United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2015 No. 67

House of Representatives

The House met at 11:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MESSER).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 5, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable LUKE MESSER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

PRAYER

Reverend Anthony Craig, Diocese of Duluth, Pequot Lakes, Minnesota, offered the following prayer:

O Lord, our God, we know that You are here with us, that You see us, and that You hear us.

We thank You and praise You for this day, which is Your gift to us. You are indestructible truth, all-encompassing goodness, and perfection of all beauty. We adore You with profound reverence.

We ask pardon from our sins. We ask You to make this session fruitful in Your service. Help us to be faithful to our marriages, to our families, and to our duties in our state in life. Give us the strength of grace in our hearts so that we might radiate Your image and likeness today.

May we also one day enter our true fatherland of Heaven. There, we hope to enjoy forever the fullness of satisfied desire, eternal gladness, consummate delight, and perfect happiness through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 4(a) of House Resolution 223, the Journal of the last day's proceedings is approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The SPEAKER 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.

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, May 4, 2015.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on May 4, 2015 at 2:47 p.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 665.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 665. An act 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 for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on March 12, 2015, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill:

H.R. 1213. To make administrative and technical corrections to the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 4(b) of House Resolution 223, the House stands adjourned until 11 a.m. on Friday, May 8, 2015.

Thereupon (at 11 o'clock and 33 minutes a.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Friday, May 8, 2015, at 11 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

1377. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Importation of Apples From China [Docket No.: APHIS-2014-0003] (RIN: 0579-AD89) received April 28, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1378. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Importation of Papayas From Peru [Docket No.: APHIS-2012-0014] (RIN: 0579-AD68) received April 28, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1379. A letter from the Administrator, Farm Service Agency, Regulatory Review

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Group, Office of the Secretary, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's interim rule — Conservation Compliance (RIN: 0560-AI26) received May 4, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1380. A letter from the Chairman, Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission, transmitting an addendum to the final Report of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission; to the Committee on Armed Services.

1381. A letter from the Chairman, Nuclear Weapons Council, Department of Defense, transmitting a certification, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 179(f), that the amounts requested for the National Nuclear Security Administration in the President's budget for FY 2016, meets nuclear stockpile and stockpile stewardship program requirements for such fiscal year and over such four fiscal years.; to the Committee on Armed Services.

1382. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report on U.S. support for Taiwan's participation as an Observer at the 68th World Health Assembly and in the work of the World Health Organization, pursuant to Public Law 108-235, 1(c); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1383. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report to Congress on the Millennium Challenge Corporation's FY 2014 obligations and expenditures for assistance provided to each eligible country as required under the Millennium Challenge Act, Pub. L. 108-199, Sec. 613; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1384. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report to Congress on the status of the Government of Cuba's compliance with the United States-Cuba September 1994 ''Joint Communique'' and the treatment by the Government of Cuba of persons returned to Cuba in accordance with the United States-Cuba May 1995 ''Joint Statement'', together known as the Migration Accords, pursuant to Sec. 2245 of the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act of 1999, Pub. L. 105-277; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1385. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's FY 2014 annual report, pursuant to 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.

1386. A letter from the Director, Office of Information Policy, Office of the Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's final rule — Revision of Department's Freedom of Information Act Regulations [Docket No.: OAG 140; AG Order No.: 3517-2015] (RIN: 1105-AB27) received May 4, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1387. A letter from the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Special Regulations, Areas of the National Park System, Bryce Canyon National Park, Bicycling [NPS-BRCA-17884; PA.PD191235A.00.3] (RIN: 1024-AE23) received May 1, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1388. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's determination on a petition filed on behalf of workers employed at the St. Louis Airport Storage Site in St. Louis, Missouri to be added to the Special Exposure Cohort, pursuant to the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000 and 42 C.F.R. pt. 83; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

1389. A letter from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting a report required by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978, as amended, 50 U.S.C. 1801 et seq., and Sec. 118 of the USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005, Pub. L. 109-177 (2006), providing information regarding all applications made by the Government during calendar year 2014 for authority to conduct electronic surveillance for foreign intelligence purposes under the Act; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

1390. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Employment and Training Administration, Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's final rule — Wage Methodology for the Temporary Non-Agricultural Employment H-2B Program [Docket No.: ETA-2013-0003] (RIN: 1205-AB69) received May 1, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

1391. A letter from the Deputy Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting a draft bill to authorize $997,600,000 for major medical facility construction projects for FY 2015, as well as to amend the Department of Veterans Affairs' Enhanced-Use Lease authority; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

1392. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report entitled, ''Finalizing Medicare Rules under Section 902 of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 for Calendar Year 2014'', detailing the instances in which the Department of Health and Human Services failed to publish a final Medicare rule within the timeline established for the final rule; jointly to the Committees on Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce.

1393. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report entitled, ''Open Payments Program Report to Congress'', describing the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' program integrity Open Payments Program; jointly to the Committees on Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. THORNBERRY: Committee on Armed Services. H.R. 1735. A bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes (Rept. 114–102). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. POE of Texas (for himself, Ms. LOFGREN, and Mr. MASSIE):

H.R. 2233. A bill to amend the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 to clarify the prohibition on warrantless searching of collections of communications for United States persons, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select), and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CARSON of Indiana (for himself, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. BROWN of Florida, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN):

H.R. 2234. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to provide for contracting preferences and other benefits for emerging business enterprises, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. CRAWFORD (for himself, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. WOMACK, and Mr. COLLINS of Georgia):

H.R. 2235. A bill to ensure the continuation of successful fisheries mitigation programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. DAVIS of California (for herself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, and Mr. DEFAZIO):

H.R. 2236. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, to submit to Congress, and make available to the public on the Internet, a report on the animals killed under the Wildlife Services program of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Ms. ESTY (for herself and Mr. MCDERMOTT):

H.R. 2237. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans to establish within the Department of Veterans Affairs a center of excellence in the prevention, diagnosis, mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of health conditions relating to exposure to burn pits; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania (for himself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. DEFAZIO, and Mr. MCDERMOTT):

H.R. 2238. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to remove bond requirements and extend filing periods for certain taxpayers with limited excise tax liability; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. MENG (for herself, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, and Ms. MOORE):

H.R. 2239. A bill to amend the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945 to increase the target financing of exports by small business concerns; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. RICHMOND (for himself, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, and Mr. LABRADOR):

H.R. 2240. A bill to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 relative to the powers of the Department of Justice Inspector General; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. SIRES (for himself and Mr. DIAZ-BALART):

H.R. 2241. A bill to direct the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to submit to Congress a report on the development and use of global health innovations in the programs,

projects, and activities of the Agency; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, and Mr. PITTS):

H.R. 2242. A bill to protect the internationally recognized right of free expression, ensure the free flow of information, and protect journalists and media personnel globally; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on 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. DESANTIS (for himself, Mr. SALMON, Mr. BLUM, and Mr. RIBBLE):

H.J. Res. 49. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to limit the number of terms that a Member of Congress may serve; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. BASS (for herself, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. HANNA, Mr. STIVERS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. MOORE, Mr. ASHFORD, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. KUSTER, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Ms. HAHN, Mr. COOK, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. COOPER, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. PETERS, Mr. YOUNG of Indiana, Mr. POCAN, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. TITUS, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. SIRES, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. DEUTCH, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. MCNERNEY, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. LEE, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. KEATING, Mr. NADLER, Mr. LEWIS, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. POLIQUIN, Mr. CLAY, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. DESAULNIER, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. TAKAI, Mr. AGUILAR, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, Mr. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. RUIZ, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. HECK of Washington, Mr. BLUM, Mr. WITTMAN, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. HILL, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. CLYBURN, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. POLIS, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. COHEN, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. YARMUTH, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. BABIN, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. HARDY, Ms. STEFANIK, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, and Mr. MOOLENAAR):

H. Res. 251. A resolution recognizing National Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges of children in the foster-care system, and encouraging Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster-care system; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GIBSON (for himself and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia):

H. Res. 252. A resolution recognizing the 50th anniversary of the national Job Corps program as it celebrates 50 years of educating and training the Nation's economically disadvantaged youth; 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. POE of Texas:

H.R. 2233.

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

4th Amendment to the Constitution

By Mr. CARSON of Indiana:

H.R. 2234.

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

Clause 1 and clause 18 of Article I of section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. CRAWFORD:

H.R. 2235.

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

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the enumerated powers listed in Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mrs. DAVIS of California:

H.R. 2236.

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

Article 1, Section 8

By Ms. ESTY:

H.R. 2237.

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

clause 18 of section 8 of article 1 of the Constitution.

By Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 2238.

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

The Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. MENG:

H.R. 2239.

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 the Indian Tribes

By Mr. RICHMOND:

H.R. 2240.

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

This bill is introduced pursuant to the powers granted to Congress under the General Welfare Clause (Art. 1 Sec. 8 Cl. 1), the Commerce Clause (Art. 1 Sec. 8 Cl. 3), and the Necessary and Proper Clause (Art. 1 Sec. 8 Cl. 18).

Further, this statement of constitutional authority is made for the sole purpose of compliance with clause 7 of Rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and shall have no bearing on judicial review of the accompanying bill.

By Mr. SIRES:

H.R. 2241.

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

Pursuant to clause 3(d) (1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee finds the authority for this legislation in article I, section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey:

H.R. 2242.

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

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. DESANTIS:

H.J. Res. 49.

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

Congess has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following, Article I, Section 8

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 27: Mr. PALAZZO.
H.R. 306: Mr. SERRANO.
H.R. 317: Ms. GABBARD.
H.R. 423: Mr. POLIQUIN.
H.R. 452: Mr. MCNERNEY.
H.R. 600: Mr. MOOLENAAR and Mr. TONKO.
H.R. 602: Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. NEWHOUSE, and Mr. SIMPSON.
H.R. 706: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 711: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 721: Mr. FORBES.
H.R. 745: Mr. JOLLY and Mr. NOLAN.
H.R. 766: Mr. ROSS and Mr. STUTZMAN.
H.R. 863: Mr. OLSON and Mr. POE of Texas.
H.R. 864: Mr. RUSH.
H.R. 880: Mr. DOLD and Mrs. WAGNER.
H.R. 909: Mr. PETERS.
H.R. 969: Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. DENT, and Mr. THOMPSON of California.
H.R. 970: Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. LATTA, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.
H.R. 1062: Mr. GIBBS.
H.R. 1150: Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. LATTA, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. BENISHEK, Mr. POLIS, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, and Mr. SCHIFF.
H.R. 1174: Mr. NEWHOUSE and Mr. FLORES.
H.R. 1185: Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. BARR, Mr. JOLLY, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. JONES, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. MEEHAN, Mrs. COMSTOCK, and Mr. AMODEI.
H.R. 1221: Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. KIND, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
H.R. 1233: Mr. PEARCE, Mr. DOLD, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. STUTZMAN, and Mr. BYRNE.
H.R. 1247: Mr. CICILLINE.
H.R. 1258: Ms. LEE.
H.R. 1269: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 1270: Mr. SALMON.
H.R. 1283: Mr. CRAMER.
H.R. 1309: Mr. PEARCE and Mr. CRAWFORD.
H.R. 1342: Mr. RENACCI, Ms. KUSTER, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. MOORE, and Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 1343: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 1462: Mr. DOLD, Mrs. BEATTY, and Mr. AMODEI.
H.R. 1475: Mr. MCCAUL.
H.R. 1552: Mr. TONKO.
H.R. 1568: Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. CLAWSON of Florida, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. HONDA, Mr.

MCDERMOTT, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. VEASEY, and Mr. HULTGREN.

H.R. 1594: Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. SMITH of Texas, and Mrs. ROBY.

H.R. 1608: Mr. SENSENBRENNER.

H.R. 1610: Mr. SANFORD, Mr. LAMALFA, and Mr. BUCK.

H.R. 1658: Mr. ALLEN, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, and Mr. PERRY.

H.R. 1696: Mr. MURPHY of Florida.

H.R. 1728: Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 1733: Ms. JUDY CHU of California.

H.R. 1739: Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. POLIQUIN, and Ms. GRANGER.

H.R. 1854: Mr. YODER, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. RICHMOND.

H.R. 1855: Mr. COFFMAN.

H.R. 1869: Mr. MCKINLEY.

H.R. 1887: Ms. DELAURO, Mr. HIMES, and Mr. ISRAEL.

H.R. 1908: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1910: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.

H.R. 1921: Mr. GRAYSON.

H.R. 2008: Mrs. BUSTOS.

H.R. 2033: Mr. GRIJALVA and Mr. VAN HOLLEN.

H.R. 2041: Mr. DENHAM.

H.R. 2042: Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. LATTA, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. SESSIONS, Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. BARR.

H.R. 2046: Mr. SENSENBRENNER.

H.R. 2047: Mr. SENSENBRENNER.

H.R. 2059: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.

H.R. 2061: Ms. LOFGREN, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. RIGELL, Mr. POE of Texas, and Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER.

H.R. 2096: Mr. DOLD, Mr. ASHFORD, and Ms. MOORE.

H.R. 2098: Mr. JONES.

H.R. 2100: Mr. TED LIEU of California and Mr. DOLD.

H.R. 2109: Mr. JONES, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. POMPEO, Mr. GOSAR, and Mr. HUELSKAMP.

H.R. 2139: Mr. HIGGINS.

H.R. 2149: Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 2156: Mr. HARPER and Mr. MACARTHUR.

H. Res. 12: Mr. SMITH of Missouri.

H. Res. 208: Mr. LYNCH.

H. Res. 233: Mr. BENISHEK, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. CLAWSON of Florida, and Mr. PERRY.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2015 No. 67

Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O sovereign Lord, You alone are God. Thank You for another day to do Your bidding. Lord, You have given each of us the same number of hours and minutes to serve You and humankind. Teach us to seize each opportunity we have to live for Your glory. Deliver us from anxieties about yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Strengthen our lawmakers in their work. Give them understanding and courage to act on their convictions. When they are tempted to doubt, increase their faith. Guide their lives by Your unfolding providence, enabling them to use the gift of time to work so that peace will rule in our world.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

THE BUDGET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today not only will Congress pass a budget for the first time in 6 years, it will pass a balanced budget for the first time in recent memory. This is something many Americans have been waiting a long time to see. It is something they deserve, and it is just the latest example of a new Congress that is back to work—back to work on behalf of Americans who work hard and expect Washington to do the same.

No budget will ever be perfect, but this is a budget that sensibly addresses the concerns of many different Members. It reflects honest compromise from many different Members with many, many different priorities.

It includes additional resources and flexibility for national defense. It reduces spending, and it balances without raising taxes. That is especially impressive when one considers the type of budget the White House proposed—one that never balanced—ever—but still tried to raise taxes by nearly $2 trillion.

That White House budget was so unserious that only a single Member of the President's party could be persuaded to publicly support it here in the Senate. Perhaps that is because it proposed to double down on the failed policies of the past: more overspending, more debt, more taxes, and hardly any reform.

So the White House fantasy budget may have made the left happy, but the new Congress believed the American people deserved better. We offered a budget that is more than just balanced; it is also oriented toward growth. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, the budget we will approve today contains ideas that could boost jobs and grow our economy.

It would embrace the energy revolution and provide for more environmentally responsible innovation. It would repeal unfair taxes, such as those in ObamaCare, and set the table for more comprehensive reform of our outdated Tax Code.

Because this budget is about embracing the future, it also gives us the tools to leave ObamaCare's broken promises and higher costs where they belong—in the past—in favor of a fresh start with the opportunity for real health reform.

This budget is also about protecting the vulnerable. It aims responsibly to improve and modernize programs such as Medicare, so they will continue to be there when Americans need them. After all, we know that failing to make commonsense improvements to save these types of programs today will mean allowing draconian cuts to fall on the vulnerable in the years to come.

The balanced budget before us went through the normal committee process. Members of both parties debated it vigorously on the floor. They offered more amendments than just about anyone can count, and then a conference committee met to work out the differences between the version of this balanced budget passed by the House and the one we passed here in the Senate. That is the way the process is supposed to work. That is the way Congress is supposed to function.

The budget reflects a lot of hard work from a lot of individuals. I would particularly like to thank Chairman MIKE ENZI and his counterpart in the House, Chairman TOM PRICE, as well as every member of the conference committee, for their tireless efforts to agree on a framework that can pass.

The balanced budget they produced won't solve every challenge, but it is a measure that will move us further down the path of positive reform. It is a budget that aims to make government more efficient, more effective, and more accountable to the middle class. And it is a reminder that the new Republican majority is getting Congress back to work for the American people.

BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL TRADE PRIORITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, once the budget is approved, we will continue our work on

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

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the bipartisan Iran bill. Then it is my hope to turn to another bipartisan measure, the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act—TPA.

This bill would enhance Congress's role in the trade process while ensuring Presidents of either party have the necessary tools to secure strong, enforceable trade agreements for American workers. Here is why that is important. Without this bipartisan legislation, American workers and farmers, including from my home State of Kentucky, will not be able to reap the rewards of selling more made-in-America goods to places such as Europe and the Pacific.

This is a bill we should all want to support. So it won't surprise anyone to hear this bill has substantial bipartisan support. It even passed the Committee on Finance on an overwhelming vote of 20 to 6—20 to 6.

But of course we have already heard of an attempt to stand in the way of this bipartisan effort to debate this legislation. We have already heard of yet another effort to make a partisan stand against a bipartisan accomplishment that would help grow opportunities for our constituents.

So yes, some may oppose allowing American workers to compete and win in new markets. Some may not be all that excited about selling more products stamped ''Made in America'' to places such as Europe and the Pacific. But the reality is the American people deserve more opportunities, not more special interest roadblocks.

That is why I plan, with the support of Members of both parties, to turn to the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act once we finish the Iran bill.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CINCO DE MAYO

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the history of Cinco de Mayo is one that is largely unfamiliar to most Americans, but to Mexican Americans it is very familiar. It is a shame we don't know more about it because the story of Cinco de Mayo is one of inspiration. It is the tale of a small military force that was vastly outnumbered but refused to capitulate.

At the Battle of Puebla, 153 years ago, a small Mexican Army force found itself outnumbered two to one by the French. The outmatched soldiers refused to give up. They couldn't. That was not in their makeup. The future of Mexico rested on their shoulders. Unbelievably, in spite of seemingly insurmountable odds, the Mexican Army refused to give up.

That is what we celebrate today—Cinco de Mayo. It is not just Mexican culture and history, but also the resilient spirit that refuses to capitulate. Our United States is better off because of that spirit engendered by millions of Mexican Americans and, indeed, the entire Latino community. It is that same spirit today that injects new life into our communities. It is that same spirit possessed by generations of Mexican Americans that has fueled the economics and vibrancy of communities throughout the Southwest. It is that same spirit that empowers Latino students to push themselves to new heights. And it is that same indomitable spirit that inspires Hispanic Americans to defend our country on the front lines around the world, as they have done for many, many decades.

Hispanic heritage in this country has never been stronger. Now it falls upon us, as Members of Congress, to support Mexican Americans and the greater Latino community to reach the promise of the American dream. We can do that by investing in working American families, not by kicking families off their health insurance, as my friend the Republican leader spoke of in this budget that is balanced in name only. Really, you can keep talking about how balanced something is, but if it is unbalanced, it is still unbalanced.

The Republicans want to repeal ObamaCare for 16.5 million people—and on and on with all the things that are good in that legislation and that have so changed America. In this budget, they want to strip children's financial aid to go to college or cut job training programs—and on and on with what they want to do in this budget.

They talk about this great meeting that took place to come up with this final bill in conference. That conference took about 10 minutes. They knew what they wanted to do, and they did it very quickly. The Republican budget is unfair, it is unbalanced, it is unwise, and, as some have said, it is immoral.

So as we celebrate Cinco de Mayo today, I hope we will remember that unrelenting Mexican spirit that prevailed on the battlefield 153 years ago. But more importantly, I hope we will recognize that the same spirit is among us today, in the homes of Mexican Americans across America.

HIGHWAY TRUST FUND AND FISA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on another matter, the Senate has a lot to do before the recess for Memorial Day. We need to finish the Corker-Cardin Iran legislation. We need to wrap up work on the budget resolution. But in addition to those two important pieces of legislation, there are other pressing needs. Surface transportation expires while we are on recess.

The highway trust fund runs out of money, and the authorization for the Federal highway program expires later this month. There are 63,500 bridges that are structurally deficient, and more than 50 percent of our roads are in disrepair. That is according to the Federal Highway Administration. Without reliable funding, our highways and bridges will only get worse, and that is an understatement.

Six States already are delaying or canceling important transportation projects because of questions over future funding—Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Wyoming.

The ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, the senior Senator from Vermont, said today that in Vermont—this tiny State, area-wise and population-wise, with about 600,000 people in it—their construction timeframe is very, very narrow. They can't do construction during most of the year. They need to plan way ahead of time, and they can't do that if there is nothing to plan. States need certainty from Washington that they will receive their highway dollars before construction leaders put shovels in the ground.

Nevada needs that certainty. Tourism in Nevada welcomes over 50 million visitors annually, resulting in 17 billion miles traveled over our roads and highways. Nevada has $47.3 billion in statewide transportation needs. That is just one State.

We must ensure our Nation's highway system has the necessary funds to address the pressing needs, and they are not there. Transportation would be the first easy place to find agreement in Congress, and it is hard to comprehend, but the Republican majority in the Senate has not held a single hearing on this most important piece of legislation—not a single hearing, nothing.

We want to work with Republicans to address our Nation's crumbling infrastructure. We understand the importance of transportation investment for working families across the country. Yet, stunningly, Republicans have effectively put our Nation's transportation system on the back burner. Hearing the Republican leader's statement this morning, I guess that is going to continue. Procrastination is dangerous to American drivers and hurtful to our economy. The U.S. highway system is central to our Nation's economic competitiveness. It is how we move goods and services. It is central to American families who use our roads and bridges each day to go to work and take their child to school. Congress should do more to support these working families and businesses.

For every $1 billion we spend on infrastructure projects, we create 47,500 jobs. Without strong Federal infrastructure funding, the American Society of Civil Engineers predicts that our country could lose $1 trillion in sales. That is almost 3.5 million jobs. Putting critical transportation investments on the back burner is not an effective way to govern, and I would hope we can have something done on highways before we go home for our recess. How can we be home in good conscience and say we tried but couldn't get it done?

We also have to reform and reauthorize FISA, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. It is one thing that has kept us safe. The FISA provisions were expanded in the PATRIOT Act and they expire June 1. Senators LEAHY and LEE, a bipartisan team of Senators, have introduced a bill that would reform these important provisions so they strike the right balance between protecting our Nation's security and preserving America's civil liberties. An identical bill was reported out of the House Judiciary Committee with a strong bipartisan vote of 25 to 2. The House is out this week, but I hope they take it up next week. I am told they are going to. This is an issue that warrants our full debate and deserves the Senate's attention before we leave. We have a lot to do and not much time. I hope Senate Republicans will help us move these important pieces of legislation without allowing either one to lapse. That is going out of business.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD—VETO

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the veto message to accompany S.J. Res. 8, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Veto message to accompany S.J. Res. 8, a 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2016—CONFERENCE REPORT—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I move to proceed to the conference report to accompany S. Con. Res. 11, the budget resolution, and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 170 Leg.]

YEAS—53

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

NAYS—44

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

NOT VOTING—3

Cruz	Mikulski	Vitter

The motion was agreed to.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2016—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to proceed having been agreed to, the Chair lays before the Senate the conference report to accompany S. Con. Res. 11, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the House 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, having met, have agreed that the Senate recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the House and agree to the same with an amendment, and the House agree to the same, signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of April 29, 2015.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to section 305(c) of the Congressional Budget Act, there will now be up to 10 hours of debate equally divided.

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, today we have the historic opportunity to put our country on not just another course but a better course. This is because Congress is poised to approve its first balanced 10-year budget since 2001. This balanced budget represents a ''lean in'' moment for a Congress under new management to confront rapidly growing deficits borne from our government's habitual overspending which plagues America and its taxpayers.

Understanding this historical context is critical because our Nation currently faces one of the largest forecasted deficits since the end of World War II. The joint Senate-House budget agreement, which produces billion-dollar surpluses in its final years, would be an accomplishment unequaled since 1947.

The new leadership in the Senate is committed to getting back to work, which will allow us to begin rebuilding the trust of working Americans. Instead of allowing political points and partisan gridlock to take precedence over responsible governing, we are once again doing the people's business.

Make no mistake—America faces overwhelming odds as we work to steer our ship of state to more sustainable and fiscally responsible waters. Even as we take in record revenues and taxes, our Nation is still unable to live within its means. As some of America's greatest leaders have previously noted, these challenges are not undertaken because they are easy but because they are hard.

Americans who work every day to pay their taxes and provide for their families understand that it is time for the Federal Government to live within its means, just as they do. Just imagine if these families spent and borrowed the way the Federal Government does. It would mean that a family with a median income of $52,000 would spend $61,000 a year. The family would add an additional $9,000 to the $311,000 they already would owe on their credit card. American families know they cannot live on borrowed money, and neither can the Federal Government. This balanced budget shows these families that if they can do it, so can we.

As with any budget, it is important to let the numbers speak on how this proposal helps make America stronger and more secure. This joint Senate-House congressional budget balances the budget within 10 years without raising taxes. It achieves more than $5 trillion in savings. It produces a $32 billion surplus in 2024 and a $24 billion surplus in 2025 and stays in balance. It boosts the Nation's economy by more than $400 billion in additional economic growth over the next 10 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office. It is expected to grow 1.2 million additional jobs over the next 10 years, again based on the Congressional Budget Office data.

This balanced budget achieves real results and allows the Federal Government to support Americans when it must and get out of the way when it should.

Let me tell you about some of the highlights of this budget agreement.

The balanced budget ensures a strong national defense. It invests in our military personnel and the readiness of our Armed Forces in the current global threat environment. It ensures that defense spending reflects the commitment of Congress to keep America safe and ensure that our military personnel are prepared to tackle all challenges, both at home and abroad.

The balanced budget provides for repeal and replacement of ObamaCare. It provides for the repeal of ObamaCare, including all of its taxes, regulations, and mandates. It paves the way for real health care reforms to strengthen the doctor-patient relationship, expand choices, lower health care costs, and improve access to quality, affordable, innovative health care. In other words, it delivers on what the President promised but never delivered. It focuses reconciliation instructions on the key congressional committees with jurisdiction over ObamaCare: the Senate Finance Committee; the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee; the House Energy and Commerce Committee; the House Education and the Workforce Committee; and the House Ways and Means Committee.

The balanced budget preserves Medicare. It preserves Medicare and protects seniors' access to health care by extending the life of the Medicare hospital insurance trust fund. It repeals the Independent Payment Advisory Board—IPAB—the unelected, unaccountable board of 15 bureaucrats created by the President's health care law that will make decisions on benefit cuts. It accounts for the recent enactment of legislation that addressed the Medicare Program's sustainable growth rate—SGR—or more commonly called the doc fix.

The balanced budget supports stronger economic growth. It boosts U.S. economic growth and private sector job creation by balancing the budget, reducing the debt, and putting a halt to government overspending to reduce the cost of work and investment, as well as the cost of starting and growing a business.

It expands the Nation's economy by more than $400 billion over the next 10 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office, under the old way of doing the accounting.

It provides an estimated 1.2 million jobs for the U.S. economy by 2025, based on data provided by the Congressional Budget Office in its traditional ways of evaluating.

It boosts the Nation's gross national product by 1.4 percent per person after accounting for inflation by 2025, according to the Congressional Budget Office. This boost in economic growth will all come from the private sector. Government spending does not contribute to its growth. As my fellow Budget Committee member and businessman Senator PERDUE notes, expanding government does not help grow the economy.

The balanced budget improves accountability and effectiveness of government. It is important to note that a balanced budget will help make our government more efficient, effective, and accountable. If government programs are not delivering results, they should be improved, and if they are not needed, they ought to be eliminated.

This agreement between the Senate and House will help Congress prioritize and demand results from our government programs. There is no doubt that this will be challenging for every single Member of Congress, but I believe we are up to the task because the American people are counting on us.

This budget agreement improves transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the Federal Government by cutting waste, eliminating redundancies, and enacting regulatory reform, and there is plenty of that out there we have not looked at yet.

It calls for modernizing Medicaid by increasing State flexibility and protecting those most in need of assistance.

It improves honest and responsible accounting practices as part of the Federal budget process by ensuring that fair-value accounting estimates are used, which provide a more honest accounting method. This is in addition to the honest, dynamic scoring method that more accurately tells us what legislation will cost hard-working taxpayers.

It improves the administration and coordination of benefits, and it increases employment opportunities for disabled workers.

This budget also calls on Congress to pass a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. That point is especially important because we must show taxpayers that Congress is committed to a balanced budget and not to overspending, so we can make our government more effective. But we are running out of time.

Currently, lawmakers in 27 States have passed applications for a convention to approve a balanced budget amendment and new applications in 9 other States are close behind. If we had 34 States, that would cause us to have a constitutional convention to balance the budget. If just seven of those nine States approve moving forward on the balanced budget issue, it will bring the total number of applications to 34 States. This would meet the two-thirds requirement under article V of the Constitution and force Congress to take action.

The other side often says they cut the Federal deficit in half during the President's term in office, but I think using the word ''deficit'' is meant to be confusing. People think he reduced the debt by one-half. Actually, the President has increased the Nation's debt dramatically. What we are talking about when we say ''deficit'' is the amount of overspending, the amount we spend compared to what we bring in. Yes, that is deficit, but it is overspending, and if we call it overspending, it will not be confused with bringing down the national debt, which is not even touched and which under the President's budget only gets worse.

In his most recent budget released earlier this year, the President proposed a plan that never balances and includes huge spending increases. It also includes a $2.1 trillion tax increase—that is $2,100 billion of tax increases—while it adds $8.5 billion—or $8,500 million—to the national debt. The Senate recently voted on his budget, and it was rejected 99 to 1.

There is no question that balancing the budget is a daunting task. Last year, our Nation overspent by $468 billion, which, if left unchecked, is set to rise to $1,000 billion. We are in control of $1,100 billion in discretionary spending, and this year we will spend $468 billion more than we take in. I will repeat that. We are only in control of $1,100 billion in discretionary spending, and this year we will spend $468 billion more than we take in.

This is an unsustainable financial path, and if Congress did what every American family has to do—live within our means—we would have to cut our annual discretionary spending in half. That would be a 50-percent cut.

This is because we spend 1½ times what we take in for items on which we can make decisions. No family or State government can do that for very long, but the Federal Government does it every year.

Our budget is not perfect, but it is a start. It provides Congress and the Nation with a fiscal blueprint that challenges lawmakers to examine every dollar we spend.

This is crucial because we currently spend over $230 billion in interest on our debt every year, and that is at an interest rate of 1.7 percent. The Congressional Budget Office tells us that every 1 percentage point that our interest rates rise will increase America's overspending by $1,745 billion over the next 10 years.

We have a looming debt of $18 trillion on its way to $27 trillion. If our interest rates were to rise to 5 percent, which is the historical norm, we will have to spend almost $700 billion annually, out of the $1,100 billion we get to make decisions on, to pay the interest on our debt. This would be catastrophic for our Nation's economy. It is vital that we address this situation now while we still have some choices.

To provide a clearer picture of how dire our Nation's fiscal outlook is, if we were forced to balance the budget in 1 year, we would have to eliminate most of our defense spending, most of our highway spending, and most of our education spending. This drastic 50-percent cut would be needed because of our consistent overspending and our interest payments, which are set to explode.

What are the two best ways to make a difference?

First, Congress should look at the more than 260 programs whose authorization—the right to spend money—has expired. Some of these government programs expired in 1983, but we are still spending money on them every year. That means we have been paying for these expired programs for more than 30 years. In some cases, we spend as much as four times the spending authority that has expired. We have to look at those programs.

For the 260 programs that have expired, we are spending $293 billion a year. Normally, we talk about over a 10-year period. Over a 10-year period, that would be $2,935 billion. Eliminating those programs would almost balance the budget. They can't be eliminated, but they should be looked at regularly. That is why we have authorizations that expire. That is so we are forced to take a look at them. No, that is so we should be forced to take a look at them; obviously, we don't. We don't do that because we want the committees of jurisdiction to have a hard look at the expired authorizations and make them current or, if there are duplications, eliminate the programs that are not needed after all or, with duplication, we ought to be able to at least get rid of half of the administrative bureaucracy on it and make sure the money gets out into the country where we promised it.

Now, there is a second way. The other way we can balance the budget is to grow the economy. The Congressional Budget Office tells us that if we were to increase the gross domestic product, private sector growth—again, this is not referring to government GDP; that is just private sector growth—if we were to increase the private sector growth by 1 percent, that would provide an additional $300 billion in additional tax revenue every year. I think that could balance the budget. But first we must get our overspending under control because Congress is already spending more tax revenue than at any point in history. When we take the tax revenue from the individuals and from the businesses, we slow down this growth that would provide the additional $300 billion in tax revenue every year. If we grow the economy, we will expand opportunity for each and every American.

Now, I know in their speeches our friends from across the aisle will criticize us for not being finished by April 15. But think of it this way: We did something in 4 months that they could only accomplish once in 4 years, and that is produce a budget—let alone a budget that actually balances.

While they were in charge, they often didn't produce a budget by April 15 or October 1 or even January 1. In fact, they produced only one budget conference agreement in the last 6 years, so don't criticize us for what we are doing. While we may have taken a few extra days, we did get it done, and this budget is poised to play a vital role in helping Congress get back to the work of doing the people's business. And when we get it done on time, the spending committees can begin on time. Hopefully, that will give the spending committees time to look at this duplication and the unauthorized spending we have.

Now, some point out that the President was able to get his budget out on time. That is true, but the last time I checked, he didn't have to run it by 535 elected officials as we do; he just had to run it past one elected official—himself. I should mention that is the first time in 6 years he has gotten a budget to us on time. We even had to have a rollcall vote today to proceed to this privileged conference report. I don't understand that.

The Senate Budget Committee is tasked with the responsibility of setting spending goals. Congress has other committees that authorize government programs and they are charged with overseeing their efficiency and effectiveness. We also have committees that allocate the exact dollars for these programs every year, but the Senate Budget Committee sets the spending goals. In other words, we set limits and we set some enforcement.

This is why passing a budget is so important for our Nation. It lets the congressional policymakers who actually allocate the dollars get to work by following our spending limits. This year, we are giving them an early start. Leader MCCONNELL is committed to allowing the Senate to do its job, and that means debate and votes on the 12 appropriations bills—the 12 spending bills. This is an important occurrence in the Senate, because over the past 8 years, appropriations bills have been as rare as ice cubes in the desert.

I wish to thank my colleagues in both the Senate and the House for all their hard work in producing a joint budget agreement that balances within 10 years, does not raise taxes, strengthens our Nation's defense, protects our most vulnerable citizens, improves economic growth and opportunity for hard-working families, and stops the Federal Government's out-of-control spending. These important steps, and still others to come, show Congress is back working for the American people to deliver on the promise of a government that is more accountable. This is something each and every American expects and deserves from its leaders in Washington. With action on our balanced budget, we will deliver.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, let me thank Senator ENZI for his civility and his humor. I have enjoyed the process by which we have gotten to where we are today. But I must say that anyone who takes an objective look at this Republican budget can do nothing else but conclude that this is an absolute disaster for the working families of this country. In fact, one of the problems I have had in describing the Republican budget is that it is so bad—it is so far out of touch with where the American people are—that people really don't even believe us when we talk about what is in this budget, which is what I am going to do in a moment.

Before I do that, I think we can all agree that what a budget is about is a development of priorities to address problems. We look at what is going on in our country as we assess the needs of the American people, and we build a budget around those needs. So let me begin by assessing what I believe are the needs of the American people.

The fundamental economic reality of today is that for the last 40 years—not the last 6 years, not the last 20 years but the last 40 years—the middle class of this country has been disappearing. Today, we have more people living in poverty than at almost any time in the modern history of America, and yet while that is going on, the gap between the very, very, very rich and everybody else is growing wider and wider.

Today, in fact, in America, we have more income and wealth inequality than any other major country on Earth. I know many people think that in the United Kingdom, they have the Queen and dukes and lords and all of this aristocracy; clearly, their distribution of wealth and income must be a lot worse than it is in the United States. That is not the case. Today, compared to every other major country on Earth, our distribution of wealth and income is the worst, and it is worse in this country today than at any time since the late 1920s.

It is hard to believe but true: Today, 99 percent of all new income goes to the top 1 percent. Since the Wall Street crash of 2008, 99 percent of all new income goes to the top 1 percent. What that means is all over this country we have people working not one job but two jobs, three jobs; people working longer hours for lower wages. Yet 99 percent of all of the new income generated is going to the top 1 percent. In the midst of that reality, our Republican colleagues say, Well, only 99 percent of all new income goes to the top 1 percent, but what can we do to make the richest people even richer?

Median family income in this country since 1999 has gone down by almost $5,000. Families are struggling to put bread on the table, to send their kids to college, to take care of their basic needs. But the Republican budget says the middle class is shrinking, people are struggling; what can we do to make life even harder for the working families of our country.

When we talk about unemployment in America, the official unemployment rate is 5.5 percent. The true unemployment—real unemployment—however, is 10.9 percent, if we include those people who have given up looking for work and people who are working part time when they want to work full time. Youth unemployment, which we never talk about, is over 17 percent, and African-American youth unemployment is

literally off of the charts. Does the Republican budget say: How do we put the American people back to work or how do we help our young people who are desperately looking for jobs or looking for education? Quite the contrary. The Republican budget cuts virtually every program out there that is designed to help working families and unemployed workers.

The typical male worker—that male worker in the middle of the American economy—incredibly made $783 less last year than he did 42 years ago. In other words, the middle class in this country is moving, unfortunately, in the wrong direction.

Does the Republican budget say that we are going to raise the minimum wage so that everybody in this country who works 40 hours a week can live with dignity? No, it does not. Again, it moves us in exactly the wrong direction.

While unemployment is much too high, while median family income has gone down, when millions of people are working longer hours for lower wages, there is another phenomenon taking place in this country, and that is that the wealthiest people and the largest corporations are doing phenomenally well—not good, not pretty good—phenomenally well. Today, we live in a society where the top 1 percent owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent.

Here is the chart. The top 1 percent owns almost as much wealth—here at the top is the 1 percent. Here is the bottom 90 percent, going down. That is reality.

The Republican budget says: Wow, look at that extraordinary disparity in wealth. We are going to do something about it.

Yes, they do something about it. Their proposals will make the rich even richer and working people even poorer. Not only do we have a situation today where—as incredible as it may sound—the wealthiest 14 people in this country—the wealthiest 14—not 1,400, not 14,000, but the wealthiest 14 people in this country—in the last 2 years have seen their wealth increase by $157 billion. So 14 people have seen their wealth increase by $157 billion. That is more wealth than the total wealth of the bottom 130 million Americans.

Here is a chart showing Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, an increase of $19 billion. Larry Ellison's wealth increased by $11 billion. This is just an increase over a 2-year period. Do you know what the Republican budget says to these guys? Hey, $157 billion in increase in 2 years? That is not enough. We are going to give your families a very significant tax break by ending the estate tax.

We have a situation where one family in this country—the Walton families, which own Walmart—that one family owns more wealth than the bottom 42 percent of the American people.

Given the huge disparity of wealth and income, given the fact that millions of Americans today are struggling to put food on the table, given the fact that working families don't know how they can afford quality child care for their kids and middle class families don't know how they are able to send their kids to college, the Republican budget in virtually every instance moves us in exactly the wrong direction.

The United States of America, sadly, is the only major country on Earth that does not guarantee health care to all people as a right—something that I believe should occur. I think health care is a right and not a privilege. Today, we have made some gains under the Affordable Care Act. We have more people who have health insurance than was the case a number of years ago. That is a good thing. This is what the Republican budget does: The Republican budget, by ending the Affordable Care Act and by cutting Medicaid by over $400 billion, throws 27 million Americans off of health insurance. That is it—27 million Americans—men, women, kids—off of health insurance. What happens to those people? How many of those 27 million people will die? Certainly thousands, because when they get sick they are not going to be able to go to a doctor. How many of those people will suffer because they had illnesses that could have been treated or cured, but they can't go to a doctor? This budget knocks 27 million people off of health insurance. When you ask the Republicans what happens to those people, they have no response at all—none, zero. So instead of moving us in the direction of having health care for all of our people, they increase the number of uninsured by 27 million Americans.

At a time when senior poverty is increasing, the Republican budget calls for ending Medicare as we know it by turning it into a voucher program. What does that mean? The Republican idea is that we give people a voucher. I don't know that they have an exact amount for their voucher—maybe $8,000—whatever. They say: Here is a check for $8,000. You are 85 years of age and you are struggling with cancer. Here is your check for $8,000, and you go out to a private insurance company and get the best deal you can.

If you are 85 years of age and you are struggling with cancer or heart disease and somebody gives you a check for $8,000, you tell me what kind of private insurance you are going to be able to get. How many days will it last you in the hospital? This is an effort to undermine and destroy Medicare. It is a disastrous idea. That is exactly what is in the Republican proposal.

At a time when millions of disabled people are trying to survive on less than $14,000 a year, the Republican budget would pave the way for a massive cut to Social Security Disability Insurance. Instead of making college more affordable—and I know that in the State of Vermont, my State, and I expect in States all over this country, young people are really wondering whether they want to go to college, because they are so nervous about the debt they will have when they come out—what is the Republican response to the crisis of the lack of affordability of college? Here is their response. They would cut Pell grants by more than $85 billion over the next decade, which would make the cost of college education more expensive for some 8 million Americans. In other words, instead of addressing this crisis, instead of helping make us competitive in a global economy by giving us the best-educated workforce, what they do is to move us in the wrong direction.

We are as a nation the wealthiest Nation in the history of the world. Most people don't know it, because almost all of that wealth goes to a handful of people on top. In the midst of this extremely wealthy Nation, disgracefully, today, we have millions and millions of families who literally are worried about how they are going to put food on the table and feed their kids tomorrow and next week.

I can tell you that in the State of Vermont—and I expect in States around this country—we have people working 40 and 50 hours a week but, because their wages are so low, they don't earn enough money to buy the food they need to properly take care of their kids and feed their kids well. Those families literally go to emergency food shelters all over America. These are working people who never in their lives thought they would have to go to an emergency food shelter. That is what they are doing all over America.

What is the Republican response to hunger in America, taking care of the most basic needs we have? The Republican response is massive cuts—massive cuts—to food stamps and the WIC Program. The WIC Program is a wonderful program to ensure that low-income pregnant women get good nutrition and that their babies have good nutrition. How basic can it get? Cut those programs. Cut the Meals On Wheels programs for fragile seniors.

In the midst of throwing 27 million Americans off of health insurance, in the midst of cutting $85 billion for Pell grants to make it harder for our kids to go to college, in the midst of making massive cuts in nutrition programs which would increase hunger and suffering in the United States of America, Republicans do something else that is literally remarkable—and I know people think I am not telling the truth. I am.

What they say is that when the rich are getting richer, when almost all new income and wealth is going to the people on top, what they have decided to do for the wealthiest 6,000 families in America—the top two-tenths of 1 percent—what they say to these billionaire families is that we are going to give you a massive tax break by repealing the estate tax. What we are going to do is give you a $269 billion tax

break that goes to the top two-tenths of 1 percent, and 99.8 percent of the American people will not gain one nickel in benefits from the repeal of the estate tax. It only goes to the wealthiest of the wealthy.

But to add insult to injury, while giving a huge tax break for the billionaire class, the Republican budget also says: Let's see if we can raise taxes on lower-income and working-class families by allowing the expanded earned-income tax credit and child tax credit to expire. These are tax credits that go to working families and lower-income families who have kids. We added a more generous benefit a few years ago, and they are going to allow that to expire at the same time as they give a massive tax break to the wealthiest families in this country.

My friend from Wyoming, Mr. ENZI, talks repeatedly about the deficit. I agree that the deficit is a problem. But he will acknowledge that under the last 6 years under President Obama, we have made significant progress in reducing the deficit—about two-thirds. But it remains very high. We have an $18 trillion debt and that is a real issue. There is no denying it. One of the reasons that we have a huge debt—not the only reason but one of the reasons—is that the United States under President Bush went to war in Iraq and went to war in Afghanistan.

Now nobody knows what the end cost of that war will be by the time we take care of the last veteran 50 or 60 years from now, but the best guesses are that those wars will cost us $4 to $6 trillion by the time we take care of the needs of our last veteran who served in those wars.

How do we pay for those wars? How do we pay for those wars? In every other war that this country fought, Presidents had the courage to go forward and say: Wars are expensive. We are going to raise taxes. Not in this case—those wars were put on the credit card—$4 to $6 trillion and we didn't pay for it.

Apparently, my Republican colleagues haven't learned a simple lesson—that you can't be honest and worry about the deficit, and then go to war and not pay for it. What they have done in this budget is to increase Pentagon spending by another $38 billion next year and $186 billion over the next 10 years.

And how is that paid for? Oh, it is not paid for. It goes on the credit card. They put it all into the so-called OCO account, and this is, by the way, an account that many of my conservative friends have called an accounting gimmick.

So here we are. Here we are at a time when this country probably faces more serious problems than at any time since the Great Depression. The middle class is disappearing. Poverty is much too high. The gap between the very, very, very rich and everybody else is growing wider and wider. Real unemployment is much too high. Young people are unable to afford to go to college. On every one of those issues, the Republican budget does exactly the opposite of what we should be doing.

In the year 2015, we should not be voting or bringing forth a budget which makes the billionaires even richer while cutting programs for people who are struggling. With an $18 trillion debt, we should not be increasing military spending by simply adding that money to the deficit.

So I would hope that people in this body, in the Senate, will take a deep breath, and appreciate, in fact, what is going on with working families in this country and will vote no on this disastrous budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, thank you very much.

I want to thank Senator SANDERS for laying out the budget in a way that makes sense. It is a document that is supposed to reflect our values, who we are. It is supposed to be a roadmap for the future. What Mr. SANDERS has just said is that it is a roadmap to disaster, and I intend to pick up on that theme.

I want also to say that I know how hard it is to get a budget out. I was on the House Budget Committee for years and on the Senate Budget Committee. I want to compliment Senator ENZI. I know it is hard to put together a coalition, even within your own party. He has said that the Senate is under new management and he is very excited about it, and I understand that. I get it. I have been in both the majority and the minority and I like the majority a lot better.

But the bottom line is, if this is the first big action of the new management, let's bring back the old one, because in this budget, the people who benefit are the very tippy top maybe two-tenths of 1 percent. It is unreal. I am not going to stand on the floor and just throw out barbs, I am going to give definite numbers so everybody sees what we mean.

The only time we have had a balanced budget in recent history was when Bill Clinton was President and the Democrats controlled the Senate. I remember it well because we didn't get one Republican vote for that budget that was so critical.

I remember my colleague Senator Bob Kerrey was thinking about it so hard. He saw all sides. He went to the movies, and during the movie he came to a—this was the right budget—he came back and voted and it got done.

Now, that was a Democratic budget that invested in the people of the United States of America, invested in their infrastructure, invested in their education, invested in their health care, and invested in them. It invested in them.

Remember, President Clinton said: Put America's families first. And it worked because we invested in our people. We headed into a period of unprecedented growth—23 million jobs created under Bill Clinton and the budget balanced.

As soon as George W. Bush took over, he did enormous tax cuts for the wealthiest at the top, got us into two wars—put them on a credit card—and we have been battling our way back after the worst economic downturn. If you look at the job creation under ''W,'' it is just shocking. Now, under President Obama, we have fought tooth and nail and we are coming back. This budget is an unmitigated disaster.

Let's start. At a time when 16 million people have finally been able to get health insurance thanks to the Affordable Care Act, also known as ObamaCare, they want to repeal this law and throw these people out. They will not have health care, and then what will happen? They will suffer, their families will suffer, and the economy will suffer. At a time when nearly 70 million Americans rely on Medicaid and CHIP for health coverage—Medicaid, we know is for the working poor, CHIP is for children—they want to block grant that program and, while they are doing it, impose cuts of more than $1.3 trillion.

So you have to ask this question—this isn't just a matter of putting a number on an easel—what will it mean for maternity care when half of all of our births in the United States are financed by Medicaid? Half of all births in the United States are financed by Medicaid, and they are cutting Medicaid by $1.3 trillion. So they will fight for your right to be born, but, boy, don't count on getting any help if you wind up in a maternity ward.

At a time when more than 50 million senior citizens and disabled Americans are in the Medicare Program and baby boomers continue to age in, they propose cutting the program by $430 billion by placing the burden on the backs of seniors and privatizing that program through vouchers. They are going to end Medicare: Senior citizens, you are under new management here, and they are ending Medicare as we know it, as we know that great program.

So after years of being the most successful program—and if you ask people on Medicare if they like it, they not only like it, they love it—they are ending it.

As Senator SANDERS pointed out, eloquently, I thought, they are saying to a sick person—you know, people are living longer. Thank God. So let's say a person is 85, 90 years old, having a hard time functioning and then gets a desperate cancer on top of it: Here is money. Go out and find the best insurance you can. Oh, yes, we know you are 90. Here is a Web site.

Oh, I don't have a computer.

Too bad. We are under new management over here. Oh, great. Bring back the old management. That is what I think.

The old management wasn't perfect, but the old management had a heart, had a soul. No one will hear.

Now, how is this: In case you are not sold about how devastating this budget

is, the Republican budget resolution eliminates opportunities for the neediest students from preschool to college by cutting $270 billion from education and job training investments over the next decade. So while the Republican leadership is pushing for free trade, free trade, whatever, what is happening to training our workers? They are cut.

At a time when less than one-half of eligible preschool-aged children are able to participate in Head Start, half of our eligible kids cannot get in. The Republican budget cuts the program by over $4 billion, resulting in over 400,000 children losing access to Head Start over the next decade.

Now, tell me I am dreaming. This is the new management. We are going to take 400,000 children over the next decade and say: Sorry, no room for you. The door is closed.

We all know Head Start is critical.

We know the cost of college continues to rise. We all know it—because we are alive, we have a heartbeat and a pulse, and everybody alive today knows what it is. I have met people who are still paying off their student loan debt when they are on Social Security. That is the new reality. What did they do? They cut Pell grant funding by more than one-third, making college less affordable for many of the more than 8 million students receiving aid.

So let's see who is now in their line of fire: middle class, seniors, little babies, students, and workers. At a time when student loan debt has reached $1.2 trillion and students are graduating with over $28,000 in student loan debt, on average, the Republican budget resolution eliminates the in-school interest subsidy for need-based student loans, causing student loan debt to increase by nearly $4,000 for an estimated 30 million students.

So it isn't bad enough for them to know that people are paying off their student loans when they are on Social Security, now they are increasing the cost of student loans even more, instead of working with us to decrease the cost to students. I will tell you, if every taxpayer in America is a shareholder, it is time to call a meeting and change this management.

Now, if you are a renter, one in four renters is paying more than half their income on housing, placing them one paycheck away from homelessness—half your income. The Republican budget resolution eliminates housing assistance for 450,000 families due to a 14-percent cut to the section 8 rental assistance program—beautiful.

At a time when 45.3 million people are living in poverty, the Republican budget resolution cuts about $800 billion from income security programs over 10 years. This category includes SNAP, Supplemental Security Income for low-income seniors and people with disabilities, and heating assistance for low-income families—lovely, lovely. Welcome to the new management that is the Senate.

Here is the thing, this is even hard to imagine they did it. It upset them so much that the wealthiest 14 families might get hit with a little bit of the tax—and I am talking about people who are worth over $10 million, way more, 20, 30, 40, 50—you name it, the highest level. They give them a $3 million tax cut.

They actually raised taxes by an average of $900 on 16 million low- and moderate-income families by allowing expansions to the EITC and child tax credit to expire, so there is no expansion of that program.

Now, whom else could we hit? Well, maybe we could hit some of our States that are suffering from the realities of climate change, such as the Western States that are undergoing the longest recorded drought in history.

Come talk to my farmers, ask them how happy they are that you are proposing dramatic cuts—and have imposed them in this budget—to the EPA, to the Department of Interior, DOE, and to NOAA—the agencies best equipped to steward our precious natural resources, develop a clean energy future, enforce our water laws, and protect our health.

But wait a minute. There are a few people who were left—away from this budget knife. Well, if you drive a car or you drive a truck or you get on a bus, you get hit too.

Listen to this one. At a time when 63,500 of our bridges are structurally deficient and 50 percent of our roads are in less than good condition, this budget cuts transportation and infrastructure investment by more than $200 billion over 10 years, a cut of 40 percent.

I just had a press conference a couple of weeks ago with Republican business leaders and Democratic workers, and they have come together against this new management idea. They are looking to fund the highway trust fund.

The whole fund expires this month. I haven't heard one word about how we are going to have a multiyear funding bill. We have six States today that have stopped spending on infrastructure.

The last I checked, we are still the greatest Nation in the world. Tell me, how do you remain a great power if your bridges are structurally deficient—63,500 of them. How do you remain a world power when you cannot move goods efficiently or people efficiently?

I will say, in all my years here, I have had the best relationship on infrastructure spending with my colleague Senator INHOFE of Oklahoma. This budget predicts a 40-percent decrease in infrastructure spending, so pretty much everyone—everyone who is impacted by this new management, which is all of us—is getting hit hard by this budget. A budget is a reflection of whom you fight for, whom you believe in, and what your values are. This budget will bring pain to middle-class families, to our working poor, to our children, to our seniors, to our students, to our drought-plagued or flood-plagued areas, and to the people who use their automobiles to go to work.

In essence, this budget hurts the very people we should be fighting for. Instead of checking with those who actually balanced the budget—when Bill Clinton was President—they go off on an opposite tear, which is to take away investments—which is what led to the prosperity, which is what led to the balanced budget, which is what led to 23 million jobs—and put in place austerity.

I gave you just a little look at some of these cuts. But, guess what, America, there is a secret in the budget. There is another $900 billion of cuts over the next 10 years in a secret little package, unspecified cuts, almost $1 trillion, because they don't even know where to go to cut. So if you didn't like the cuts I talked about, wait until they get to the unspecified cuts.

Who do you think is going to get those cuts? Not the wealthy few families, it is going to be more pain for the middle class, more pain for the working poor, and more pain for the workers and businesses of the transportation sector. We are not going to see cures for Alzheimer's or cancer because, believe me, that is not going to happen, no initiatives there.

This budget does not belong on the Senate floor. This budget is too painful to be enacted. This budget ought to be redone with an eye toward the balance we achieved those years ago by making smart investments in our people and by cutting back on wasteful spending but not bringing political vendettas to the table when already so many millions of our people have health insurance. You are going to take that away? You fought so hard for the chance to govern—you did, believe me—just as we are going to fight to get it back. That is what politics is. But now it is time to work together.

This is a radical budget. This doesn't reflect any coming together. And as soon as we wake up America to the fact that this budget hurts them, maybe we will have a chance to fix it. I really hope so because our middle class can't take any more pain. Our drivers can't take any more pain. Our students can't take any more pain. Our seniors can't take any more pain. Our children can't fend for themselves.

So I hope we will have a big ''no'' vote on this budget. I also hope, after we have our vote, that we come together and fix some of these major problems, starting with the highway trust fund, where already six of our States have stopped spending. There are still 800,000 unemployed construction workers and thousands of businesses suffering because we don't have a long-term solution to the highway trust fund. Why don't we take care of that? No, we are going to take up some fast-track, speedy trade bill that includes countries that pay their people 52 cents an hour. That is what we are going to do. We are going to rush to that.

Why don't we fix the problems here? Why don't we fix the student loan rate so people aren't paying off student loans when they are on Social Security? Why don't we make sure people can afford to get educated? Why don't we improve the health care system and not throw people off the rolls? Let's do it the right way. Let's not do it ''my way or the highway'' because that only is going to wind up hurting the American people.

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

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am glad I had a chance to come to the floor and listen to the distinguished ranking member on the Committee on the Budget and the senior Senator from California talk about this budget, but I feel like it is two ships passing in the night when I see this remarkable accomplishment under the leadership of Chairman ENZI on the Committee on the Budget and the entire Committee on the Budget.

This is a congressional budget that balances within 10 years. It doesn't raise taxes. It reprioritizes our Nation's defense. It protects our most vulnerable citizens. It improves economic growth, which is literally the rising tide that lifts all boats in a growing economy. That is something our economy has not been doing very well lately. And it stops the Federal Government's out-of-control Federal spending. This is really a remarkable accomplishment. As a matter of fact, this is the first joint 10-year balanced budget resolution since 2001.

I think what drives our friends across the aisle crazy is the fact they haven't passed a budget since 2009. Now, with the new leadership here in the Senate, in the 114th Congress, we have done the basic work of governing, which is to propose—and this afternoon we will pass—a balanced budget.

I know there are differences across the aisle. Clearly, there are reasons why people choose to be a Democratic Senator or a Republican Senator. But, to me, the differences are pretty stark. Our friends across the aisle don't think that the government should have to live within its means but that we should continue borrowing money we don't have and overspending and hand the bill to our kids and grandkids. I personally think that is a moral hazard. That is really unconscionable—to keep spending money and then to send the bill to our kids and grandkids and say: You pay. We had a good time. Good luck.

Our friends across the aisle think the Federal Government is not big enough because they want to continue to feed the beast with more of Americans' hard-earned tax dollars so it can get bigger and intrude further into everyone's freedoms and choices that should be left to individuals and their families.

It sounds to me as though the ranking member on the Committee on the Budget, the Senator from Vermont, thinks the government ought to simply take more of the money Americans have earned and give it to somebody else who didn't earn it.

I can only conclude that our friends across the aisle think an $18 trillion debt is not a problem. It is. When interest rates start creeping back up, as they eventually will, more and more of our tax dollars are going to be spent sending interest payments to the Chinese and other holders of our sovereign debt to service that debt. That is going to crowd out not only national security spending, it is going to crowd out the safety net spending we all agree is necessary for people who can't protect themselves.

So there are real differences.

This budget, I am proud to say—which we will pass this afternoon thanks to the heroic work of our Committee on the Budget—is a real accomplishment. I guess what would be a real embarrassment is if we didn't pass a budget. But we will pass a budget.

People listening at home may say: Why are you patting yourselves on the back for passing a budget? We have a budget in our business. We have a budget at home. So why is it such a big deal for the new Congress to actually pass a budget?

Well, I guess it shouldn't be a big deal. It should be something we do routinely because it is really the most basic demonstration of the ability to govern. But what makes it remarkable is the fact that it hasn't happened in a long time. So that is why I am so glad.

We actually have seen under the new leadership in the 114th Congress some real progress. We have actually seen Democrats and Republicans working together to accomplish some important things. That is something which I think the American people appreciate and which all Members of the Senate have come to enjoy. The mood has changed. The ability of Senators to participate in the process and actually come up with solutions has gotten so much better in just the first 100 days of the 114th Congress, I think we are slowly starting to develop some momentum.

We passed a bill that lets Medicare beneficiaries see the doctors they need. That is a good thing. We also passed an important piece of legislation that provides aid to victims of human trafficking. Through the end of this week, we will continue to work our way through another important piece of legislation, the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, which was unanimously voted out of committee a few weeks ago. This is very important not only to the region in the Middle East but also to us and the world. This bill will guarantee that Congress will have an opportunity to review and potentially block any final deal with Iran that President Obama reaches during the so-called P5+1 negotiations.

After we conclude the consideration of that important piece of legislation, we are going to move on to consider something else I think will help grow the economy and actually end up bringing more revenue into the Federal Treasury, help us with some of our deficits and debt, and that is to pass trade promotion authority and then to take up the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement.

My State happens to export more than any other State in the Nation, and our economy reflects that because just our binational trade with Mexico creates about 6 million jobs. It is a good thing to have more markets in which to sell the things our farmers grow or sell the livestock our ranchers raise or the manufactured goods Americans make. It is a good thing.

This bill would make sure the United States gets the best deal in pending trade agreements with countries from Asia, to South America, to Europe, and it would help make sure that Texas's products and, more generally, American products and industries find new markets, which will in turn raise wages for hard-working families. That is something we all support.

With all these other signs of progress, I think that writing and passing a budget is one of the most fundamental responsibilities we have. While that should be pretty obvious—families across the country sit around the table each month and do the same thing—it is a fact that was lost on many of our Democratic colleagues when they controlled the Chamber.

While listening to the Senator from California, I was reminded once again of what a cut in Washington, DC, is. It is not a cut in the amount of spending in a program at current levels, it is a reduction in the rate of increase. That is what they call a cut. What this budget does is it begins to cut the rate of increase of spending in a way that helps us control the deficits and take the first important step toward dealing with our long-term debt.

When we vote on this budget today, it will be the first time both Chambers have actually voted for an agreed-upon spending bill since 2009. As I said earlier, it will be the first balanced 10-year budget since 2001, and that is despite 4 consecutive years of trillion-dollar deficits under President Obama—trillion-dollar deficits. Those deficits, as the chairman has appropriately pointed out, add up to debt, the deficit being the difference between what the government brings in and what it spends in a given year. Four years of consecutive trillion-dollar deficits has done grave damage to our national debt, with a downgrade in America's credit rating by Standard & Poor's.

It would be one thing if the President and our friends across the aisle had a

good record when it comes to their budgets and their proposals, but they do not. Just look at what the President has proposed.

President Obama has missed statutory deadlines to propose a budget so often that it became more notable when he actually did fulfill that responsibility than when he did not.

When the President's budget was voted on in 2011, it was unanimously rejected by Democrats and Republicans. It didn't receive a single vote. The same was true in 2012. If the President had proposed a responsible budget, I am certain Members of his own party would have at least voted for it. In 2011 and 2012, no Democrat voted for the President's budget. Last year, in the House of Representatives, all but two Members voted against the President's budget when given the chance. It went down by a resounding 413 to 2. That was the President's budget proposal. We saw history repeat itself in March as well. One by one, nearly every Member of this body came to the floor and gave a thumbs down to President Obama's budget proposal. As a matter of fact, it got one vote; it went down 98 to 1.

Whether it is offering a completely irresponsible budget that is rejected by both parties or the failure to offer any budget at all, our friends across the aisle are living in a glass house. And when you live in a glass house, you really shouldn't throw stones. But the most important point is that the American people deserve better.

We had an important election in November, and it changed the majority in the Senate. It established new management.

In that last election cycle we made promises we intend to keep, and we were elected on our promise to be different and to govern responsibly. That promise includes passing a budget that protects taxpayers and sets the Nation on a path toward sound fiscal footing. Fortunately for the American people, we are keeping our campaign pledges, and this budget does reflect their confidence in the new leadership of the Congress.

This budget leaves our country with a surplus after 10 years. It puts us on a path to begin to pay down our national debt, and it does not raise taxes.

By balancing the budget without tax hikes, like we do in Texas with our budget, we can protect taxpayers and foster an economic environment that allows jobs and opportunity to blossom.

But protecting our taxpayers is not our only priority. I believe our No. 1 priority in the Federal Government is national security. I believe Congress needs to make sure that is unmistakably clear, and we do so in this budget.

The budget also provides the military with the necessary flexibility to react to changing threats and to make additional investments as necessary in a way that does not add to overspending.

Not only does this send a message to our troops that they will have the support they need in order to do the job they volunteered to do but also to our families, our military families who serve as well in our all-volunteer military system.

This prioritization of national security also sends a very important message to our Nation's adversaries. We know that weakness is a provocation to the bullies and the tyrants around the world. When people such as Vladimir Putin see the United States retreating, pulling back, not prioritizing our national security, and not maintaining our role in the world as a preeminent power, it is a provocation and it is an encouragement. We see that happening around the world as we see now a greater security threat environment than perhaps we have seen in many, many years. But this budget sends a message to our adversaries around the world that America will not shrink and will not retreat from our leadership role.

The budget under consideration was passed just a few days ago in the House of Representatives because it serves the American people by providing for our national defense and balancing the budget within 10 years. And it doesn't raise taxes—something Congress hasn't done for almost 15 years.

This afternoon, the Senate will keep its part of the bargain. We will follow through on our promise, and we will make clear to the American people that we are committed to getting our fiscal house in order with this important first step.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, a budget is far more than a series of numbers on a piece of paper. A budget really is a statement of values and priorities, a statement of the kind of Nation we are and the kind of Nation we want to be.

For many of us, these values and priorities are clear. We believe that a budget should help us move toward an economy that is built from the middle out—not from the top down—and a government that works for all of our families—not just the wealthiest few. But the Republican budget that we are here debating today would move us in the opposite direction.

Instead of working with us to build on the bipartisan budget deal we struck last Congress, Republicans have introduced a budget that would lock in sequestration. It would hollow out defense and nondefense investments and use gimmicks and games to paper over the problems.

Instead of putting jobs, wages, and economic security first by prioritizing policies such as paid sick leave, which shouldn't be partisan issues, the Republican budget would cut taxes for the rich and leave working families behind. Instead of building on the work we have done to make health care more affordable and accessible, the Republican budget would take us back to the bad old days when insurance companies called all the shots and when fewer Americans had access to the care they need.

I will take a few minutes today to talk about each of these issues and to urge my Republican friends to take a different approach, to put politics aside, to come back to the table, and to work with us on a responsible budget that puts the middle class first and will actually work for families and communities that we all represent.

The first issue I want to talk about is the automatic cuts from sequestration and the failure of this budget to address an issue Democrats and Republicans agree needs to be solved.

I am proud that coming out of the terrible government shutdown at the end of 2013, we were finally able to break through the gridlock and dysfunction to reach a bipartisan budget deal that prevented another government shutdown, restored investments in education, in research, and in defense jobs and really laid down a foundation for continued bipartisan work.

That deal wasn't the budget I would have written on my own, and it wasn't the one Republicans would have written on their own, but it did end the lurching from crisis to crisis. It helped workers and our economy and made it clear that there is bipartisan support for rolling back sequestration in a balanced way.

Our bipartisan deal was a strong step in the right direction, and I was hopeful that we could work together to build on it, because we know there is bipartisan support to replace sequestration in a balanced and fair way.

Not only did we prove that with our bipartisan budget deal, but Democrats and Republicans across the country have continued to come out against the senseless cuts to defense and nondefense investments. But Republicans went the opposite way with their budget this year.

They were able to cut trillions of dollars of programs that support families and fight poverty—nearly $1 trillion cut from Medicare and Medicaid and more than $5 trillion overall. But they refused to dedicate a single penny of that to roll back the automatic cuts to education, research or defense investments.

To put that in perspective, we were able to roll back sequestration for 2 years in the Bipartisan Budget Act with $85 billion in savings. But the Republican budget won't fix the problem even for this coming year with more than 50 times that amount of savings.

Instead of using just a tiny fraction of the enormous cuts this budget has in it to pay for investments that both Republicans and Democrats agree must be made, this budget uses a gimmick by increasing OCO funding to appear to patch over the problem on the defense side without raising the cap on defense funding and doing nothing at all for nondefense investments such as education, research, jobs, and infrastructure.

We know the automatic cuts are terrible policy, and we know the President has said he would veto spending bills at sequester levels. I also know there are Republicans who have seen the impact of sequestration in their States, as I have seen it in my State of Washington, and I know there are Republicans who look at this budget and wonder why it couldn't use some of the trillions of dollars in cuts to reinvest in American innovation or in our defense investments.

So I am hopeful that instead of continuing to kick the can down the road or relying on gimmicks that don't actually solve this problem, Republicans will come back to the table and work with us to build on our bipartisan budget deal in a balanced and responsible way, will allow the Appropriations subcommittees to actually do their work and not wait for another crisis before they push the tea party aside and work with us to get this done.

Instead of rehashing old debates and lurching us toward another completely avoidable crisis, we should be working together to put in place policies that boost the economy and help our working families—policies such as allowing workers to earn paid sick days. No worker should have to sacrifice a day's pay or their job altogether just to take care of themselves or their sick child. But today, in this country, 43 million Americans do not have access to paid sick days.

Making sure more workers have this basic worker protection will give more families some much-needed economic stability. And, by the way, it is pro-business. Access to paid sick days boosts productivity, and it reduces turnover—two huge benefits for employers.

Businesses that want to help their workers stay healthy should have a level playing field so they aren't at a disadvantage when they do the right thing. A strong bipartisan majority of Senators affirmed their support for allowing workers to earn paid sick days during the budget amendment process, and I was hopeful we could build on that momentum and keep working together to increase the economic security for millions of workers and families.

So I was very disappointed that the conference report does not reflect that provision. Instead of keeping our bipartisan amendment and providing paid sick days to help workers and families, this conference report instead allows for tax credits for employers that would not guarantee access to paid leave. That is a step in the wrong direction. But it doesn't have to be the last step this Congress takes.

So I urge our colleagues to work with me to pass the Healthy Families Act, legislation that would move this debate beyond budget amendments and make paid sick days a reality for millions of Americans. Allowing workers to earn paid sick days is one way we can ensure our workplaces are working for all families—not just the wealthiest few.

I also want to talk about one more way this budget would be devastating for families across the country. The Affordable Care Act was a critical step forward in our efforts to build a health care system that puts patients first, and it allows every family to get the affordable, high quality health care they need. But the work didn't end when this law passed—far from it.

Families across the country are expecting us to keep working to build on this progress and continue making health care more affordable, more accessible, and with higher quality, and that is what Democrats are focused on. Unfortunately, this Republican budget would do the exact opposite. It would roll back all the progress we have made, take us back to the bad old days when insurance companies called all the shots, when being a woman was a preexisting condition, when far fewer families could afford to get the health care they need. In fact, this Republican approach could even mean an average tax hike of $3,200 a year on working families who would have to pay more for their care.

Families are tired of Republicans playing games with their health care. So I hope my Republican colleagues will listen to the millions of people across the country who have more affordable, quality health care and to the vast majority of our constituents, who want us to work together to solve problems and not rehash old fights, and that they will finally drop the political games and work with us to move our health care system forward—not backward—for the communities we serve.

Republicans control Congress. It is their job to write and pass a budget. But our constituents actually sent us here to work together—not simply to argue with each other. People across the country are expecting us to break through the gridlock once again, like we were able to do last Congress, and deliver results for their families and the communities we represent.

So I urge my colleagues to oppose this budget that would be devastating to middle-class families, seniors, investments in our future, and the economy. I really hope that Republicans decide to come back to the table and work with us on policies that grow the economy from the middle out—not from the top down—and that moves us towards a government that works for all families—not just the wealthiest few.

I yield the floor.

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I thank Senator ENZI and members of the Budget Committee for the 2016 budget conference agreement that we are currently considering in the Senate. Included in the budget conference agreement are policy provisions that I believe begin to move this country in the right fiscal direction, including balancing the budget within 10 years without the need to raise taxes on the hard-working American taxpayer—something the administration's budget fails to do. In addition, the budget agreement provides a pathway to repeal the failed policies of ObamaCare.

I am pleased the resolution does provide some relief from sequestration's devastating cuts to our national defense. The good news is that there is some relief. Providing additional resources for defense through the Overseas Contingency Operations account, known as OCO, is a good one, but it is temporary and it is a Band-Aid.

Again, I thank Senator ENZI for the great job he has done, but the fact is that this body and this Congress is guilty—is guilty—of not repealing sequestration, which is devastating our military and destroying our ability to defend this Nation in these most perilous and difficult times.

Before the Senate Armed Services Committee on January 29, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger testified:

> As we look around the world, we encounter upheaval and conflict. The United States has not faced a more diverse and complex array of crises since the end of the Second World War.

What are we doing? We are slashing defense year after year through something called sequestration, which was never intended to happen. That is a devastating indictment of the Congress of the United States in our first priority, which is protecting this nation.

Gen. Mark Welsh, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, stated:

> We are now the smallest Air Force we've ever been. When we deployed to Operation Desert Storm in 1990, the Air Force had 188 fighter squadrons. Today, we have 54, and we're headed to 49 in the next couple of years. In 1990, there were 511,000 active duty airmen alone. Today, we have 200,000 fewer. . . . We currently have 12 fleets of airplanes that qualify for antique license plates in the state of Virginia.

General Odierno, Chief of Staff of the Army, said:

> In the last three years, the Army's active component and strength has been reduced by 80,000; the reserve component by 18,000. We have 13 less active component brigade combat teams. We've eliminated three active aviation brigades. . . . We have already slashed investments in modernization by 25 percent.

He went on to say:

> The number one thing that keeps me up at night is that if we're asked to respond to an unknown contingency, I will send soldiers to that contingency not properly trained and ready. We simply are not used to doing that.

Admiral Greenert, the Chief Of Naval Operations:

> [D]ue to sequestration of 2013, our contingency response force, that's what's on call from the United States, is one-third of what it should be and what it needs to be.

Gen. Joseph Dunford, Commandant of the Marine Corps, now nominated to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Of Staff, testified:

We're investing in modernization at a historically low level. We know that we must maintain at least 10 percent to 12 percent of our resources on modernization to field a ready force for tomorrow. To pay today's bills, we're currently investing 7 percent to 8 percent.

I asked every single one of our service chiefs and our area commanders the same question: If we do not repeal sequestration, will it put the lives of our men and women who are serving in the military in greater danger? The answer by every single one of these uniformed leaders—not just civilian leaders—was, yes, we will put the lives of the men and women who are serving in the military in greater danger unless we repeal sequestration on defense.

I say to my colleagues of the United States Senate, this is not acceptable. It is not acceptable for us to ask the young men and women who are serving in our military in uniform to put their lives in greater danger because we copped out, we failed to address the issue of increasing an unsustainable deficit. We are making them pay the price.

Thirteen percent of the budget is allocated to defense; defense is taking 50 percent of the cuts.

The Ryan-Murray agreement was something that was welcomed. We need another Ryan-Murray. We need the men and women who are serving as Members of Congress to understand that we have no greater responsibility than the defense of this Nation.

I can assure my colleagues that, working with my friend Senator REED of Rhode Island, the ranking member on the Senate Armed Services Committee, we will be working. We will reduce waste and mismanagement. We will address acquisition. We will reform acquisition and the terrible cost overruns that plague our ability to do business in the defense business. We will be cutting the size of these huge staffs that have grown and grown. We will be making significant reforms in the way the military does business, but these reforms will not have the impact that is necessary in the short term, and that is that we are putting the lives of American soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen in greater danger.

I come to the floor to thank my colleague from Wyoming, Senator ENZI, for the great job he has done on this budget. But I would tell my colleagues that we must work together in a bipartisan fashion to fix the damage sequestration is doing.

I will only add one other point that is very important. Some of us have forgotten that in the days after the Vietnam war, the military was in terrible disarray. Ronald Reagan came to the Presidency on the slogan ''Peace through strength.'' We rebuilt the military. We put it back in the condition of being the greatest military and effective force in the world, and we won the Cold War.

Right now, if you look at a map of the world in 2011 and look at a map of the world today—in 2011 when we enacted sequestration—you will find that Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, Madeleine Albright, Brent Scowcroft, and every person who is respected on national security in this country will tell you that we are in grave danger. Whether it be from ISIS, whether it be from Iran, whether it be aggressive behavior by the Chinese—no matter what it is, there are severe crises, no matter where it is in the world. We are in the midst of serious challenges to our national security, and the last place—the last place—we should continue to cut is on our defense and capability to defend this nation.

I yield floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I first wish to thank the distinguished Senator from Arizona for his leadership and echo his words that we need a bipartisan solution on this issue, and hopefully we will be able to address it, not only supporting our men and women when they are actively in harm's way but supporting them as veterans, which I know he cares deeply about as well. That is why we need a bipartisan and balanced solution like we had before. I thank the Senator for his leadership.

Mr. President, the reality is that this budget—any budget for the United States—is about our values and our priorities. That is what it is all about as a country. I have to say, as a senior member of the Budget Committee, I am deeply concerned about the values portrayed in this budget. I greatly respect the chairman and ranking member and thank them for their service, but when we look at this budget in total, this goes opposite to what the majority of Members talk about every day because this particular budget keeps the system rigged in favor of the wealthy and well-connected against the interests of hard-working, middle-class Americans.

Picture this: In this budget, if you are a family with assets of $10 million or more, you hit the jackpot: You get at least a $3 million bonus tax cut in this bill, in terms of the policies laid out in the bill. How is it paid for? It is paid for by everybody else. Sixteen million hard-working Americans will see a tax increase of at least $900 based on these policies. We will see critical investments and services cut. There is nothing done to address jobs going overseas. There is not one loophole proposed to be closed that is sending our jobs overseas. We want to create an economy and really balance the budget? Let's bring those jobs home. There is nothing in this budget about that. If you have wealth of over $10 million, it is your lucky day—$3 million or more in your pocket. There is Christmas in this budget for very wealthy multimillionaires, but if you are everybody else, you are in trouble.

There is no focus on creating jobs. And God help you if your family has a mom or dad or grandpa or grandma who has Alzheimer's disease and is in a nursing home because this budget guts nursing home care for millions of Americans, a lot of folks who desperately need that care.

One out of five Medicare dollars today goes to treat Alzheimer's. This is an area I have been deeply involved in and I am partnering with Senator SUSAN COLLINS on, important work that needs to be done. But if you have someone who has Alzheimer's disease and who needs long-term care, you are out of luck in this budget.

This morning, I talked to a group of women who are in town for breast cancer research. This is the month that focuses on breast cancer research. If you care about breast cancer research, in this budget, you are out of luck. If you want to make sure we are investing in cures and treatments—we are now so close in so many areas. American research, innovation, and the best minds in the world are working on opportunities to us to solve Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease and cancers and all kinds of other areas of concern. But the budget is cut for NIH, the National Institutes of Health. What kinds of priorities does this reflect?

On top of that, for 16.4 million people who now have affordable insurance, it will be gone.

What is interesting about the budget is it is very creative because all the revenue, all the fees to pay for health care stay to help balance the budget; it is the health care that goes away. So for those breast cancer patients whom I talked to this morning who are now so grateful that if they need go out and get new insurance, they will not be called someone with a pre-existing condition, that goes away in this budget.

If you have a child who is 22, 23, just graduated—I spoke at graduation ceremonies this last weekend—and they are on your insurance right now while they are trying to get themselves together and get that first job, that goes away.

This budget attacks health care, which, by the way, is not a frill. We do not control when and how we get sick or if our children get sick or if our parents or grandparents need a nursing home or what may happen in terms of medical issues in our families, but health care is directly attacked. The Affordable Care Act—gone. Gutting inpatient care in nursing homes for Alzheimer's patients and others. Research—gone.

We are hearing from our Republican friends that they are making government work. But I will tell you what—it is not working for middle-class families. It is working for you if you are making over $10 million a year or have more than $10 million in assets, but it is not working for you if you are holding down two or three jobs and you are just trying to make it for your family.

We believe as Democrats that this ought to be a middle-class budget because everybody deserves a fair shot to get ahead and have a chance to have a better future. For us, that means this

budget should have a major focus on creating millions of jobs by rebuilding our roads, rebuilding our bridges, our infrastructure.

By the way, the funding for that—the authorization for the highway trust fund—runs out at the end of May. There is nothing in here to address that, no funding in here to address that. We are going to see all kinds of jobs eliminated all across the country if that funding is eliminated. We believe in rebuilding our roads and bridges and creating millions of jobs.

We stand up for Social Security and Medicare. This budget has $430 billion in cuts to Medicare, and it doesn't say where they come from. It is proposing a structure that would actually eliminate Medicare as we know it and turn it into some kind of a voucher system or some other kind of system that is not guaranteed care under Medicare. We believe in protecting Medicare and Social Security.

We believe everybody ought to have a fair chance to work hard and make it and go to college. This does nothing but increase costs for students going to college. We believe costs ought to go down so that when students leave college, they do not end up with so much debt that they cannot go out and buy a house. People cannot buy a house, as realtors in Michigan have told me, because they have so much debt. They cannot qualify to get a loan for a house or to start a new business.

We, as Democrats, want to make sure everybody has a chance to go to college, that it is affordable, that we are protecting Social Security and Medicare, and that we are creating jobs, rebuilding our roads and our highways and the opportunity to invest in America.

Finally, we want to bring jobs home. It is insane that we still have a Tax Code that rewards those—sometimes only on paper—who leave this country. They still breathe the air, drink the water, drive on the roads, they just don't have to pay their fair share of taxes as businesses because on paper they are based somewhere else. That is not fair to every small business in Michigan that is working hard every day. It is not fair to every taxpayer across this country and every business we have that is really an American business. There is nothing in this budget which addresses that.

I conclude by saying we should resoundingly object and vote no on the priorities and the values set out in this budget. They do not reflect what is good to create and grow a middle class and create opportunity in this country.

If you are one of the privileged few, hallelujah. Break out the champagne after this passes. But if you are the majority of Americans, hold on to your seats and put on your seatbelt, because if this is, in fact, put into place, it will be a rough ride for America. Our side is going to do everything humanly possible to make sure that does not happen.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I thank my great colleague from Michigan for her outstanding words and leadership. She is a senior member of the Budget Committee. She knows just what is wrong with this budget and she knows how to reach the American people in terms of revealing and showing just that. I thank her.

I thank my dear friend Senator SANDERS, a fellow graduate of James Madison High School in Brooklyn, for his great leadership on the Budget Committee as well.

Look, in a certain sense, this Republican budget is a gift to us and to the American people because it shows their real priorities, and their priorities are so far away from what average Americans want that this budget will resound from one end of the country to the other between now and November of 2016.

The budget the House and Senate Republicans have put together helps the very wealthy and powerful in our country who, frankly, don't need any help. This idea that cutting taxes on the very wealthy will somehow make America a better place, how many Americans actually believe that? We understand a lot of our colleagues do. They hang out with these people, I guess. But that is not what most Americans think, that is for sure.

The budget should reflect the economic reality right now. Middle-class incomes are declining. It is harder to stay in the middle class. It is harder to reach the middle class. A budget should help those folks who are in the middle class stay there, and it should help those who are trying to get to the middle class create ladders so they can get there.

Again, this budget seems to focus all of its attention and all of its goodies on the very wealthy. The economy is getting stronger but mainly at the very high end. So we need to cut their taxes because they are hurting? And at the same time we need to raise taxes on 16 million Americans who are working and making $20,000, $30,000, $40,000 a year—raise their taxes by $900? How many Americans would say we should cut taxes on the 4,000 wealthiest people an average of $3 million, at the cost of $260 billion over 10 years, and raise taxes by $900 on people making $20,000, $30,000, $40,000 a year? Is it 1 percent of America who thinks that way? Maybe. But it seems our colleagues on the other side of the aisle followed that Pied Piper, that 1 percent, in putting together their budget. It makes no sense.

The Republican budget is a document of willful ignorance. It was constructed in an ideological house of mirrors where no one sees reality. No one who put together this budget sees any reality. They don't see middle-class people struggling.

Making it harder to pay for college? What the heck is going on here in this great America? Our colleagues are trying to pass a budget that says we should make it harder to pay for college, that veterans should lose food stamps—veterans, the people who served us. I am sure the vast majority of them are looking for jobs and income. That is who veterans are. They don't want a handout. But when they are down on their luck—maybe they had injuries, maybe it was rough adjusting to family life back home again—you cut their food stamps? Wow. What kind of budget is this? As I said, it is a budget in an ideological house of mirrors.

Cap student loan payments? There are 30- and 40-year-olds with huge burdens of debt. They cannot even buy a home. Maybe they even put off having kids. In this budget, our Republican friends are saying we should eliminate and cut programs so we can reduce some of that debt burden. Wow. What world are you folks living in? It sure isn't the world of reality. It is an ideological house of mirrors. It is a budget document of willful ignorance.

I could go on and on and on with this budget. How many families have elderly parents in nursing homes who have Alzheimer's? We know that tragedy. This budget makes it harder for those people to stay in those nursing homes by cutting Medicaid, which many of them are on. And then these young families are going to have the burden of taking their dear parents, their loved ones, back into their homes. Do we want that?

Well, you say, we have to cut somewhere. How about not giving the 4,000 richest families $260 billion over 10 years and putting some of the money into cancer research, putting some of the money into helping veterans feed themselves, putting some of the money into helping make it easier to pay for college?

Republicans are going to have to figure out a way to convince the American people that they are doing something, anything, to help the middle class. So far they are striking out.

There is only one bit of good news. Our colleagues, when they are forced to actually put real numbers to these budget numbers in the appropriations process, will not be able to do it. They will not dare do it. I hope—this will be up to our ranking member Senator MIKULSKI and the members of our Appropriations Committee—they take this budget and actually craft it into the appropriations bill and put it out there, and let's see how many of our colleagues actually vote for it.

How many of our colleagues will vote to make it harder to pay for college? How many of our colleagues will make it harder for veterans to feed themselves when they are out of luck? How many of our colleagues will vote to raise taxes by $900 on people making $30,000, $40,000 a year? I doubt many.

This is a fun day for our Republican colleagues. They get to beat their ideological breasts, show the hard right

they really mean it, and then maybe we can go back to governing the country and helping the middle class.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I wish to speak as well about the budget that is before the Senate. I want to point out something I believe the Senator from New York failed to mention in his comments. We are actually doing a budget. That is what is pretty historic about this.

A few years back, I got on the Budget Committee because I thought it would be the place where a lot of action was going to occur and where we were going to be doing big, consequential things for the country. I asked our leaders, when they made committee assignments, if I could serve on the Budget Committee. I served on the Budget Committee for 4 years. In the 4 years I was on the Budget Committee, when the Democrats controlled this Chamber, we did not write a budget—not a single year. It was like being on a committee that was completely irrelevant around here. We did not do a budget for 4 years. This year, we are finally going to pass a budget. They only did do one in 2009 so they could pass ObamaCare with 51 votes.

The last time we actually had a 10-year balanced budget was in 2001. So we are talking about something that is pretty historic. This is the first time this has happened in 14 years. I will repeat that. The last time Congress passed a joint 10-year balanced budget resolution was 14 years ago, in 2001—the year Apple released the first iPod.

This year, the President has, once again, proposed a budget that never balances—not in 10 years, not in 25 years, not ever. When the other side gets up and talks about the Republican budget and attacks it, at least Republicans in this Chamber recognize the importance of having a budget and putting in place a pathway, if you will, for how we are going to get the fiscal situation of this country in a better place, and it sets out our priorities because that is really what the budget process does. It says this is what we are for.

What the Democrats argue—and we heard the Senator from New York making the argument—is that we are not spending enough and that this is about spending more. I believe the American people realize that if we want to solve middle-class wage stagnation—they talk about the middle-class wages being lower, and they are lower. They have been significantly lower since this President took office. As I was saying, if we want to solve middle-class wage stagnation, we have to have an expanding economy.

The way to help people into a better place economically and to raise the income of people in this country is to get a growing, vibrant, robust, expanding economy that is growing at a faster rate than the anemic 1- to 2-percent growth we have seen in the last few years. The way we achieve that is not by growing the government. It is not about growing the government. We have to grow the economy. When the economy is growing, that is when we start to see people in this country, middle-class income families, benefit.

As I said, the President proposed a budget that never balanced, and he proposed increasing spending by a staggering 65 percent over the next 10 years. I don't need to tell the American people that kind of spending is unsustainable. For too long the attitude in Washington has been to spend now, pay later. That only works for so long. Sooner or later your spending catches up with you.

Six years ago, when the President took office, our national debt was already a massive $10.6 trillion. Over the past 6 years, during the President's administration, our national debt has increased by more than $7.5 trillion, and today it is at a dangerously high $18.2 trillion. That is the size of our economy. In fact, that is larger than our economy. That is a 1-to-1 ratio. That kind of debt slows economic growth, threatens government programs, such as Social Security and Medicare, and jeopardizes our Nation's future.

In 2011, then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ADM Mike Mullen, the highest ranking military official in our country, said, ''I've said many times that I believe the single, biggest threat to our national security is our debt.'' I have heard him say that. I served on the Armed Services Committee for 6 years. I heard the chairman of the Joint Chiefs say that repeatedly in front of committees at various hearings and at various times. That is quite a statement from the country's top-ranking military official: the greatest threat to our national security is our debt.

If we keep racking up our debt the way we have been doing, we will not be able to pay for our priorities, such as Social Security, Medicare, national defense, and infrastructure. All of those priorities could face huge cuts if we don't get our Nation on a sound fiscal footing.

When the Republicans took control of the Senate in January, we were determined to get Washington working again. We knew that one of the most important steps in that process was passing a balanced budget resolution. Republicans understand what every American family knows; that you cannot keep racking up debt indefinitely and that the solution to being in debt is not to increase spending.

In March, we introduced a budget blueprint that would balance the budget in 10 years and put our Nation on a path to fiscal health. House Republicans introduced a similar balanced budget resolution. During the month of April, the two Houses came together to iron out the differences in our blueprints and produced the final document that we will be voting on today.

It is not a perfect document. It does not solve every one of our Nation's problems, but at long last it gets us moving in a different direction—in the right direction. Instead of ignoring our Nation's fiscal problems, the Republicans' budget resolution addresses them and promotes spending restraint.

Under our budget blueprint, by the time the 10-year budget closes in 2025, our Nation will be running a surplus of $24 billion instead of racking up another $1.5 trillion in deficits every single year. Unlike some budget plans, our budget will continue to balance in 2026 and beyond.

In addition to restraining spending, the Republicans' budget resolution focuses on cutting waste and eliminating the inefficiency and redundancy that plagues so many government programs. Our budget also puts in place reforms that will encourage honest accounting. The result of these provisions will be a more efficient, effective, and accountable government that works for the American people.

Our budget also, as I said, makes a healthy economy a priority. Almost 6 years after the recession has ended, millions of Americans are still struggling and opportunities for advancement are still few and far between. A big reason for that is the oppressive, big-government policies and deficit spending of the Obama administration. Our budget will help stop government from strangling the economy by limiting the growth of spending and reducing the debt, which will help reduce the cost of work and investment and the cost of starting and growing a business. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that our budget will result in an additional $400 billion in economic growth over the next 10 years.

The Republicans' budget will also pave the way for the removal of inefficient and ineffective government regulations that are making it difficult for many businesses to hire new workers and create new opportunities and higher paying jobs.

Our budget also addresses another priority of American families, and that is fixing our Nation's broken health care system. Now 5 years on, the President's health care law has resulted in higher costs, lost health care plans, reduced access to doctors, and new burdens on businesses, both large and small. In fact, it has been pretty much one disaster after another.

Just this week, a USA TODAY headline announced that ''contrary to goals, ER visits rise under ObamaCare.'' The article says: ''Three-quarters of emergency physicians say they've seen ER patient visits surge since ObamaCare took effect—just the opposite of what many Americans expected would happen.'' That is from the USA TODAY article. Of course, as we know, ER visits are our most expensive form of health care.

It is no surprise that the majority of the American people continue to oppose the law. Our budget paves the way for a repeal of ObamaCare and the introduction of real, patient-centered

health care reforms that will give Americans more health care choices at a lower cost.

Finally, our budget will start the process of putting major entitlement programs such as Social Security and Medicare on a sounder footing going forward. Right now, the Social Security trust fund is headed toward bankruptcy. If we don't take action, Social Security recipients could be facing a 25-percent cut in benefits by the year 2033. Medicare faces similar challenges to those faced by Social Security. Under the worst-case scenario, the Medicare trust fund could become insolvent by as early as 2021. That is just 6 short years away. The Republican budget would help preserve Medicare by extending the trust fund's solvency for an additional 5 years, which would protect retirees' benefits while giving policymakers additional time to ensure that this program provides support to seniors for decades to come.

I am proud that today the Republicans in Congress will ensure that we have a joint balanced budget resolution for the first time in 14 years, but I also wish to emphasize that is no more than what the American people should expect. The American people, after all, have to live within a budget; their government needs to do so as well.

Going forward, balanced budgets need to be the norm here in Congress. Washington has spent enough time working for its own interests. It is time to get Washington working again for American families.

This is the first time in 14 years that we have actually had a budget resolution and a conference report that balance within 10 years. As I said earlier, during my time here in the Senate, which hasn't been that long but about 10 years now, this is the first time—with the exception of 2009, in which we did a budget simply so the Democrats could pass ObamaCare through reconciliation—this is the first time we have done a budget that passed both chambers in the 10 years I have been here, with the exception perhaps of the first few years.

It is time to get Washington working again for the American people. It starts with passing the budget. That is why I am proud that Senator ENZI and others worked hard to get us where we are. I hope today we will ultimately have the votes necessary to pass this and do something which hasn't been done around here in a very long time but which is really essential for the good of the American people in this country.

RECESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess until 2:15 p.m. today for the weekly conference meetings and that the time during the recess count against the majority time on the budget conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:51 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2016—CONFERENCE REPORT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that time under any quorum call be equally divided between the two sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ENZI. 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. WHITEHOUSE. 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. WHITEHOUSE. Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise today to speak in opposition to the Republican so-called budget. I call it a ''so-called budget'' because I do not believe even Republicans would actually pass appropriations consistent with it. It looks to me like it is just a show to keep extremists on the right happy. My guess is that practical Republicans cannot wait for President Obama to bail them out by negotiating appropriations higher.

Recently, we have seen impressive examples of committee bipartisanship. In Foreign Relations, Senator CORKER brought a unanimously bipartisan Iran resolution out of the poisonous turmoil surrounding that issue. In the HELP Committee, Senator ALEXANDER brought a unanimously bipartisan education bill out of committee on an issue that has long been contested. Even the intensely divided Environment and Public Works Committee brought out a chemical regulation bill with a strong bipartisan majority. But Budget? No chance.

Instead of working with Democrats on a real budget, Republicans produced a partisan ideological showcase. They cut programs for seniors, for low-income families, and for other vulnerable citizens and protected the wealthiest Americans from contributing even one dime in deficit reduction.

As we have seen in the past, Republicans care about deficit reduction only when it involves cutting programs for people who need help. But can they find a single tax loophole to cut? Not one.

This budget follows the Ryan budget off the cliff of shielding every single subsidy and giveaway in the Tax Code. No special interest tax loophole is too grotesque for them. Big Oil tax subsidies, special low rates for hedge fund managers, private jet depreciation, for goodness' sake—tax giveaways that amount to nothing more than taxpayer subsidies for the wealthy and well connected—this budget loves and protects them all.

Not only do the Republicans protect every tax loophole, they propose eliminating the estate tax—a tax that only affects families worth over $10 million—the top 0.2 percent. You may have heard a lot about the 1 percent. Well, this budget does even better than that. It confers a great, wonderful, fat favor on the top 0.2 percent and, at the same time, the budget will allow the taxes to increase on 13 million lower- and middle-income households—households with 25 million children. That is a $300 billion tax giveaway to that 0.2 percent—to basically 5,000-some of the wealthiest families in America. And that big gift to those 5,000-and-some wealthiest families is paired with a tax hike for millions of families who are just getting by.

And, of course, it is lower-income and middle-class families who would suffer the most from the Republican spending cuts. Medicaid, food stamps, Pell grants, and job training all get axed. They hand Medicare over to private sector vouchers and kick 16 million Americans off of health insurance plans they obtained through the Affordable Care Act.

Today, across this Capitol, breast cancer advocates are asking for our support for investment to help cure that deadly disease. This budget cuts research for breast cancer and other deadly diseases. It slashes funding for nursing homes, including those that care for seniors with Alzheimer's. It even supports a 20-percent across-the-board benefit cut for disabled Americans—a 20-percent benefit cut for disabled Americans—by doubling down on the senseless House rule that can be used to create an artificial crisis and prevent a routine Social Security fix.

As for the investments that keep our Nation competitive in an increasingly global economy, all are attacked. From scientific research to education to infrastructure, the Republicans offer a radical plan of cuts.

In a nutshell, their behavior proves that the deficit is just a pretext for them to cut programs that Republicans have always opposed—programs that create jobs, support the middle class, and offer lifelines to the most vulnerable Americans.

Even transportation infrastructure—our roads and bridges—gets whacked. Much of our highway system dates back to the 1950s, and roads and bridges across the country are in dire need of repair and replacement. This budget fails to provide any new funding for infrastructure. It does not even ensure that current funding levels will be maintained.

This matters because the current funding authorization for highway and transit projects expires at the end of the month. That will imperil construction projects and jobs just as we enter the busy summer highway construction season. There is no plan to deal with that that Republicans have announced—no bill in any committee.

In the budget, Republicans had an opportunity for a big win-win. They could have upgraded America's roads and bridges and supported millions of jobs. Ranking Member SANDERS even offered an amendment that would have paid for infrastructure investments by closing some of these corporate tax loopholes. All Republicans had to do was vote yes. But corporate tax loopholes were too important, and roads and bridges did not matter. They chose to protect their cherished tax giveaways for special interests. Today the clock still ticks toward a looming highway jobs shutdown.

This will hurt a lot of States. It will particularly hurt my home State of Rhode Island. We are a historic and densely populated State. We have aging and heavily used infrastructure. Lots of our roads and bridges are in poor condition. One study found that the average motorist in Rhode Island pays an extra $637 per year for car repairs and operating costs because of potholes and bumps and other bad road conditions. It is not just Rhode Island. This is true also across the country. Nationwide, poor road conditions are estimated to cost our country more than $100 billion a year—over $500 per motorist. The American Society of Civil Engineers gives America's bridges a grade of only C-plus. It gives our roads a D.

Where is the plan to address this? Where is the plan to help the working Americans who have to spend $500 or $637 a year because we do not take care of our roads and highways? There is none.

Well, I understand that the Republicans in the Senate have been in the minority for a long time and old habits die hard. But the responsibility of a majority is to be responsible. Republicans passed up the opportunity to be responsible in their budget with highway funding. This should not be that difficult. They could start by looking at the bipartisan 6-year highway bill approved last year in the Environment and Public Works Committee. My recollection is that it was approved unanimously. That bill would have provided the certainty that our State departments of transportation need to plan for the big multiyear, job-creating projects that our years of deferred maintenance have brought due.

The extremist Republican budget under the Senate rules does not need Democratic support, and it appears that the Republicans do not even want Democratic support. Under the Senate rules, this budget will pass this Chamber. The good news about that is that the budget is merely political theater. The penalty for violating this budget is a 60-vote point of order. Nowadays it takes 60 votes to pass an appropriations bill. So in effect the penalty is a nullity. So there is really nothing to violating the budget.

The real budget will be sent to us through the Appropriations Committee, and the real numbers will be negotiated upwards, and the Republicans will be relieved of the human responsibility for what would happen if this budget were actually to guide our appropriations. That is the good news.

The bad news is that it is a missed opportunity to try to work in any kind of a bipartisan fashion. It is a missed opportunity to address issues that Americans agree on, such as maintaining our bridges and highways.

I hope very much that my friends on the other side of the aisle will begin to work with Democrats on addressing, with some semblance of bipartisanship, our constituents' needs in that regard. With funding set to expire in just a few weeks, and with no Republican plan on the horizon to address it, we should at least begin with a bipartisan conversation about a long-term highway bill.

I thank the Presiding Officer and 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. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise as we are talking about the budget, and I want to talk a little bit about that today, being a member of the Budget Committee and someone very concerned about the fiscal direction of our country. I also want to talk about a trip I took to Israel. Over the last weekend, I was in Israel having meetings with Prime Minister Netanyahu, members of the Knesset, the Minister of Intelligence, the Deputy Foreign Minister, and others, and part of what I want to talk about in the budget relates to that.

This budget, by the way, is the first time in 6 years that we have had the ability for the House and Senate to come together and have a congressional budget. During that 6 years, by the way, I think there has been $8 trillion added to the national debt. During that 6 years, there has not been adequate oversight of the departments and agencies of government, partly because there hasn't been a budget. Without a budget, it is very difficult to go through the appropriations process, which means that not only has spending been high—more money being spent than coming in, in terms of revenue year after year to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars—but also we haven't had the ability to have the appropriate checks and balances, oversight of the various agencies we have in the appropriations process.

So, after 6 years, it is about time. My constituents, when I say it is the first time in 6 years we have been able to pass a budget, they say, well, what took you so long. Why is it that I have to have a budget in my family, have to have a budget in my business and in our community, the county, and the State, and Congress can't get its act together? So we are, this afternoon, I believe, going to pass this budget, and it does provide this framework for going forward.

What is that framework? Well, it is a balanced budget over 10 years. Although it is the first time Congress would come together in 6 years to have a budget, it is actually the first time since 2001 that there has been a budget that gets to balance that is presented and passed by this Congress. That is important.

Earlier, one of my colleagues was talking about everything that was cut by this budget. Actually, those decisions are going to be made by the Appropriations Committee. That is appropriate. They are the committee responsible for defending every dime. Congress has that responsibility. They are the ones who should look at the priorities. They are the ones who should decide which program is working and which one is not working, which ones should get less money, which ones should get more money, which ones should be reformed and changed. That is the process we are going to be undertaking, and it is exactly what we are hired to do.

Is it an easy vote? No. Yet we see this afternoon we will get the necessary 51 votes to pass this budget and begin to move the country forward. It not only balances the budget in 10 years, it does it without raising taxes. It does it in a way that actually strengthens Medicare, protects Social Security, supports a healthier and stronger economy that we need in this country.

We just had the economic growth numbers come out for the first quarter and, boy, are they disappointing—0.2 percent. We just had some weak numbers in terms of jobs numbers last month. We have to do better. We can and should do better. Part of it starts with better policies here in Washington, DC. We need policies that encourage people to get out there and work hard, take a risk, and let people know that if they do play by the rules and work hard, they can get ahead. There is so much more we can do with tax reform and regulatory relief and coming up with smart ways to deal with health care. That is what this budget does, by the way.

It also improves the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of government. This is very important. It has a particular provision that I feel strongly about, as the Presiding Officer knows. He has done a great job of shepherding us through the Budget Committee to make sure we could have the information on the floor of the Senate to decide the best tax reform to pursue.

We will now have not just what is called the static analysis but also an analysis, that takes into account that tax policy does change people's behavior. We all know that—everybody knows that—but we haven't had that information until now. This macroeconomic scoring of a tax provision is going to make it more likely to come up with good tax reform that will help give this economy the shot in the arm it needs to get moving.

I am pleased with the fact that we are finally going to move forward on a budget. It is discouraging that it took this long—6 years—but with the Republican majority we committed to do this, and I am very pleased that this afternoon we are going to finally see, for the hard-working taxpayers whom I represent, the opportunity to actually have a budget around here and to get individual appropriations bills done.

One other part of the budget that relates to the trip I just took is our defense spending. The budget helps to provide more avenues for increasing defense where needed, and in this dangerous world in which we live, we do have to ensure that we have a strong defense that is up to the challenges we face.

ISRAEL

Mr. President, I just returned from a trip to Israel, where I had very productive meetings with Prime Minister Netanyahu, with the Secretaries, the Ministers of Intelligence, the Deputy Foreign Minister, other Israeli officials, as well as our Ambassador over there and his team.

The reason for going to Israel was the same as with the previous visits; that is, to learn firsthand from those on the ground about the best way forward in a very volatile and dangerous region of the world, to show support for our ally Israel and, finally, to report back to my Ohio constituents and to the Senate as we face these challenging issues we have in the region. I saw when I was there, again, how since its independence in 1948, the people of Israel have not only learned how to survive, how to make do in sometimes a very unforgiving strategic and natural environment, but have also learned how to thrive.

They boast the region's most dynamic economy now. It is also the region's most vibrant democracy, with an open society that promotes the values of freedom, tolerance, and equality. It is a small population. They have very little land and very few natural resources, and they are faced with aggression from all sides. Throughout its history, Israel has faced these challenges through both the power of the head and the heart—knowledge, innovation, grit, and determination—to build and defend the world's one and only Jewish State and the one democracy in the region.

It is against this general backdrop that I wanted to talk to the Prime Minister and other leaders about some really important topics that we face in the Senate; one is the ongoing nuclear talks and how to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon, as well as how to address Iran's current aggression all throughout the region.

Second, I wanted to talk about the insidious campaign going on around the world. It is a campaign to delegitimize Israel through boycotts, divestments, and sanctions. I have been involved in this for years. Ten years ago, I worked on this as the U.S. Trade Representative. Most recently, I joined Senator BEN CARDIN in a bipartisan effort that was successful in adding an amendment to the trade bill that is working its way through the system, to tell our trading partners you cannot boycott, divest, and sanction Israel if you want to do business with us.

Third, I want to talk about the myriad of challenges that face this region and the destabilizing of it right now: ISIS, the civil war in Syria, the immediate challenges Israel faces with the terrorist activities of Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon and in Syria.

Finally, I wanted to talk about the Israel-Palestinian dialogue, the opportunity for peace and a two-state solution.

Of all these threats, I suppose Israel's greatest threat lies in Iran. Iran has been described, by the way, as a regime that is the No. 1 state sponsor of terrorism in the world. Let's remember that, remember whom we are dealing with. This has been true since 1984, when they put Iran on the terrorist list. I think there are only four countries on it, and one is Cuba, that I am sure the administration would like to remove from that list. So this is a small list of countries.

According to the administration, the Iranian regime is able to produce enough material for a nuclear weapon in sometime between 3 months and 1 year, depending on which testimony you hear from the administration. They also acknowledge that it supports terrorist groups such as Hezbollah. It funds other Shiite militias as it seeks regional dominance in Iraq. We have seen this in Yemen most recently, but also in Syria and elsewhere. They also have supported a Sunni group, Hamas, as they lobbed rockets into Israel. Many of those rockets have been provided, apparently, through Iran. Of course, we should not forget that this behavior comes from a regime that has pledged to ''annihilate,'' ''destroy,'' and ''wipe Israel off the map.''

Like many of my colleagues in the Senate, I have serious concerns about the framework of the nuclear agreement and what may follow in a comprehensive deal. Given the importance of this issue, I feel strongly that Congress should play a role in analyzing any agreement and approving or disapproving it. Our negotiating objective, in my view, should be an enforceable agreement; one that contains concrete and verifiable steps to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons capability.

For years, the international community demanded that Iran dismantle its nuclear program—most notably by halting all enrichment activity. If you look at the U.N. resolution and the activity around that, it is pretty strong language. From what we know, it appears that the so-called framework agreement is still a great distance from that. I hope that can be improved. We are looking at a model of an agreement that aims to freeze the nuclear program but somehow doesn't dismantle it. I certainly would have preferred the dismantlement model, and with the tough sanctions we put in place, I had hoped that was doable. But given where we are and given Israel's expertise and focus, I wanted to learn more about why the Israelis think the framework agreement is inadequate and whether it can be turned into a better agreement.

There are many important questions that remain, and sadly only a few of them have satisfactory answers in the current framework agreement. In fact, the Iranian version and the U.S. version of the text seem to differ on some of the key details. If you hear from them, they say one thing and we say another. In particular, I returned from this trip continuing my focus on what I think is perhaps the most important issue of all, which is the sanctions relief. The U.S. Congress put these sanctions in place, encouraging the administration. If we give the Iranian regime sanctions relief on day one before they have kept their word on any deal, we will be contributing a cash windfall to Iran's ongoing efforts to further destabilize an ever-growing list of countries—think about it—Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Yemen, and so on. Whether it is sanctions relief or whether it is releasing frozen oil revenues in banks that are all around the world, getting the proceeds from sales of oil that are now frozen in banks, if that becomes something the Iranians can use, that kind of financial relief would be a step to fuel war, not peace.

So these are the right areas to focus on when it comes to Iran, not just for Israel's sake, of course, but for the sake of peace and stability in the region and for our sake, our national security, and the world's sake.

I am hopeful we can pass the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act and safeguard Congress's role. I hope we can move to a bipartisan consensus on the floor of the Senate. But what constitutes a good deal? I believe consensus could provide a measuring stick to determine what kind of an agreement would produce a lasting peace and also provide the administration some leverage, give them some leverage to be able to negotiate a more effective agreement by having that debate on the floor of the Senate.

Attacks on Israel, of course, don't always come from rockets, missiles, or other violent means. Increasingly, opponents of Israel are using economic weapons to target Israel. The boycott,

divestment, and sanctions movement—also called BDS—is an effort to undermine Israel's sovereignty and further isolate it from the international community, really delegitimize the state.

Senator CARDIN and I recently authored the United States-Israel Trade Enhancement Act of 2015. It has a very simple purpose. It says that the United States will leverage trade to stop efforts to delegitimize Israel, especially when, as I look at it, having just been there, some of these BDS efforts actually harm the Palestinians in the West Bank, whom I think some of these efforts are meant to help.

Our legislation leverages ongoing trade negotiations to discourage our trading partners from engaging in this economic discrimination. I have seen how it works. I know trade can be effective. We did this with Oman when I was in the U.S. Trade Representative's office, as they wanted to negotiate a trade agreement, and the same with Bahrain. Both of those agreements ended up removing their boycotts of Israel. I talked with Saudi Arabia when I negotiated for their accession to the WTO, where again we were able to make progress in providing, in that case, equal treatment to Israel.

I am very proud that the Cardin-Portman amendment was the first and one of only three amendments to pass out of the Finance Committee when we took up the trade promotion authority bill.

In my meetings with U.S. Ambassador to Israel Dan Shapiro, the Foreign Ministry, Israeli national security officials, and in my discussions with the Prime Minister, I gained some additional insight into how BDS actually works in practice, and I came home more resolved than ever to work in a bipartisan way to ensure that we don't have this discrimination and painfully obvious double standard with Israel. For instance, its advocates only insist on isolation and penalties for Israel—not other countries—over territorial disputes and turn a blind eye to other territorial disputes around the world.

Finally, I talked to officials at length about general turmoil in the Middle East and Israel's relationship with its neighbors. This deteriorating regional security environment includes Egypt's battle against Hamas and radicalism in the Sinai, the brutal civil war in Syria, the destabilizing role of Iran-backed Hezbollah fighters in Lebanon and Syria, threats and challenges to our ally Jordan, the brutality of ISIS, and the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

So I returned from my trip with my concerns reinforced over the threats to the region, but I also returned with hope because whether I was touching the ancient stones of the Western Wall, walking the Stations of the Cross in the Old City, amidst the Old City Market, standing amidst the worshipers in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, or marveling at the modern hustle and bustle of Tel Aviv, I saw a remarkable phenomenon up close.

A small but determined country that carries within its narrow borders the ancient wisdom of our great faith, the cutting-edge innovations, and the can-do spirit of the modern State of Israel—all of this combines to bring me back to this floor with a greater resolve to meet the challenges we talked about today for our own national security but also for that of our steadfast ally, Israel.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, what is the business pending before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The conference report to accompany S. Con. Res. 11, with 10 hours of debate equally divided.

Mr. DURBIN. On the budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On the budget.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I hope some of the comments I make in reference to this product are not taken personally.

I thank the Presiding Officer for all the work he has put into the budget and for his friendship and cooperation on so many different issues.

What is this budget all about? A budget is really like a blueprint. It really says what we want to do and spend in the next fiscal year that starts October 1. As a result of passing a budget, we send a message to the spending committees and tell them how much to spend in different areas. The budget tries to spell out not only the amounts but also the policy we are to follow when we pass these spending bills. It is really a pretty small document by Federal standards, but it really packs a lot of wallop when it comes to what we are going to be doing for the next several months.

Budgets make choices, just as our family budgets make a choice. Can we afford a new car? Is it time to move? Can we remodel the kitchen? Can we pay for the kids to go to college? These are family budget decisions that are made that really impact the lives of members of the family. Just as those decisions impact lives, so does this, in a large way, for over 300 million Americans.

Sadly, from my perspective—and I have great respect for the Senator from Wyoming, who serves as the Senate Budget Committee chairman—from my perspective, this budget has the wrong priorities. Let me tell you why.

Many times, you are going to hear speeches given on the floor of the Senate about how the government should not pick winners and losers. I have heard that so many times. It basically says: Let's leave it to the free market forces and other forces. Government shouldn't pick winners and losers.

This budget being offered to the Senate picks winners and losers, and we can almost identify those winners by name because what this budget does is it eliminates the Federal estate tax. The Federal estate tax in this circumstance—changes that are called for, reforms in it, will result in tax breaks for the wealthiest people in America. Roughly 4,000 people a year will be spared, if their estates are worth more than $10 million, from paying the estate tax. For these individuals who are that wealthy, it means a $3 million tax break. When you add it up over a 10-year period of time, 4,000 people per year, it comes out to $268 billion. So the wealthiest people in America are declared the winners in the Senate Republican budget.

Who are the losers? The losers are 16 million Americans who will find that they don't have the benefits of the EITC tax credit, as well as the child tax credit that has been proposed. For 16 million Americans, we cut back tax credits which they can use to build and sustain their families in order to give tax breaks to 4,000 people a year who have an estate worth more than $10 million.

We haven't ignored the estate tax. In fact, we substantially reformed it. We indexed it. We made a lot of changes to it. But the Republican budget said we haven't gone far enough. We still have 4,000 people who are so rich that they are going to pay the tax, and this budget says it is time for that to end. I think they are wrong.

In order to deal with reducing the budget deficit, let me tell you where this Republican budget turns. All of us are aware of the fact that student loan debt now is the largest debt in America other than mortgage debt. There is more student loan debt in America than credit card debt. Think about that for a second.

Millions of students are deep in debt and carrying that debt for year after year because higher education—colleges and universities—cost so much. Middle-income families can't afford to pay it. They haven't saved enough. So the kids and sometimes the family have to borrow the money to get it done.

What does this budget do for those student borrowers? First, it reduces the amount of money available in Pell grants. Pell grants are grants—not loans—given to low-income students at colleges and universities. That is money the students don't have to borrow because they come from low-income families. Well, in this bill, we have a 31-percent cut in Pell grant funding; it is about $90 billion over 10 years. Eight million Americans are dependent on Pell grant funding in this current school year. They will find that there is less money available in grants—even though they are from low-income families—to go to college. So what is the alternative? Don't go to college or borrow more money. So the Republican approach to the student loan debt crisis is to decrease the grants and increase the debt of future students.

That isn't all. There is a provision that says: If you borrow money to go to

colleges and universities from the Federal Government, then your repayment of those government loans is going to be at least sensitive to your situation in life. In other words, you won't have to pay more than 10 percent of your income each year to pay off the student loan.

They eliminate it. That basically means these students are going to have to pay higher amounts of their earnings on their student loans. Is that a problem? It is a big problem. It is a problem for those fresh out of colleges and universities who want to start their lives. How are they going to start their lives and take the jobs they want and still pay off the student loans? Students are making decisions now about where they go to work and what they do with their lives because of the debt they carry with them out of colleges and universities. The Republican budget before us today makes it more difficult for those students by reducing the Pell grants and increasing the payback cost on student loans.

They do something else for students, too. The Affordable Care Act, which some call ObamaCare, said: If you graduate from college, you can stay on your parents' health insurance plan until age 26. Is that important? Boy, it was in our family.

I can remember when my daughter graduated from college, and I said: Jennifer, do you have health insurance?

She said: Dad, I don't need it. I feel fine.

Really?

Well, now, under the Affordable Care Act, my daughter and other kids can stay on their parents' health insurance plan. So what does the Republican budget do about that? It abolishes the Affordable Care Act. It abolishes that protection for families to keep their kids on their health insurance plans. How can that help families and kids fresh out of college? A lot of kids out of college are not finding jobs right away. They are doing internships. They are working part time. They can't afford health insurance. But they are on the family plan now because of ObamaCare—not according to the Republican budget; they want to get rid of it.

That isn't all. When you take a look at eliminating the Affordable Care Act—at this point, we have 16 million Americans who have the benefit of health insurance because of ObamaCare, and they eliminate it over a period of time. And we believe that number will grow to 27 million Americans who, because of the Republican budget, will not have the opportunity to get health insurance.

They cut back on Medicaid eligibility. Medicaid, of course, is health insurance for those in low-income situations. What will happen to those people? I wonder if the Budget Committee sat down, took a look, and said: Well, what is going to happen if people lose their health insurance, 27 million Americans? It would be naive to say that they just won't get sick. We know they will, and it will go back to the old days. In the old days, sick people who had no health insurance still showed up at the hospital. The hospital took care of them. The doctors took care of them. They were charity patients. Who paid for their care? All of us who have health insurance. I don't want to go back to the old days. I don't think America wants to. But this Republican budget does. It eliminates the Affordable Care Act.

I travel around Illinois and Chicago—I am honored to represent it—and I go to community health centers. They are popping up all over, in rural areas and cities as well, in neighborhoods. I want to say how proud I am that the Affordable Care Act created many of these centers. I have said, and I stand by it, that if I were sick or a member of my family were sick, I would be confident that if they walked into that center, that clinic, they would be treated to professional care. They are popping up all over the place. Elderly people now have someplace close to home to go to a clinic. Those who are on Medicaid—the health insurance from the government—can go in and be treated the same as anybody else.

What do we have in this bill when it comes to these health care clinics? This bill not only kicks 11 million people off Medicaid by taking away States' rights to expand health care to lower income residents, it cuts funding for community health centers by 70 percent—community health centers that are now serving 23 million Americans, which includes 7 million children and 250,000 veterans. How can we be better off by cutting back on the medical care in these health clinics? Do we think people won't get sick? Of course they will, and the cost will be shifted to others, just like the bad old days that we remember when health insurance premiums were going through the roof. But that is the proposal, and I think it is a serious mistake.

When I look at this Republican budget, I wonder if the Members who voted for it have really taken these ideas back home; if they have sat down with people and talked about what the impact will be when working families lose the tax credit of the ITC and child care. I wonder if they have considered what the impact will be by saying they want to perpetuate breaks in the Tax Code which reward companies for taking jobs overseas.

Isn't that the last thing we should be doing? Shouldn't the Tax Code be rewarding American companies that keep quality jobs in the United States, instead of shifting their mailing address to the Cayman Islands or someplace in Europe?

I think it is pretty clear: If you want to build a strong American economy, you stand by the best, most patriotic American corporations that keep people working in the United States. Yet that is not what this budget proposal does. We can do better.

I hope we defeat this budget resolution, and I hope we can then sit down and actually have a bipartisan conversation about the future of this country.

I think the future of this country includes a Tax Code that is fair to working families. I think it rewards American companies that create jobs in the United States. I don't think it gives 4,000 people a year, who happen to be the wealthiest people in America, a winning Power Ball ticket, as this budget proposal we have before us does.

I think we ought to expand the reach of health insurance, not reduce it. We want to give families a chance to be able to send their kids to college and kids not be so burdened with debt they can't chart their own futures. That is an optimistic, positive view of a growing America. This budget resolution is not.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this budget resolution and say to the Committee on the Budget that we can do better. If we are going to pick winners and losers, let's pick working families right here in America as the winners.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PORTMAN). The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise reluctantly against this budget resolution. I want to pick up exactly where our colleague from Illinois left off with respect to the values that are really important for this debate. As I look at this budget, I see opportunities missed that would bring the Senate together, help us find common ground, and particularly help the middle class.

The reality is there are tens of millions of people in Oregon and across America who day in and day out walk an economic tightrope, stretching every paycheck to the last penny. They want to climb the ladder of opportunity, they want to give their kids a brighter future, and the climb is not easy. My view is we ought to be trying to write a Federal budget that makes it easier for middle-class people to climb that ladder of opportunity and for those who aren't middle class to start moving up the rungs.

This legislation before us misses out on several bipartisan opportunities that reluctantly drive me to say the bill is flawed, because in too many instances, it leaves our working families, our middle class, behind.

Let me be specific. I offered, when the budget came up here, an amendment which stipulated that tax reform be built around the needs of our middle class so employers that would hire workers would have an opportunity to hire more, our workers would be able to get child care, and our students would be able to get educated. It was pretty straightforward. It said tax relief should be built around our middle class.

A number of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle asked if this would allow for some approaches that

they would be interested in. I said of course.

Chairman ENZI and I both have the honor to serve on the Senate Committee on Finance, so I offered an amendment that was built around some core ideas, recognizing my colleagues might have other approaches. A number of Republicans voted for that. It got more than 70 votes in the Senate.

Today, as we debate this legislation, we don't hear anything about tax relief for middle-class families. As I look at the budget, it sure looks to me, given some of the other priorities, as though there is a real prospect that taxes could go up for our middle-class families, as if they are not getting hammered hard enough. We could be working on a budget proposal today that creates new opportunity for middle-class people, a proposal that includes something such as what was voted on in the Senate that got more than 70 votes. Yet it is not there.

A second example deals with rural America. Again, in a lot of our rural communities there is enormous hurt. Many feel the policies of the Federal Government would pretty much turn them into some kind of economic sacrifice zone. So in the Committee on the Budget, I said: I think we have an opportunity to bring together programs such as the Secure Rural Schools Program, the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and we could adopt a smarter approach to fighting wildfires. The fact is that, too, was bipartisan. In the Committee on the Budget, the vote was 18 to 4—an overwhelming 18-to-4 bipartisan vote for the kind of approach I offered which would bring these programs together and put in the budget secure rural schools alongside these other programs that are a rural lifeline.

Once again, a bipartisan proposal—a bipartisan proposal that got resounding support in the Senate Committee on the Budget—somehow didn't make its way into the legislation we are considering today. So for communities in my home State, the message is: We are not really going to make your communities a priority.

I was just in, for example, Roseburg, OR, which is Southern Oregon, where there are hard-working people who would like to both get the timber harvest up and have the funds for their police and their schools and their roads and basic services. But this budget says that even though in the Committee on the Budget we had something bipartisan to help those communities, gee, we are really not going to follow through. We are just going to have a partisan plan, No. 1; and No. 2, we are going to basically shuffle to the side these bipartisan proposals with respect to middle-class tax relief and rural communities that, in my view, could make a huge difference in the quality of life for millions of American families. Of course, these were bipartisan ideas.

Now, a third area that has concerned me about this budget is the need for supporting programs such as Medicare and Social Security that keep millions of Americans from falling through the cracks. With this budget plan, the Congress ought to be protecting Medicaid so Americans of very limited means can count on having access to health care. Yet the budget that is being considered today would make, in my view, needlessly painful, needlessly arbitrary cuts.

It just seems as if the budget doesn't recognize that weakening Medicaid will hurt the most vulnerable families in Oregon and across the country—those who are struggling so hard to climb that ladder of opportunity. Without Medicaid coverage, those who are vulnerable end up forgoing checkups. They end up passing on the preventive visits. In my view, they will end up with lesser care at a higher overall cost. A massive burden would end up getting shifted to hospitals and doctors and many Americans who simply pay insurance premiums through their employer.

So if we make those kinds of cuts today—the cuts I have described as being arbitrary—we are going to have higher costs and more economic pain down the road.

Finally, millions of seniors and those with disabilities rely on Medicaid to help cover what otherwise can be crushing costs—crushing costs—in the long-term care area. I was codirector of the Oregon Gray Panthers for a number of years before I was elected to Congress, and what I have seen over the years are nursing home costs going up and up and up. Even those families who worked hard and saved and never took that extra vacation, never bought that special car ended up being impoverished, and they and those who are disabled simply would not be in a position to get long-term care without Medicaid.

Now, we know what used to happen years and years ago. There were poor farms, there were almshouses when savings ran out. It is pretty hard to do that with the demographic revolution of today, with 10,000 people turning 65 every day—10,000 people turning 65 every day for years and years to come.

So my view is Medicaid, this lifeline for the most vulnerable people—a lifeline that keeps so many individuals, particularly seniors, from falling into utter destitution—should be protected rather than filleted, as this budget would do, and it is one of the major reasons I am in opposition.

I will close by way of saying that I have gotten, over the years, to know Chairman ENZI very well. He is a compassionate legislator. He is a talented legislator. My hope is, though I oppose this budget today for the reasons I have described—the bipartisan opportunities missed with respect to tax relief for the middle class and the rejection of a bipartisan plan to help rural America—that in the days ahead, as we go to the Committee on Finance, in particular, and we look at these issues, we can return to what has always been the Senate at its best, which is working in a bipartisan fashion. We can do it on tax relief. We can do it for rural America.

By the way, we can do it in terms of Medicare. We can protect the Medicare guarantee and hold down costs. Our colleague Senator ISAKSON from Georgia has joined me in an important piece of legislation that really starts to transform Medicare into a program that better meets the needs of those who will most need it, which is those with chronic disease—cancer, diabetes, stroke, and heart disease. But we would be protecting the Medicare guarantee, not, in effect, damaging Medicaid the way this budget would do.

Mr. President, I am going to yield the floor now and just state, once again, that I hope we can go back to what makes the Senate function at its best, bipartisanship. We missed that opportunity thus far, and I hope we will return to it.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Oregon for his kind comments, and I know, as the ranking member of the Committee on Finance, he will be doing a lot of things to see that things in this budget happen, and I suspect they will happen a lot the way they are here.

I would like to mention just a couple of things, though, for him to note because he mentioned the wildfire suppression. I know how passionate he and Senator CRAPO have been on wildfire suppression. I want him to note that section 3208 preserves the wildfire suppression funding.

One of the things that has always concerned me since I got here was that we have these emergencies for all sorts of things. When I first got here, they were $5 billion a year; now they are up to $7 billion a year. But any time you are budgeting and you know something is going to happen every year, it ought to be in the budget. So I put in $7 billion for emergencies, and that will help to provide some of the funding for his suggestion of the wildfire suppression.

A couple of the other paragraphs the Senator from Oregon would be interested in are 4319 and 4320. We did not throw out everything. We did do some combining of ones that were very similar to make sure that in the 183 proposals we had for reserve funds, we could come up with a few fewer that would incorporate the ideas of everyone.

Some of the previous speeches mentioned what we were doing to Medicare. There aren't a lot of specifics on Medicare because, again, the Finance Committee—which Senator HATCH chairs and Senator WYDEN is the ranking member on—will have to make a lot of those actual decisions. In fact, almost everything that is in the budget requires some additional action, and that

additional action even has to be signed by the President. So if we are way off, it is not going to happen. But I am thinking there will be a lot of bipartisan action on this.

On Medicare itself, all we in the Senate did was go with the same Medicare cuts that the President suggested in his budget. We made one small change in that. We said those Medicare cuts, the money that will be saved in Medicare, has to stay with Medicare. That is a difference that we have with the President. When we did ObamaCare, there was $714 billion worth of Medicare that was taken out and spent on other parts of the program. We could have done the doc fix back then really easily, but that was spent in other places.

One of the promises we made was that if there were some changes in Medicare—and there ought to be some changes in Medicare. Actually, the government ought to take a look at everything it does on a regular basis and do it better or, if it is not working, do without it. But Medicare does serve a need in this country, and the money that comes from Medicare ought to stay in Medicare but used in better places in Medicare, where it is more needed.

So I hope people will actually take a look at the document that is here.

Incidentally, on the Medicare proposal, the House came to the Senate proposal and eliminated a couple of things they had.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TESTER. 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. TESTER. Mr. President, if we look into this Senate's agenda this month, we will see right away why so many folks are frustrated with Washington. We have now been considering an Iran bill for the last 2 weeks. It has huge bipartisan support, but it is tied up with amendments designed to kill the bill.

Today, the House and Senate Republicans bring forth a budget which reflects some of the worst ideas from each Chamber. Back in March, I raised concerns that the Senate budget put the interests of a few ahead of the future of this country, and that is still true today. The majority insists on spending billions of dollars overseas, and continues the fiction that this spending somehow doesn't count towards the deficit.

Under this budget, every penny proposed in the overseas contingency operations account—that is $187 billion—is going to be borrowed from China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and others. The majority once again favors tax breaks for the wealthiest among us over plans to strengthen the middle class—a middle class that has been the envy of the world. But under this blueprint, the $2,500 tax credit that helps students with the cost of tuition disappears. The benefit under the child tax credit gets smaller, and American middle-class folks get squeezed. The majority continues to reward companies that ship jobs overseas instead of creating jobs right here in the United States. This budget drastically cuts and ends Medicare as we know it, and it opens up the door to the sale of our public lands.

Finally, this budget fails to invest in basic infrastructure. In fact, it actually calls for a cut of over $200 billion in highway and transit funding over the next decade. The majority is pushing this proposal even though the highway bill funding expires on May 31, 2015. Now we are nearly out of time. In less than 4 weeks, just as millions of Americans will be getting on the road to enjoy summer vacations, road construction projects around this country will come to a screeching halt.

In my home State of Montana, the State department of transportation will delay nine projects this month due to Congress's failure to pass a long-term highway bill. Four projects that were scheduled to be awarded in April have been postponed to July and may be postponed indefinitely. Five more that were scheduled to be awarded next week will also be delayed. If Congress does another short-term extension, that list will get even longer. If we delay these projects even by a few weeks, we could miss the entire construction season in Montana, a northern-tier State. The snow will start falling, and the potholes will get bigger.

We already know that America's transportation infrastructure has been ignored for far too long. According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, more than half of America's major roads and bridges are rated as poor to mediocre. In Montana, 40 percent of our roads are in need of repair or will need fixing soon. When our roads have potholes or can't handle the volume of cars and trucks, safety becomes an issue. Montana routinely leads the Nation in highway fatalities, and thousands of road fatalities each year are the result of bad road conditions.

As far as the economic impact, Federal highway dollars directly impact 11,000 jobs in Montana alone, not to mention the thousands of others who rely on roads for their businesses. These are jobs that cannot be outsourced. Each year, around $60 billion in goods is shipped over Montana's 75,000 miles of roads and highways. That is true economic impact.

So instead of a long-term highway bill that allows States to plan and to get America moving, the next item the majority leader says he is going to take up is trade promotion authority. This will open the door for trade deals that the American public hasn't been allowed to see. While many in Washington see trade promotion as the key to ensuring America's long-term economic viability, we need to make sure that the investments are made right here at home—smart investments.

After all, how are farmers in Montana going to get their crops to Asia if they cannot even get them down the road to the nearest grain elevator?

Our transportation infrastructure affects every industry. Take, for instance, Montana's outdoor economy. Millions of people come to Montana each year to hunt, fish, hike, and enjoy Montana's great outdoors—from Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks to our millions of acres of forest and public lands. Montana's outdoors brings in $6 billion each year and supports some 60,000 jobs.

Passing a highway bill will increase folks' ability to access these outdoor places. But States which oversee these construction projects cannot wait until the end of the month to find out if Congress is going to do its job. Many of them are already pumping the brakes on projects until we step up and pass a highway infrastructure bill.

In the University District in Missoula, an important resurfacing project was scheduled to start next week after classes get out. But thanks to congressional inaction on the highway bill, that project will start no earlier than the third week in July—maybe not at all.

What does that mean? That means the project likely will not be done before students return and traffic in the University District increases exponentially. The Montana Department of Transportation has already announced it will push back the start-up date 3 months for a bridge replacement in Sanders County.

With one in five bridges being in desperate need of repair, delays on projects such as this are irresponsible and only add to the backlog. The need to act could not be more clear. While everyone knows we need a long-term solution, the American people have come to expect the worst from Congress—shortsighted, stopgap measures that will not give businesses or working families the certainty they need and deserve.

The House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee have put forth no solutions to this date. They are anxious to move the trade legislation that seems all too reminiscent of past trade deals—long on promises but short on jobs. Yet they will not produce a long-term highway bill that we know creates jobs here in America.

We must pass a long-term highway bill, and one that is paid for. But instead of working together on a long-term plan, Congress seems resigned to passing another short-term patch. This is shortsighted and we will have negative consequences for folks across this country.

The question I have for my colleagues is this. When did passing a highway bill become political? When

did basic investments in our Nation's infrastructure become this difficult? This is a no-brainer. Now we have folks in Congress who think roads build themselves. We have folks in Congress who eagerly swipe the Nation's credit card when it comes to investments in the Middle East. But these same Members of Congress will not even open up the wallet to fill a pothole next to a school in this country.

China will spend more than $400 billion on transportation infrastructure this year. That is eight times more than the United States will spend on the highway trust fund. How do we expect to compete in a global economy if we are not willing to make the investment?

Infrastructure investments are investments in our economy, and they are investments in the future. If we can pass a long-term bill, it will pay for itself by giving businesses the certainty they need to grow, create jobs, and build the kind of economy that our kids and our grandkids deserve.

The clock is ticking, but the Senate is focused on the wrong priorities. It is time to refocus on making smart investments in our economy and being honest with the American people in our budgets. Right now we are doing neither.

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.

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

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

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to voice my opposition to this budget. Since being elected to the Senate, I have always stressed the importance of responsibly addressing our country's fiscal challenges. We have had bipartisan agreements before when we faced fiscal challenges. At the end of 2013, we passed the bipartisan Murray-Ryan budget agreement which then led to the passage of the omnibus spending bill. I was part of the group of 14 during the shutdown who came together with an idea for a fix that allowed us to get to the budget—seven Democrats and seven Republicans. We also saw some major bipartisan work on the farm bill, the Water Resources Development Act, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and we reauthorized the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program and, as well as we know, recently, the Medicare sustainable growth rate. But today that is not what this budget is about. That is one of my major focuses today.

I would say, by the way, as a result of some of the bipartisan work that has been done in the past, since 2009 we have seen the deficit as a percent of GDP drop from nearly 10 percent—9.8 percent, exactly—to under 3 percent.

In this economic recovery, we have seen 61 straight months of private sector job growth and added over 12 million private sector jobs. Unemployment is at 5.5 percent nationally and 3.7 percent in my home State of Minnesota. The unemployment rate went down faster in 2014 than it has in any year since 1984.

With this economy not just stabilized but finally starting to show some signs of improvement—not everything that we need, not with everyone sharing in its growth; we know that—we are no longer governing from crisis. We are finally governing from opportunity—opportunity for the people of this country, opportunity to compete in this global economy. My problem with this budget is that it does not give us that opportunity. This budget would make drastic cuts to the programs we need to seize this opportunity in the global economy, programs such as student loans, transportation, and heating assistance, just to name a few.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the deficit is projected to drop to 2.8 percent of GDP in 2015, a cut of nearly two-thirds. Yet this budget would cut many of the programs that help our middle-class people, our families, our seniors, and those working hard to make ends meet. We have heard about a lot of the cuts in programs, but I want to focus on three key areas that I believe we need to invest in today so we can seize this opportunity when we finally have a stable economy and our country can grow and compete. The first is infrastructure, the second is investing in kids, and the third is research.

One of the best ways to boost our economy and create good-paying jobs is through investing in infrastructure. For far too long we have neglected the roads, the bridges, and the mass transit that millions of Americans rely on every day. According to the Federal Highway Administration, more than 24 percent of the Nation's 600,000 bridges are either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers' 2013 report card, the United States scores a D-plus on the overall condition of our Nation's infrastructure.

Compared with other countries, we are falling behind. China and India are spending, respectively, 9 percent and 8 percent of their GDPs on infrastructure. How much are we committing? Just 2 percent. The effects of this shortsighted strategy are increasingly clear. No one knows that better than in my home State of Minnesota, where on August 1, 2007, a major bridge—an eight-lane highway—went crashing into the Mississippi River, and 13 people died. Dozens and dozens were injured. Dozens of cars were submerged in the water. As I said that day, a bridge should not fall down in the middle of America—especially not an eight-lane interstate highway, especially not a bridge that is one of the most traveled bridges in our State, especially not a bridge that is blocks from my house, a bridge that my family goes over every day when we want to go anywhere in our State—rush hour in the heart of a major metropolitan area.

When we have something like that happen in the State, we understand the importance of investing in infrastructure. The last thing we want to see is more cuts. Whether it is roads, bridges, rail, airports or waterways, the need to rebuild our infrastructure is critical to reclaiming our country's competitive edge. We want to get goods to market in this export economy. How do we do it? We do it with roads, with bridges, with rail. We do it with locks and dams. We do it with airports. Yet this budget would cut transportation and infrastructure by more than $200 billion over the next decade—a cut of 40 percent. That is simply unacceptable.

Education funding is something that is so important to me in my life. My grandpa worked 1,500 feet underground in the mines and never graduated from high school. He literally spent his life working, putting money in a coffee can in the basement to send my dad to community college. My dad went to community college and got a 2-year degree and then went on to the University of Minnesota—two public institutions. That is what education is about. Yet, we see cuts to education, cuts to Pell grants in this bill.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act provides critical funding to help offset education costs for States and local areas that are providing services to kids with disabilities. We are talking about our most vulnerable kids here. Yet this budget would cut Federal education funding by 2 percent in 2017 and 9 percent in 2025. IDEA funding—that funding so critical for kids with disabilities—would be cut by more than $15 million per year on average in Minnesota and more than $950 million nationally. Our kids deserve better than that.

Medical research—no one knows that better than Minnesota, home of the Mayo Clinic, home of the University of Minnesota. Yet what do we see with this budget? The cuts would mean a devastating $8 billion decrease at the National Institutes of Health over the next decade. This is simply unacceptable—cutting investment in medical innovation for cures that could cure Alzheimer's, for cures that could cure childhood diabetes, for cures and for research that could help people with autism; cutting investment in medical innovation is not a path that we can afford to take.

As Newt Gingrich said in an op-ed this last month, investing in health research is both a moral and a financial issue. The NIH is a beacon of hope for people across the Nation and in my home State of Minnesota. Just look at Alzheimer's. Right now, close to 5.2 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's, including nearly 100,000 Minnesotans. These numbers will grow dramatically in the many coming years

with the aging of the baby boomer generation. We know there is good research being done through the Human Genome Project and the work that is being done at Mayo, where, if we can catch it earlier, our doctors might be able to figure out exactly what works and does not work. If you do not catch it early, how are they ever going to do the research we need to do to figure out what works and what does not work if you wait too long?

That is some of the groundbreaking work that is being done right now. That is why I have worked with Senator DURBIN on legislation to boost NIH funding. In contrast to this budget, the American Cures Act, of which I am a cosponsor, would reverse the trend of declining Federal investment in medical research and fuel the next generation of biomedical discoveries by providing a 5-percent annual increase at NIH and at other key Federal research agencies.

We need to see this as an investment. We know how expensive Alzheimer's is—and we know the heartbreaking stories of families where a family member gets Alzheimer's. Yet we cannot back away from the research that is going on right now—the research for things such as precision medicine. We are going to have targeted treatments helping patients to live healthier lives.

In conclusion, this budget would make cuts to infrastructure at a time when we need to invest and rebuild. This budget would make cuts to programs that serve kids with disabilities and slow the process of biomedical research and innovation. We have an opportunity now in this country. Through the work of so many businesses and workers across the country, we have been able to stabilize this economy. People in our country did not give up. But now is the moment to seize opportunities, and seizing opportunities means really taking back our place in America as a preeminent researcher, as the country that people go to when they want to cure diseases. We cannot do that by moving backwards. We cannot do that if we are going to cut the funding for our roads and bridges. We cannot afford to have another I–35W bridge collapse.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this budget and work together on a smarter budget, one that actually allows this country—America—to seize the opportunity before us so we can compete in this global economy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the budget that is before the Senate, this combined House-Senate Republican budget. In evaluating this budget proposal, my core question has been this: Is this a budget that works for working America? Or is this a budget designed for powerful special interests and for those best off in our society? A budget is not just about the numbers; it is about the vision that it has for America.

Over 70 years ago, President Franklin Roosevelt issued an economic bill of rights, proclaiming: In our day these economic truths have become accepted as self-evident: the right to a useful and remunerative job; the right to earn enough to provide adequate food; the right of every family to a decent home; the right to adequate medical care; the right to adequate protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment; and the right to a good education. He closed with these words: ''All of these rights spell security.''

Enacting a budget that advances these economic rights for all Americans is my top priority. That means the budget must create good-paying jobs, improve access to quality, affordable education, ensure retirement security for our seniors, and lower the tax burden on working families. The American people share these priorities. They want a plan, a budget, a vision for our Nation that builds a foundation for middle-class families to thrive.

Two months ago, I stood on the Senate floor to review the budget proposed as the Senate Republican budget. In category after category, that budget earned a failing grade. Unfortunately, I am here today to say that the plan that has come out of the conference committee from the House and Senate Republicans is even worse. It constitutes an egregious assault on working Americans. It slashes investments in infrastructure and education, failing to close tax loopholes and attacking financial reform. It is fundamentally misaligned with the values of working Americans. It is poised to move our Nation in exactly the wrong direction—more tax breaks and corporate welfare for millionaires, billionaires, and large corporations that are already doing phenomenally well and more pain and suffering for the middle class, working families, and the most vulnerable.

With this budget, the GOP is continuing to play games with Americans' health care coverage, claiming we can grow our economy by cutting health care for seniors and children and the poorest in our society. The Senate GOP budget wiped out coverage under the Affordable Care Act, and this budget continues to wreak havoc. It will immediately eliminate health insurance coverage for 16.4 million Americans and swell the ranks of the uninsured by 23 million individuals within a single year. It will deny millions of young adults the right to stay on their parents' health insurance plan until the age of 26. It will deprive 130 million Americans with preexisting conditions the right to purchase affordable health insurance if they lose their jobs or otherwise lose their health insurance. These numbers are appalling.

It puts our seniors back at risk of bankruptcy from unaffordable prescriptions because it wipes out the ACA's effort to fill in the Medicare Part D doughnut hole. In 2014 alone, seniors saved $4.8 billion on prescription drugs, and 39 million seniors will be forced to pay more for preventative services under this budget. The GOP budget takes seniors back to the bad old days where the doughnut hole would force more than 9.4 million seniors and persons with disabilities to pay billions more out of pocket for prescription drugs.

At a time when senior poverty is on the rise, shouldn't we be focused on helping our seniors retire with security and dignity? Instead, the new plan cuts Medicare deeply—$430 billion over 10 years. It cuts Medicaid by at least $400 billion, jeopardizing nursing home care for the most vulnerable senior Americans. It calls for ending Medicare as we know it by turning it into a voucher plan. Finally, it paves the way for a fast-track consideration of a way to repeal the Affordable Care Act through reconciliation.

When you total up these factors, look at the assault on seniors. There is more for prescription drugs and less for nursing home care and Medicaid. Medicare will be cut by $430 billion, and it will be voucherized. Annual wellness checks and preventive services, such as mammograms and prostate cancer screening, will be wiped out. What this budget does is turn security into insecurity. What this budget does is turn dignity into indignity. This is an unacceptable assault on our seniors.

It is also an assault on our children and on education. Both Democrats and Republicans agree that we want a chance for our children to get ahead and to pursue their dreams. Shouldn't the budget tell our children that education is a priority? The Republican plan makes new cuts to Head Start that would kick 400,000 children off the program over a 10-year period—400,000 empty Head Start chairs across America.

This picture is from an event that I held at Oregon's Whitaker School. The cuts in the Senate Republican plan to Head Start would mean 15 empty chairs just at this one location. But now we are talking about a budget that wipes out an opportunity for 400,000 children from struggling families to get a head start through Head Start.

The conference report doesn't just hit early childhood education; it also fails our children with regard to opening the doors of opportunity for higher education. College costs are soaring, so it makes sense to strengthen Pell grant funding. But this Republican budget slashes Pell grant funding by about one-third. Picture one out of every three of our children who use a Pell grant to get through the doors of college, the doors of opportunity, unfortunately having that opportunity taken away. This budget cuts the program by $90 billion over 10 years and will make college out of reach for so many when we should be going in the other direction.

That is not all. It also increases student loan debt by an average of $4,000 for an estimated 30 million students,

making the children from struggling families pay more for basic need-based student loans.

I believe in opportunity. I believe in the American dream. I believe that higher education is one of the best pathways to the middle class. We cannot and must not adopt a budget designed to slam the doors of opportunity shut on millions of our children.

There is more to be concerned about. One of the keys to prosperity is infrastructure. My colleague from Minnesota was just illuminating many of the problems in that area. Why shouldn't a budget prioritize improving our Nation's crumbling roads, bridges, dams, water systems, airports, and rail systems?

We have a huge infrastructure deficit. Our highway trust fund is running out of money. Right now Europe is investing 5 percent of its GDP in infrastructure and the United States is investing less than 2 percent. We are vastly underinvesting, and this budget continues and aggravates that underinvestment, hurting the creation of good-paying jobs now and doing enormous damage to the economy of the future.

Our parents did far better for us by putting a massive infusion of funds for infrastructure that strengthened the system and strengthened our economy today. Shouldn't we do the same for the next generation? And then we can turn to food security.

Our country has 40 million hungry Americans. In the wealthiest Nation on Earth, shouldn't our budget make sure families can put food on the table? This Republican budget says no. It supports making massive cuts to programs that provide critical assistance to low-income families. This plan eliminates nutrition assistance for 1.2 million women, infants, and children who rely on the WIC Program through $10 billion in cuts to programs over the next decade. This budget would cut $660 billion over 10 years for programs that support low-income individuals and families, including massive unspecified cuts to food stamps. With this budget, my Republican colleagues are telling the parents of children and financially challenged families: Let them go hungry. And that is just wrong.

Since this budget cuts food, Pell grants, infrastructure, and health care, and since it does so much damage to working families, shouldn't it ask for some small sacrifice from those who are best off? Apparently not. This Republican budget takes from the most vulnerable and gives it to the wealthiest families in America. This Republican budget provides a quarter of a trillion—and, yes, that is trillion with a T—dollar tax break for the wealthiest 0.2 percent of Americans while increasing taxes on 13 million working families with 25 million children by diminishing the earned income tax credit and the child tax credit, affecting families who earn just a modest amount with an average household income of just $22,000.

I cannot conceive of any economic or moral argument that justifies taking money out of the pockets of struggling families—from Pell grants to Head Start to food on the table—and giving it away to the already wealthiest Americans. Perhaps one of my colleagues who is voting for this budget would like to explain why taking from the poor to give more to the wealthiest families in America is justified, because it is not justified.

Despite the fact that our richest families already pay less in their marginal tax than working families pay, this Republican budget wants to give more away to them from the American Treasury and do it by taking food and education opportunities out of the reach of our struggling families.

This budget removes two amendments that were originally adopted in the Senate budget. Senator MURRAY's amendment would have allowed Americans to earn paid sick leave. It was supported by 61 Senators, including 15 Republicans, but it was eviscerated in this budget. The second amendment was introduced by Senator SCHATZ. It would have ensured that all legally married same-sex spouses have equal access to Social Security and veterans' benefits they have earned. It was broadly supported but wiped out in this joint House-Senate Republican budget.

This budget takes away from hard-working, middle-class Americans, from struggling Americans who are often working two to three minimum-wage jobs, and it gives away to the wealthy and well-connected, not asking them for one slim dime—not one egregious tax loophole closed—and gives them preferred tax cuts, returning millions of dollars to the wealthiest families.

Is this a budget that works for working Americans or is it a budget for the best off? I think it is clear from the topics I have covered that this is a budget for the best off at the expense of everyone else in America in every possible way that provides a foundation.

If we return to the vision laid out by Franklin Roosevelt in 1944 of the self-evident economic truths, of a right to a good job, to earn enough for adequate food, to a decent home, to adequate medical care, and to protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment, this budget fails every test and should be defeated.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I wish to speak on the budget resolution conference report that we are considering today.

In my view, this is the worst budget resolution that I have seen in my 22 years in the Senate. It represents a major step backwards for the country, and I believe we need to go back to the drawing board.

Budget resolutions are as much about priorities as they are about numbers, and I believe this budget resolution sets all the wrong priorities.

At a time when millions of families are still struggling to recover from the recession, this budget would raise their taxes while cutting taxes for the wealthiest Americans, who have only gotten wealthier in recent years.

The budget calls for the elimination of the child tax credit and the earned income tax credit, which would raise taxes by an average of $900 on 13 million working families. Yet, at the same time, the budget would eliminate the estate tax, which is only paid by 5,400 families each year who inherit estates worth more than $10 million.

Let me repeat that: this budget calls for raising taxes on 13 million low-income families in order to pay for tax cuts for the 5,400 wealthiest families, representing the richest 0.2 percent of our country.

Prioritizing the rich over struggling families is at the heart of what is wrong with this budget.

In addition, this budget calls for dramatic funding cuts for the very Federal programs that these working families rely on most. Nationwide, the cuts required by this budget would: prevent 35,000 low-income children from enrolling in Head Start, an early childhood education program; cut Federal funding for public schools that serve more than 1.9 million low-income students; increase the cost of college for more than 8 million low-income students through cuts to Pell grants; prevent 2.2 million Americans from accessing job training services; and eliminate health coverage through Medicaid for 14 million low-income Americans.

In my view, these cuts are draconian and wholly unnecessary. I also believe that these cuts would only further exacerbate income inequality and economic hopelessness, the very forces that have been fueling unrest throughout the country.

The events in Baltimore that have been broadcast across the Nation in recent weeks are not only a response to years of police brutality, but also the result of whole neighborhoods being left behind economically.

As a former big-city mayor, I remember a time when there was robust Federal and State support for cities to redevelop depressed neighborhoods and provide educational and employment opportunities for their citizens.

That priority no longer exists, certainly not in the austere funding levels of this budget. Instead, we have seen a total abandonment of our cities over the past three decades.

When I was mayor of San Francisco, the Community Development Block Grant program, CDBG, was the primary source of Federal funding to help State and local governments undertake housing, economic development, and neighborhood revitalization projects. During my time at city hall, CDBG funds peaked at $3.7 billion, which would be the equivalent of $10.6 billion in inflation-adjusted 2014 dollars. In 2014, Congress provided only $3.023 billion for CDBG, just 28 percent of that peak inflation-adjusted amount.

For my city, when CDBG was at its prime, it meant we had around $28 million per year to use for police, fire departments, and economic development projects. Under the funding levels in this GOP budget, San Francisco would be slated to receive only around $16 million a year, just 20 percent of what I had when adjusting for inflation.

If you care about our cities and the problems facing them, these are the dollars that can really make a difference. They work; I have seen it. Yet, they would simply not be there under this budget.

At the same time, many States, including California, have cut funding for local redevelopment projects, further straining local government funding for economic development and neighborhood revitalization.

Now, I recognize Congress can't solve all of the country's problems, and pouring money into cities will not cure all of their ills.

But I believe the central role of the Federal Government should be to expand opportunities for the people who need it most, not those who have already succeeded in life.

This budget doesn't do that. Not only does this budget not help working families, it would actually make their situation even worse.

This budget would take away the healthcare of the most vulnerable, make it even harder for Americans to find a job, deny our Nation's youth the opportunity to learn, and raise taxes on those who can least afford it.

The Republican priorities reflected in this budget are morally wrong and terrible for our country's future. It is time to develop a budget that helps all Americans, not just the wealthy few.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, the budget conference report before us today charts the wrong course for our country and threatens our economic and national security.

During the consideration of the Republican Senate budget a few weeks ago, I laid out concerns about its most alarming aspects and my reasons for opposing it. My concerns and opposition have not changed because this Republican budget conference report doesn't deviate from the Senate budget's construct.

Indeed, the Republican budget stacks the deck in favor of special interests and makes it harder for middle-class families to get ahead. For example, their budget would eliminate the estate tax, giving the wealthiest 0.2 percent of Americans a $269 billion tax cut over 10 years. It would pave the way to cut millionaire's top marginal tax rate from 39.6 percent to 25 percent. At the same time, it would raise taxes on 16 million middle-class families by ending the expansion of the earned income tax credit and child tax credit. These choices by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are clear and stand in stark contrast to policies my Democratic colleagues and I fight for that help middle-class families and grow the economy from the middle out.

The Republican budget would also keep the sequester in place, which puts unworkable caps on nondefense and defense spending. Both sides of the ledger need relief from the sequester for our Nation's economic and national security. But it seems that my colleagues on the other side are only willing to use the overseas contingency operations, OCO, account to provide relief to defense spending despite what we have heard from our military leaders on the need to address both sides of the ledger and that using OCO in this manner has its own serious shortcomings.

The Pentagon simply cannot meet the complex set of national security challenges without the help of other government departments and agencies—including State, Justice, Homeland Security, and the intelligence community. In the Armed Services Committee, we have heard compelling testimony on the essential role of other government agencies in ensuring our Nation remains safe and strong. The Department of Defense's share of the burden would surely grow if these agencies were not adequately funded as well.

Adding funds to OCO does not solve the Defense Department's problems. As Army Chief of Staff General Odierno said, ''OCO has limits and it has restrictions and it has very strict rules that have to be followed. And so if we're inhibited by that, it might not help us. What might happen at the end of the year, we have a bunch of money we hand back because we are not able to spend it.''

Making a 1-year plus up to OCO also does not help the Defense Department with the certainty and stability it needs when building its 5-year budget. As General Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, testified, ''we need to fix the base budget . . . we won't have the certainty we need'' if there is a year by year OCO fix. Defense Secretary Carter added that raising OCO does not allow the Defense Department to plan ''efficiently or strategically.''

While adding funds to OCO would provide some relief to the Defense Department, it is to defense alone, leaving domestic agencies at sequestration levels. And the truth is that the Defense Department cannot do its job without other departments. As General Mattis said, ''If you don't fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition.'' And in recent testimony, the commanders of Northern Command and Southern Command stated they could not accomplish their mission of protecting this country without the Coast Guard, the Border Patrol, DEA, and the intelligence community.

Moving beyond the needs we have to keep the Nation safe, there is a whole list of needs that ensure Americans and our economy stays healthy and thrives. I would like to bring attention to one such need—addressing lead poisoning, a preventable tragedy that dramatically impacts a child's health and ability to learn. This budget would mean cuts to programs that help keep kids healthy like the lead poisoning prevention program. The kinds of physical health issues and developmental delays that stem from lead poisoning have long term effects on our children, our communities, and our economy. Indeed, educational system costs are estimated at $38,000 over 3 years per child with special education needs due to lead poisoning.

The impact is especially pronounced in low-income and minority neighborhoods and populations in cities like Providence or as the Nation has recently seen in the dramatic events unfolding in Baltimore. These lead poisoning prevention programs are the kinds of initiatives that help put disadvantaged communities on an even playing field and, ultimately, work to ensure that our children can grow up to contribute to their families and their communities.

I have mentioned several shortsighed provisions, but this budget is replete with them. We cannot short-change our Nation's investments in the middle class, in our children, and our national security and expect long-term prosperity. That is why I will vote no and urge my colleagues to do the same.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

RECOGNIZING MONTANA'S SMALL BUSINESSES

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Montana's thousands of small businesses and for their contributions to our State's economy.

During National Small Business Week, we recognize all of the hardworking Montana men and women who took the risk to start a small business. These men and women have spent countless, sleepless nights working to create jobs and grow their business in a State they love and call home.

Before being elected to Congress, I spent nearly 3 decades in the private sector, and I know firsthand there is no better place to live and work than in Montana. I also know that our small businesses are critical to Montana's economy and our State's future.

According to the Small Business Administration, small businesses represent more than 97 percent of all Montana employers, in turn employing more than 68 percent of Montana's private sector labor force.

I am excited to say there are a lot of small business success stories in Montana. We have countless business leaders and entrepreneurs working to drive our State's economic growth and helping us lead the way in a variety of industries, from tourism and agriculture to technology and resource development.

Look no further than Bozeman, my hometown, where Advanced Electronic Designs is doing incredible things in innovations, helping to build up the Montana high-tech sector. Their team is comprised of 15 Montana State University engineers, and together they have designed more than 70 percent of the

LED signs in Times Square—from the NBC ''Today'' show to the Disney store.

I have also had the opportunity to tour ALCOM in Bonner, MT, to see their trailer manufacturing facility. They just won the Small Business Administration's 2015 Small Business Award for Montana Exporter of the Year. This award recognizes ALCOM's achievement in significantly increasing their export sales, profits, and jobs, while encouraging other Montana businesses to find new markets for their goods.

This is an exciting time to do business back home in Montana. From our growing technology sector to our State's diverse natural resources, there is a lot of opportunity to create jobs and grow businesses in Montana. Unfortunately, the Federal Government's out-of-touch policies and bureaucratic overreach continue to prevent Montana's small businesses from reaching their full potential. Too many Montana businesses face regulatory burdens that hinder innovation and block opportunities for growth.

Our Tax Code is too complex and serves as yet another barrier to prosperity. And ObamaCare's burdensome and costly mandates are forcing millions of dollars in new fees and compliance costs upon Montana's small businesses, in turn forcing our job creators to downsize, reduce employee hours, or close their doors altogether.

When I drive around in Montana, I have yet to hear a small business owner ask for more regulations and higher taxes. We need commonsense policies that encourage Montana's job creators to innovate and to grow. We need solutions to lift these regulatory barriers, reduce tax burdens, and create long-term certainty for hard-working Montanans.

I have long said that the best solutions don't come from bureaucrats in Washington, DC; they come from Main Street Montana and our State's hard-working businesses and community leaders because in Montana, we understand that jobs come from small business, not big government. That is why we need to reduce the redtape that is holding our small businesses back and work toward commonsense regulations that don't place unnecessary burdens on Montana families and Montana small businesses.

We do need comprehensive tax reform that is fair, that is simpler, that promotes economic opportunity, and that works for all Montanans. And we need to repeal and replace ObamaCare with Montana-driven solutions that put patients and their doctors at the center of a health care equation and don't place these job-killing burdens on our small businesses.

Instead of hindering our small businesses, we should reward them with flexibility and with the freedom they need to thrive and empower them with the tools they need to create jobs. That starts with educating Montana's future leaders and ensuring that students have the tools they need to succeed in their future careers.

It is no secret that for many recent college graduates, finding a job in today's economy is harder than ever. This is especially true in Montana, where students are often forced to leave our State to find good-paying and long-lasting careers. It has been said that our top three exports are our grain, our cattle, and our children.

As we work to grow Montana's technology and resources, we need to ensure that our students have the skills they need to get ahead and find jobs at home. From Montana's tribal colleges and vocational schools to the new Jake Jabs College of Business and Entrepreneurship Building at Montana State University, Montana's educational institutions are leading the way in giving our students the head start they need to succeed outside of classrooms and help grow our State's economy because when small businesses succeed, our economy thrives.

We need to continue to find ways to encourage investment, entrepreneurship, and innovation in our State and all across our Nation. Our country was founded on the principles of hard work and entrepreneurialism. I am proud that Montana's small businesses continue to exemplify these pillars of our Nation's heritage and are leading the way in economic innovation.

During this National Small Business Week, I encourage all of my fellow Montanans to shop small and join me in supporting Montana's small businesses and thanking them for the important role they hold in our State—not just this week but every week.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, today, for the first time in 6 years, Congress will pass a budget, and we are passing a budget that actually balances. This fulfills another basic responsibility of governing and an important promise Republicans made to the American people.

In advance of this vote, I wish to take a moment to applaud Chairman MIKE ENZI for his leadership on this issue. Because of his strong work, our balanced budget will help grow our economy, reduce the debt, repeal ObamaCare, and rein in Washington overreach. Our balanced budget proves that the Senate is fully working again on behalf of the American people.

OBAMACARE

Mr. President, I wish to speak about another issue that is also important to Americans across the country, an issue which I hear about as I travel the State of Wyoming and which I heard about this weekend.

Last week, the Democratic leader came to the floor of the Senate and he made some very interesting statements about the President's health care law. He said ObamaCare is a smashing success. That was last week.

On Monday, we had this headline in the Wall Street Journal:

> U.S. Emergency Room Visits Keep Climbing: People on Medicaid turn to hospital care when doctor access is limited, new survey suggests.

It is interesting to take a look at this large story and learn about how the number of visits to emergency rooms keeps climbing in spite of what the President promised during the debate of the President's health care law.

The article goes on to say:

> Emergency room visits continue to climb in the second year of the Affordable Care Act, contradicting the law's supporters who had predicted a decline in traffic as more people gained access to doctors and other health care providers.

This is according to a survey by the American College of Emergency Physicians. They should know; they are the ones in the emergency room treating patients. The group says that people whom the health care law pushed on to Medicaid—pushed on to Medicaid—are having trouble getting appointments or even finding a doctor to take care of them because it is someone who doesn't take their new coverage. Does the Democratic minority leader think that is a smashing success? This is a survey of over 2,000 emergency room doctors. Seventy-five percent of them said they have seen increases in emergency room care since 2014. Only one out of 20 ER doctors said they have seen a decrease.

The article quotes one doctor, Dr. Howard Mell, as saying: ''There was a grand theory the law would reduce ER visits.''

A grand theory? Yes, it was.

He said: ''Well, guess what, it hasn't happened. Visits are going up despite the [law], and in a lot of cases because of it.''

That is according to one emergency room doctor who sees the results of the Obama health care law every day in the emergency room where he takes care of patients.

This really shouldn't surprise anyone. We have seen the warning signs coming now for a while. Back in December, the Department of Health and Human Services found that more than half of the health care providers listed for Medicaid plans—half listed as taking Medicaid patients—couldn't schedule appointments for patients, and they are even listed with Health and Human Services as taking care of Medicaid patients. This is only of the doctors who actually care for Medicaid patients in the first place. We know that about half of doctors won't see Medicaid patients at all because the reimbursement is so low for taking care of them.

For more than one-quarter of the doctors, the wait time for a patient to actually get an appointment is more than a month. Does the Democratic leader think that is a smashing success, waiting more than a month to see a doctor?

Last year, almost half of doctors said they had seen an increase in emergency

room visits, and now we see it is much higher. Some supporters of the law last year said that wasn't important. They said: Don't worry, the numbers will drop off after the first year as more people get primary care physicians. Well, it hasn't happened, and it has actually gotten worse. About half of the ER doctors saw an increase in the first year of ObamaCare coverage and 75 percent saw an increase this year, the second year.

It is not getting better. It continues to get worse, to the point that USA TODAY had an article dated May 4, yesterday, page 1: ''ER Visits Surge Despite ObamaCare.''

It says:

> Three-quarters of emergency room doctors say they are seeing ER patient visits surge since ObamaCare took effect—just the opposite of what many Americans expected would happen.

It is not what many Americans expected would happen.

Look at what the President said would happen. Back in 2009, the President was trying to pass the law, and President Obama said this: ''If everybody's got coverage, then they're not going to go to the emergency room for treatment.''

That was one of the biggest reasons the law required everyone in America to have insurance coverage. Remember, that is the mandate. It is called the individual mandate, and it remains extremely unpopular today. The President kept saying it over the years. He said it early on, he said it during the debate, and he said it after the law passed. He continues to hold this position in spite of the fact that 75 percent of emergency room doctors—2,000 doctors who actually work in emergency rooms—are saying: It is not true, Mr. President. The ERs are getting more and more crowded.

We see what happens when an ER gets more crowded: The wait time goes up, the mortality rates for patients trying to get treatment there goes up—because of the health care law.

In 2013, the President told one group of people: ''It means that all the providers around here, instead of having to take in folks in the emergency room, they suddenly have customers who have insurance.''

The President's statements continue to fly in the face of reality. According to the people who really know what is going on, the medical coverage is not keeping people out of emergency rooms. It has become crystal clear that coverage does not equal care. Not only is ObamaCare coverage not delivering care, in many cases the system to provide the coverage isn't even working.

There was an article last Friday in the Washington Post. The headline was ''Nearly half of ObamaCare exchanges are struggling over their future.''

It says: ''Nearly half of the 17 insurance marketplaces set up by the states and the District [of Columbia] under President Obama's health laws are struggling financially.''

Does the minority leader think that is a smashing success?

According to this article, ''many of the online exchanges are wrestling with surging costs, especially for balky technology and expensive consumer call centers—and tepid enrollment numbers.''

It talks about problems in Minnesota, Vermont, Rhode Island, and Colorado. In Oregon, the exchange has failed so spectacularly that the State had to shut it down entirely.

The Washington Post says: ''States have already received nearly $5 billion in Federal grants to establish the online marketplaces.''

That is $5 billion that hard-working American taxpayers had to pay to set up these exchanges, and half of these exchanges, in spite of all of that taxpayer money, are now struggling financially.

This article quotes one expert, Sabrina Corlette, who is a project director at Georgetown University's Center for Health Insurance Reforms. She said: ''A lot of people are going to want to know: What happened to all those taxpayer dollars?''

Well, that is what a lot of Senators want to know. That is exactly what Senators on this side of the aisle have been asking for quite a while now. What happened to all of that hard-earned taxpayer money? How much of that $5 billion was wasted?

The States with these failing exchanges are now looking at raising taxes and raising fees on everybody else's insurance claims. So in half of the States, the exchanges where people are supposed to sign up for coverage are failing. Billions of taxpayer dollars wasted, and States are looking at charging people even more. That is the President's solution for health care in America.

People who do get coverage and want to see a doctor may have to wait for more than a month. They may end up going to the emergency room along with millions of other eople since ObamaCare's mandates began.

Does the minority leader, who came to the floor last week calling this health care law a smashing success, really think that is so? This is not what the American people wanted from health care reform. People knew what they wanted, and they wanted something very simple: They wanted the care they need from a doctor they choose at a lower cost. ObamaCare has failed on every one of those things. It is not a smashing success.

It is time for us to finally give Americans the health care they were asking for all along.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, a budget is about building for the future. A budget is about what it takes for our families, our businesses, and our economy to grow and prosper.

The basics are pretty simple: Our kids need access to a good, affordable education. Our workers need good wages and good benefits. Our businesses and our workers need transit—roads and bridges that are safe enough, strong enough, and fast enough to get us to work and keep goods and services moving. Our workers need good jobs here in America, jobs built on 21st-century innovation and technology. And everyone needs to know that we are in this together, that we won't kick people to the ground, that we will help those who need it most, including seniors, children, and families struggling to make ends meet. That is how we build a strong future.

The Republicans have a different vision of how to build a future. The Republican budget plan will make the rich richer and the powerful more powerful while leaving our kids, our college students, our seniors, our workers, and our families to fall further and further behind.

The people of Massachusetts didn't send me here to do what I can to help the richest of the rich; they sent me here to work for them. So I want to talk about what this Republican budget will mean to the people of our State.

Assuming it is applied proportionately, the Republican budget can cut mandatory transportation funding by 40 percent over the next decade. That will be significantly fewer dollars to repair and improve our highways and to help keep our buses and trains moving in Massachusetts. So if you already think we have a crumbling infrastructure, if you are already worried about old buses and whether the T can struggle through another winter, remember that the Republicans want to slash the support for transportation by 40 percent. With these cuts, our crumbling infrastructure will crumble even faster.

These cuts will also cost jobs. Economists estimate that this Republican budget could mean 56,000 fewer jobs in Massachusetts alone.

This budget also takes aim at our kids. Over the next decade, it could eliminate Head Start services for 400,000 children across this country, cutting the program by more than $4 billion. Little kids are under attack, and so are big kids. The Republican budget could also make college more expensive for the 131,000 Massachusetts students who receive Pell grants. And cutting the student loan interest rate? Forget it. The Republican budget keeps sucking billions of dollars in profits off student loans.

The Republican budget puts Massachusetts residents' health at risk, especially the health of our seniors. Today, the Affordable Care Act saves seniors billions of dollars in prescription drugs. The days when seniors had to choose between filling a prescription and paying the rent were over, but under the Republican budget, almost 80,000 seniors in Massachusetts could each pay an average of $920 more per year for prescription drugs.

It gets worse. About 900,000 seniors in Massachusetts could lose free preventive Medicare health services and

about 26,000 Massachusetts nursing home residents who rely on Medicaid could face cuts to their care and an uncertain future.

What about medical research and the technologies of the future, the kind of work we are proud to do in Massachusetts? For over 10 years, Congress has decimated medical research funding, reducing the buying power of the National Institutes of Health by nearly 25 percent and choking off support for projects that could lead to the next major breakthrough against cancer, heart disease, ALS, diabetes, or autism.

With people living longer and longer and more and more families desperate for a breakthrough on Alzheimer's, what is the Republican budget solution? Cut the NIH budget. Cut medical research. In fact, compared with the President's budget, the Republican budget could mean 1,400 fewer NIH grants a year.

The Republican budget also cuts $600 billion from income security programs, such as nutrition assistance, potentially jeopardizing food stamps for thousands of Massachusetts families who depend on this program to put food on the table. And just to turn the knife a little deeper for families in Massachusetts, the Republican budget could cut funding for heating assistance—funding that helps 183,000 Massachusetts families stay warm in the winter.

We know whom this budget would hurt—millions of middle-class families in Massachusetts and all over this country who are busting their tails to try to make ends meet. It will hurt people who work hard and play by the rules but who are seeing opportunity slip away. Why? Why inflict so much damage on hard-working American people, on students and seniors, on kids and construction workers? Why cut back the support for researchers trying to cure Alzheimer's or college kids trying to get an education? Why? One answer. Once again, the Republicans want to give billions of dollars in tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans—and they expect everyone else to pay for it. The Republicans have planned $269 billion in tax cuts that could go to just a few thousand of the richest families. That is not just irresponsible, it is just plain wrong.

A budget is about values. The Republicans' values are on display here. This budget is about making sure that a tilted playing field tilts even further, and everyone else gets left further and further behind. Those aren't American values. We believe and we have always believed in opportunity. We believe that everyone should have a fighting chance to build a better life for themselves and their children.

Mr. President, we weren't sent here just to help the rich get richer. It is time for the Senate to stand up for the values that build a strong middle class, and we can start by voting down this terrible Republican budget.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

CITIZEN UNREST AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the unrest we have seen, especially in Baltimore in the last week and to a lesser extent in several other cities around the country, including the city of Philadelphia in my State of Pennsylvania.

There has been, of course, no shortage of discussions on this matter, going back to last year, to the protests in Ferguson, MO, and those surrounding other flashpoints that have involved law enforcement officials.

We have in one way or another landed on a bit of a national conversation about police practices, and that is a good conversation. I think we should have that. I, for instance, think we should seriously consider body cameras for use by police officers.

I think this conversation is closely related to some other things that we need to be talking about as well, including the problems of urban America that have a number of causes and that certainly deserve our attention and our action. For instance, I think we can and should be talking about how we can create better jobs, better economic growth, and a better economic climate in our cities, especially our big cities. We need to talk about how we can bring down the terrible rate of poverty that has been persistent for decades in our cities. We have to talk about how schools have been letting down too many poor families in our big cities.

We ought to talk about family structure as well because we know that a breakdown of families contributes enormously to all sorts of social pathologies—involvement in gangs and drug use and drug dealing, criminality in general, and poverty itself.

We can talk about guns, too. I remain proud of the work I have done across the aisle to try to make it more difficult for guns to fall into the hands of people who have no right to be using them—criminals and those with mental illness.

These are all things we ought to be talking about in this great debate, and we should be acting on these things in the Senate and in State and local governmental bodies across the country.

There is something in this discussion that we should also be willing to talk about. It is something that hasn't gotten as much attention during this national conversation about police practices, and it is something that has been bothering me for some time. I think it came to a head this week in Baltimore. I am going to talk about this now and I am going to continue to talk about this in the coming weeks and months because I think it is an important part of this national discussion.

My concern specifically is over the growing scapegoating of police officers in America today. Before I go any further, let me be perfectly clear about one central point. If a police officer acts unprofessionally, acts outside the bounds of ethical standards or breaks the law, then by all means that police officer has to be held accountable and punished for his or her transgression. There is no excuse whatsoever for unlawful police conduct. That absolutely cannot be tolerated not even one little bit.

I will be clear about another point. It is true that there are real and horrible cases of police misconduct. No one I know is trying to deny that or sweep it under the rug or pretend it doesn't happen. It does happen, and it should never be tolerated.

Let's also keep this in perspective. There are doctors who break the law. There are accountants who break the law. There are lawyers who break the law. There are elected public officials who break the law. The fact is that there are bad actors in every profession, in every line of work, in every walk of life, and that is true of the police as well. But if you listen to many of the police critics we hear from today, you would think there is some sort of epidemic of crimes perpetrated by the police. That, I assure you, is not true.

In my years in public life, I have spent a lot of time with police officers. I have gotten to know many of them. I have gone on rides with them. I have listened to their concerns. I have met with them. I have supported their community organizations. I have attended the charitable fundraisers they have held. By and large, I can tell you that I don't know of any group of people anywhere in our society who are more dedicated professionals than the policemen and policewomen across our country.

Far from the epidemic of police misdeeds that some claim to be happening out there, I think just the opposite is true. The overwhelming majority of police are honest men and women. They have very high ethical standards. They don't have a racist bone in their body. Our police have incredibly difficult and often dangerous jobs to do, and it is an incredibly important job as well.

Our communities—let's face it—we all depend on the police. That is probably more true in urban areas than anywhere else in the country.

So we need to have a conversation about bad police practices, but we also need to have a conversation about what a great job the vast majority of police are doing across our country and how much they deserve our thanks and our support.

Unfortunately, the scenes we witnessed in Baltimore last week certainly work against the kind of gratitude we ought to show to our law enforcement community. I am not talking about what happened to Freddie Gray. Mr. Gray absolutely deserves justice. If the police in the Gray case committed crimes, then they must be punished. I don't question that in the least. But what happened last week in

Baltimore was not only about Freddie Gray. In scenes reminiscent of last year in Ferguson, last week in Baltimore we saw a great American city dissolve into utter lawlessness. We saw riots that destroyed a senior citizen center, a CVS drugstore, numerous cars, all kinds of property. We saw dozens of injuries, including injuries to over 90 police officers.

We had a curfew imposed and the National Guard called in to restore order as though this were some kind of war zone. We even had Major League Baseball cancel two games and conduct one game where no fans were permitted to attend. They played before an empty stadium. How is that allowed to happen in a great American city?

Some people excuse this lawlessness and point to the difficult underlying conditions in the local community, but let's ask ourselves who gets hurt the most by these riots.

Well, we know it is the very poor people from these communities who now have no senior center to go to. They cannot go to CVS to get their prescriptions filled or to pick up necessities for their kids. And, of course, there is this big, red, flashing neon sign telling businesses, large and small—they could provide jobs and economic activity there—to stay away.

So where do the police come in on this? Well, President Obama called the looters and rioters in Baltimore thugs, and President Obama has received some criticism for that. I just would use an objective, indisputable term. These people are ''criminals.''

It is a serious crime to set a fire to a car or to a building. It is a serious crime to throw a rock or a bottle at a police officer. Assault and battery is a serious crime. It is a serious crime to engage in looting, and people who commit those acts are criminals. They should be arrested, they should be charged, and they should be prosecuted and punished to the full extent of the law, but in order for that to happen, we need the police. We need them to be actively engaged.

The Baltimore police officers have reported that they were ordered to stand down last week as the city was being destroyed. That is pretty tough to take—especially, I assume, for the law-abiding Baltimore citizens who need that police protection.

Instead of standing down in the face of wanton criminal acts, the police need to be allowed to do their job. They should make arrests. They should restore order. There should never be another American city that looks the way Baltimore did last week.

Now, when six police officers were charged on Friday in the death of Freddie Gray, there were celebrations in the streets in Baltimore. At a certain level, that is completely understandable. Whatever Mr. Gray did on that day, the day he was arrested, he certainly did not deserve to die, and his death cries out for answers. We need to have answers to these questions.

In the passions of last week, I understand why some people cheered the appearance that the criminal justice system was standing up for Mr. Gray. I totally understand that, but let me ask a question. What happens if these accused police officers are found to have not broken the law? What if one of them, several of them or even all of them are found not to have violated the law? What happens then? Will we see Baltimore, and maybe other cities, erupt in flames once more? That is already what appears to be forecast in some quarters.

What about those six individual police officers? Well, we know what happens if they are found guilty. If they are found guilty, they are going to go to jail for a long time, and that will be appropriate.

But what happens if they are found innocent? In the Ferguson, MO, case, a grand jury found there was no reason to believe a crime had been committed by the accused police officer, Darren Wilson.

The U.S. Justice Department also did an investigation, and they decided not to bring civil rights charges against Officer Wilson. So Officer Wilson was found to have committed no wrongdoing, neither by the local grand jury nor by the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Justice Department.

But what happened to Officer Wilson? Did anybody ask that question, What happened to Officer Wilson? Well, he faced multiple death threats. He ended up having to leave his job on the police force, the one job he had always wanted and he loved to do. He ended up having to move out of his home and go live somewhere else. He is only 28 years old.

Now, the accused police officers in Baltimore have life stories too. One of them is police Sergeant Alicia White. She is a 30-year-old African-American woman who joined the Baltimore Police Department 5 years ago. She is engaged to be married. A local Baltimore minister, who knows Sergeant White, described her this way:

> She wanted to be a police officer because she is a Christian and wants to be a good role model for young black women. And she wanted to be that good cop in the community and bridge the gap between the police and the neighborhoods.

Of the six arrested officers, three are African Americans, three are White. None of this means any of these officers necessarily acted appropriately or right in this case. It is quite possible they did not and, if so, the court system, our legal judicial system, will determine that.

What I am simply trying to point out is that these police officers have human faces. They are human beings, and these officers are going to go through hell whether they deserve to or not. Their lives will never be the same whether they are guilty or innocent. There will be many people in the community who shun them, even if they are found to have done nothing wrong.

What message does that send to all the tens of thousands of police officers all across America who risk their lives every day to protect their communities from criminals? Unfortunately, it says there are a lot of people out there who are looking to misplace a lot of social problems we face in our country on the backs of the police. It says they might not be allowed to do their jobs when their communities most need them to do their jobs, and it says that one day, should they find themselves accused of wrongdoing, there might be a public mob that clamors for their conviction and threatens to burn down the city if the legal system finds them independent. That is a sad state of affairs.

I am not defending the officers in the Gray case. I don't know whether they are guilty or innocent. I expect the legal system to determine that, but that is not my point. My point is that while there are some police officers who act terribly and who must be stopped, there is no epidemic of police criminality in this country.

We should absolutely discuss and act upon the issues that surround police and community relations, by all means, and we also need to acknowledge the critical role the police play in keeping our community safe, the overwhelming majority of police who conduct themselves honorably day in and day out.

The next time there is a demonstration about police conduct, I hope it is a demonstration to thank the police for their dedication, their hard work, and their courage. That is a demonstration I will be honored to join.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. AYOTTE). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, we are here debating choices. They happen to be choices about our budget, about the future of our Nation that will be determined by choices we make about how to invest.

That is the key concept at stake in this very momentous moment as we consider choices for how to invest in middle-class financial security, and all that goes along with it, job creation, infrastructure, education funding, clean energy research. All of those choices are critical to the future of our Nation, and we will make disastrous choices if we adopt the budget that has come to us in the conference report for fiscal year 2016 because it fails to understand the need for investment in our future.

We are in danger of leaving a lesser America—an America that for the first time in our history will reflect a lesser Nation left to our children and their grandchildren. All generations before us determined that they would sacrifice, that they would give back and pay forward. Yet now, sadly, in fact tragically, we endanger their future by failing in those investment decisions.

The conference agreement would cut trillions of dollars to domestic programs without seeking revenue. In

fact, it relies on gimmicks that undermine its integrity—a significant gimmick, for example, accounting, $2 trillion in tax revenue from the Affordable Care Act while at the same time repealing that law. It relies on trillions of dollars in supposed savings without detailing how those savings will be accomplished.

At the very least, we owe a measure of integrity to the American people. We can disagree about choices, but at least we should be honest about how revenue is supposed to match the spending we allocate. The proposal before us would, in fact, repeal the Affordable Care Act, which has already allowed more than 16 million Americans to obtain health insurance, access preventive services, and save money on their premiums. It would cut more than $1 trillion from Medicaid, reversing the expansion that has provided health insurance to millions of Americans.

Too many Americans are still struggling, and yet this budget would cut funding for job training and employment services. It would eliminate the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, which provides vital support for small manufacturers in Connecticut and across the country. Time and again, we have learned that education is the key to a brighter future for our children. Yet, tragically, this budget would cut the funding across the spectrum of American education, from universal prekindergarten, which would be slashed, to college affordability, where loan programs would be decimated. In fact, instead of making college more affordable, this budget decimates two critical programs that would help future students pay back loans. Remember, the average student debt in this country is in the tens of thousands of dollars. In Connecticut, it is about $30,000, conservatively estimated.

This budget would increase student loan payments for millions of borrowers, and it would slash Pell grants—increase the cost of loans, cut the amount of grants available that enable students to avoid borrowing. In fact, it would cut the Pell Grant Program by nearly 30 percent and eliminate other important Federal subsidies.

These moneys are not spending, they are investments in our future, the futures of those students whose hopes and dreams will be constrained, undercut, and killed but also the future of our capacity to manufacture and compete around the globe because what we have—more than any other nation—is very smart, skilled people. That is why companies are coming back to this Nation after outsourcing.

One of these programs, the Pay as You Earn Program, caps monthly student loan payments at a level that is proportionate to their earnings and forgives debt after 20 years of repayment.

But the Republican budget would require cuts to this program in a way that could increase required monthly payment increases of more than 50 percent to some borrowers, and it paves the way for eliminating the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, which assists students with debt payments for those who go into public service professions, such as teaching, firefighting, and policing. This program ought to be especially close to our hearts because we purport to be engaged in public service and to provide a role model for young people who engage in public service.

I am particularly concerned about this program's impact on our railroads, roads, bridges, and airports. We know those facilities as infrastructure—the magic word in the Senate, ''infrastructure.'' In fact, we had a hearing just this morning in the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee on the importance of fully funded, long-term investments in our Nation's highway transit and rail system.

We heard testimony from the public and private sectors about how important a revitalized and reinvigorated transportation network is for American competitiveness, American businesses, and American professionals to compete in the world. Yet, through this budget, we will not only sanction, but we will encourage and enable an inadequate investment in infrastructure. The budget conference report before us would cut funding for highways and mass transit by 40 percent over the next decade. There may be no more important fact to know about this budget.

So I regret that I will vote against this budget because I wish, as do many of my colleagues, that we could reach a bipartisan measure that will embody the best in America, not encourage a retreat from our public obligation.

In fact, I think America is ready to invest, ready to give back and to pay forward. In fact, I believe our wealthiest Americans are ready to do more and approve closing loopholes and ending subsidies, not making blanket cuts to vital programs, not cutting taxes for millionaires, as this budget would create a pathway to do, not forcing another 12 million middle-class families and students to pay for college by ending the American opportunity tax credit or adding $1,100 more in burdens on them, and not forcing 16 million middle-class families to pay a $900 tax hike by ending the expansions of the earned-income tax credit and child tax credit. I think our most fortunate Americans are ready to pay forward and do more and invest and, in fact, make more sacrifices, which is the way this budget ought to be arranged. And it isn't even a matter of sacrifices on the part of anyone; it is ending the subsidies for outsourcing to ensure that everyone pays their fair share without those hidden tax breaks and subsidies that can be closed.

I hope we can do better than this. I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing the budget conference report.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, a budget is a vision of the future, and it clearly appears the two sides have very different visions as to what our country should be and the direction in which we move.

At a time of unprecedented and grotesque income and wealth inequality, where 99 percent of all new income is going to the top 1 percent, my Republican colleagues say we need to give a massive tax break to the 5,000 wealthiest families in America—the top two-tenths of 1 percent—a $269 billion tax break over a 10-year period. That is not what the American people believe. What they believe is that at a time when the rich and large corporations are doing phenomenally well, when we have a large deficit, when we have massive unmet needs in this country, that maybe, just maybe it is time to ask the wealthy and large corporations to start paying their fair share of taxes, not give them more tax breaks. That is exactly what this Republican budget does.

At a time when the United States is the only major country on Earth that doesn't guarantee health care to all people and when 35 million Americans today have no health insurance and even more are underinsured, with large copayments and high premiums, the Republican budget unbelievably—unbelievably—simply throws 27 million Americans off of health insurance. What happens to them? What happens when the Affordable Care Act is ended—which is what their budget does—and 16 million people lose their health insurance? What happens when another 11 million people lose their health insurance because of the $440 billion cuts in Medicaid? What happens to 27 million Americans? How many of them will die? Clearly, many thousands will die. People who are sick will not be able to go to the doctor. People who are sick will get sicker and suffer. Twenty-seven million people thrown off of health insurance is beyond being unconscionable. Yet, that is what is in the Republican budget.

The Presiding Officer is a neighbor of mine in New Hampshire. I know that in New Hampshire—I have been there recently—and in Vermont, young people are wondering about how they are going to be able to afford to go to college and what kind of student debts they will incur when they leave college. Our charge is to work together to make sure that every young person in this country who has the ability and the desire and the willingness to go to college is able to go to college regardless of his or her income. That is what we need to do in a competitive global economy.

We used to have the highest percentage of college graduates in the world. Today, we are in 12th place. That is not where we should be if we want to compete globally in this difficult world economy.

What is the Republican solution? The Republican solution is to make a bad

situation much worse, with a $90 billion cut over a 10-year period in mandatory Pell Grant funding—Pell grants being the major source of funding for low- and moderate-income young people in order to get help to go to college. This budget does exactly the opposite of what we should be doing.

We are the wealthiest country in the history of the world. The problem we are having is that almost all of that wealth is going to a handful of people at the top. Yet, today we have more people living in poverty than at almost any time in the modern history of America. We have seen some descriptions of that in the tragedy we recently observed in Baltimore in communities where 50 percent of the people are unemployed, where kids don't have enough to eat. Honestly, without being too rhetorical, I just don't understand how, when families are struggling to feed their kids, when everybody understands that hunger is a real problem in this country, anybody could vote for a budget that makes huge cuts in food stamps, in the WIC Program, and in other nutrition programs for families who are struggling to feed their families. That is not what this country is supposed to be about.

On top of all of that—on top of cutting health care, with 27 million people thrown off of health insurance; cutting education, making it harder for kids to go to college, harder for families to put their kids into Head Start; harder for poor families to feed their kids—my Republican colleagues say a major priority in this country is to give $269 billion in tax breaks to the top two-tenths of 1 percent. Does anybody—anybody outside of this Chamber think that makes any sense at all? Does anybody outside of here think those are American priorities? Billionaires do not need another tax break. They are doing just great. They are doing fine.

Then, to add insult to injury, the Republican budget allows to expire the additional benefits we put into the earned-income tax credit and the child tax credit. That, in effect, would mean a tax increase for over 10 million working families. We would be raising taxes on low-income workers while lowering taxes on billionaires. Those are not the priorities of the American people.

Madam President, I hope very much we will reject this budget.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. Madam President, the Senate will soon vote to adopt the conference report to S. Con. Res. 11, the budget resolution. I supported the budget resolution when we considered it in March, and I plan to support the conference report, but I was disappointed to see one difference between the budget resolution that was passed by the Senate this year and the conference report we will be voting on later today. The Senate's budget resolution contained language that would have created a point of order against any legislation that designated more in the so-called OCO or overseas contingency operations funding than what the President requested in fiscal year 2016. The conference report we will soon consider does not contain that provision.

This point of order would have allowed those of us who have objected to off-budget funds being used in order to avoid spending caps—particularly in the international affairs budget—to at least raise the issue on various appropriations bills and other measures we consider in this body. This is an issue which needs to be raised, especially in light of the State Department's use of such funding.

It is bad enough that the administration has been requesting OCO funding to avoid making tough choices for its underlying budget since 2012, but Members of Congress have become enablers, consistently appropriating more OCO funds than the administration has asked for. In fiscal year 2014, the administration requested $3.8 billion in OCO funding for international affairs; Congress appropriated $6.5 billion. For fiscal year 2015, the administration requested $7.8 billion in OCO funding for international affairs; Congress appropriated $9.26 billion. That figure does not include the $2.5 billion appropriated to address the Ebola crisis; we appropriated that separately as emergency funding.

While emergency funding and OCO are different designations, the practical effect is the same. This is funding which is not subject to budget spending caps created by the Budget Control Act.

This year, the administration has requested $7 billion in OCO funding for international affairs.

Secretary Kerry said in early 2013 that ''OCO funding supports the efforts of the department in meeting the extraordinary demands of operating in the frontline states of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, and to a limited extent in other fragile regions.'' This year's OCO request includes funding for those countries, plus Syria, Jordan, and the Ukraine.

Some of my colleagues have concerns that the Defense Department will be shortchanged under the spending caps, and we have worked to increase OCO funding spending in 2016 beyond the $57 billion requested by the President to $96 billion in total. But that $96 billion can be used for anything the administration and Congress both designate as being in support of ''overseas contingency operations.'' It also enables departments that receive OCO-designated appropriations to avoid having to make the tough funding decisions in their underlying budgets.

I am disappointed the conference report we will consider today does not contain a point of order that would have at least enabled those of us who share these concerns I have raised today to raise this issue and to take some votes on it.

With that being said, I also understand that passing a budget is an important step in getting back to regular order and allowing Congress to carry out one of its primary responsibilities—establishing a budget for the Federal Government. By passing this budget, Congress will be able to start considering appropriations bills and other budget-related legislation. After all, it is Congress's job to exercise oversight and prioritize where and how Federal dollars are to be spent. In addition, passing a budget also initiates the reconciliation process for the committees in the House and the Senate that oversee the Affordable Care Act.

As I said earlier, I will support this conference report, but I would be remiss not to voice my concerns over the removal of the OCO-related point of order and the systemic use of off-budget funds to avoid busting the spending caps.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that all time remaining on the conference report be yielded back at 5:30 p.m. today and that the Senate vote on the adoption of the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Madam President, the American people have consistently and overwhelmingly voiced their concern that our country is moving in the wrong direction, whether that be with regard to wage stagnation, unemployment or simply realizing the American dream.

Unfortunately, the budget resolution before us sends a strong message to the American people that Washington isn't listening. Instead of taking the opportunity to work together across party lines and move our country in the right direction, the Republican budget resolution continues to take our Nation down a road where Washington again stacks the deck against the middle class and rewards the wealthiest families and largest corporations in America.

There isn't a single tax expenditure or loophole that is closed in the Republican budget. This budget refuses to ask the wealthy to contribute a single dollar more to deficit reduction. It does nothing to eliminate the carried interest loophole at a time when Wall Street billionaires pay a lower effective tax rate than some truckdrivers, teachers, and nurses. In fact, this budget would eliminate the estate tax for wealthy families who inherit over $10 million.

This budget doesn't just give a tax cut for the wealthiest 1 percent, it also calls for lowering the top individual tax rate at a time when the top 1 percent already earns more income than the bottom 50 percent.

What is more, the Republican budget resolution actually delivers a tax break

for the wealthiest 0.2 percent of Americans over the next decade, providing an average tax break of $3 million to multimillionaires and billionaires. In fact, there are more Senators who will be voting later this afternoon on this budget proposal than the number of Wisconsin families who would benefit from the tax provision of this tax break I just cited.

Who picks up the tab for these giveaways? In my home State of Wisconsin, an estimated 158,000 hard-working families would pay $1,000 or more in taxes under the Republican budget resolution. I wonder, do my colleagues on the other side of the aisle really believe this budget gives Americans ''the right to rise''? Is this their idea of an ''American revival'' for our middle class?

Not only does the Republican budget resolution fall short when it comes to making strong investments in education to create a strong path to the middle class, it actually falls flat by actually cutting these investments, failing to make college education affordable, and ignoring the huge student debt crisis across America. For Wisconsin families, the cost of college education will increase for up to 117,000 students because of the Republican budget's substantial cuts to the Pell Grant Program. At a time when our national economy moves forward with a slow and steady recovery, my State's economy has continued to lag behind.

So I can't support this Republican budget resolution when it doesn't make the strong investments America desperately needs in our roads, in our bridges, and in our ports that will create jobs, boost our local economies, and provide businesses with the quality transportation system they need to move their goods to market. I can't support this Republican budget resolution when about 46,000 Wisconsin jobs would be eliminated because of cuts to investment in transportation, education, and other programs.

At a time when both parties should be working together to pass a budget that grows our economy for the middle class and gives everyone a fair shot at getting ahead, this Republican budget resolution cuts investments in workforce readiness, leaving 40,000 Wisconsinites without the training that prepares them to put their hard work ethic to work moving our economy forward.

Many of the Wisconsin workers I hear from every day are really struggling to make ends meet. They are working more, taking home less, and worried—worried that for the first time in American history, their kids will have fewer opportunities than they did.

The Republican budget doesn't address those worries, it doesn't address those anxieties or those fears. It doesn't respond to this insecurity. Rather, the Republican budget continues the same failed, top-down economics, where Washington rigs the rules in favor of special interests, in favor of millionaires and billionaires.

Unfortunately, the Republican proposal seeks to balance the budget on the backs of the middle class and those struggling to one day become a part of America's middle class. This budget proposal marks another missed opportunity for the majority. The American people are right to believe this budget takes our country another step in the wrong direction because it turns its backs on building a stronger future. We can do better.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

Mr. ENZI. Madam President, section 3112 of the conference agreement directs the Joint Committee on Taxation and CBO to produce, alongside CBO's conventional estimates, cost estimates that incorporate the macroeconomic effects of major policy changes. With respect to the designation of the major legislation that would fall within this definition, the chair of the Committee on the Budget in the Senate shall exercise the authority granted under subsection (c)(1)(B)(ii), in consultation with the appropriate chair or vice chair of the Joint Committee on Taxation, to designate a revenue measure as major legislation.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ENZI. 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. ENZI. Madam President, I have been here most of the day listening to comments about the budget. I am fascinated by the budget speculation that has gone on here. Of course, I do know I only had 6 weeks to make up a budget for us to debate, and add to, subtract from, and then to conference. But a lot of what has been said is not actually in the budget. Of course, one of the comments was that it should be a bipartisan budget. In the whole time I have been here, there has not been a bipartisan budget. The majority party has always gotten to take the lead and outline what they see as a vision. But in the past, I remember we used to do our opening statements on the budget in the Budget Committee and then get a copy of the budget we had just commented on. I thought that was wrong. I provided them with it the day before the statements were made so they could make better comments on the budget and have better amendments.

What I really would have liked to have done is to have released it even a little earlier. I proposed this to them in exchange for them doing their amendments in advance so we could see their amendments and they could see our amendments. That would lead to a much more bipartisan budget event. That was not agreed to.

Now we are down to the point where we are talking about this final conference report, where we have gotten the House and the Senate to agree on a position. I noticed a lot of people today said we were cutting highways. We are not cutting highways. There is a provision in there to take care of highways. I think everybody—both sides of the aisle—wants to make sure we have adequate highways in America. How we get there might be a little different. The President suggested we put a mandatory tax on money that is held overseas by companies to force them to bring it back. If that is done in too short of a period, that would bankrupt a lot of companies because they do have those invested in things overseas. But it is something everybody looking at international tax reform has been talking about. One of the difficulties is, if you do give a reduction in the amount of tax in order to encourage them to bring it back without making it mandatory, it shows up as a huge cost to the Federal Government. Right now they are taxed at 35 percent. If we were to say they could bring it back at the 14 percent the President suggested, that would be a 21-percent cost to our budget. But if we leave it at 35 percent, nobody is bringing that money back here. If we put it at 14 percent and make it mandatory, I guess they would bring the money back here, if we didn't bankrupt them. That will be considered in the Finance Committee in the tax reform package.

I am certain something will be done on that to make us more competitive overseas, to bring the money back. I know they are talking about taking, as the President suggested, a portion of those funds to take care of the highways in the beginning, but we still have to have a long-term way to take care of highways, and that is going to require some bipartisan action.

Virtually everything that was talked about today in the way of criticism is something that still has to be done. It has to be done with a majority vote, and it has to make it through the whole Senate process, which probably requires 60 votes, which means it is going to be bipartisan, and then every one of those things we were accused of doing has to be signed by the President.

They have to be reasonable. They cannot be unreasonable, as we are seeing in there. Some do not even exist. For instance, we were accused of cutting Head Start money. That is not in the budget. There were some cuts to Head Start. That was part of the sequester a couple of years ago. I was astounded when some of the Head Start people came to my office and said: We got cut 7½ percent.

I said: No, no. It is 2.3 percent.

They said: No. We got cut 7½ percent.

What I found out was that the bureaucracy in DC kept their money and took it out on the kids out there. Kids were taken out of Head Start. They realized their error and they made some different changes and they restored the money out there.

I asked my people: Ok. You got your money back?

They said: Yes, but we still couldn't put our kids back because our costs went up so high under ObamaCare on health care for our employees that we had to put all of that into health care. That was not how it was supposed to work either, but that is how ObamaCare works.

They also talk about us cutting Pell grants. We moved Pell from mandatory to discretionary. It was not cut. It was moved so it could be reviewed on a regular basis, just like everything else. The estate tax was mentioned. Again, that is a Committee on Finance issue that would have to be dealt with. It has not been given approval for all the years that have been asked for, but that does not mean somebody cannot request it. We will see if the Finance Committee can find some way to do it.

I think we can tell from the discussion that probably was not going to happen. The numbers speak, and the speculation does not. But here are some of the things this budget does: It balances the budget within 10 years without raising taxes. It achieves more than $5 trillion in savings, so it puts us on a slope to get to a balanced budget in 9 years. It produces a $32 billion surplus in 2024 and a $24 billion surplus in 2025 and it stays in balance. It boosts the Nation's economy by more than $400 billion in additional economic growth over the next 10 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office. It is expected to grow 1.2 million additional jobs over the next 10 years—again, according to the Congressional Budget Office statement.

The balanced budget ensures a strong national defense. Yes, that is in there. The balanced budget provides for repeal and replacement of ObamaCare. The balanced budget preserves Medicare. We heard about these cuts to Medicare. There are some savings in Medicare. Under our plan, instead of those being spent on other programs outside of Medicare, those are to be used for Medicare.

We already saw that we did the doc fix. That is so the doctors would be adequately paid so they would continue to take Medicare patients—very important. That is taken care of in this budget. The balanced budget supports stronger economic growth. Note that the boost in economic growth will all come from the private sector. Government spending does not contribute to this growth.

As my fellow Budget Committee member and businessman Senator PERDUE notes, expanding government does not help grow the economy.

The budget agreement improves transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the Federal Government by cutting waste and eliminating redundancies and enacting regulatory reform. It calls for modernizing Medicaid by increasing State flexibility and protecting those most in need of assistance. It improves honest and responsible accounting practices as part of the Federal budget process by ensuring that fair value accounting is used, which provides a more honest accounting method.

I am the first accountant to chair the Budget Committee. It is very important for me to have it so we can tell exactly where things are going, not just in the first 10 years, which is what we have been typically doing, but looking at the outlying numbers too.

We are going through a baby boom retirement right now, and the number of people under Social Security is going just like that.

We did not change Social Security. Under the Budget Act, we are not allowed to change Social Security, but we are going to have to take a look at it. Looking at those numbers in the long term is going to force both sides of the aisle to take a look at what we need to do to save what we are used to.

This new honest accounting will tell us more accurately what the legislation will cost the hard-working taxpayers. It improves the administration and coordination of benefits, and it increases employment opportunities for disabled workers. It calls on Congress to pass a balanced budget amendment for the Constitution. There are a bunch of States that are working on it and 27 States passed the requirement for us to do that. Nine other States are close behind. If seven of the nine agree to that, we will have to actually balance the budget.

How difficult is that? Last year, we overspent $468 billion. The dollars that we get to actually make decisions on are about $1,100 billion. Some people call that $1.1 trillion. I do not think that really tells the story; 1,100 billion sounds like a lot more than $1.1 trillion. So $468 billion overspent on an $1,100 billion decision process, that is 50 percent. If we were to balance the budget, we would have to cut that by 50 percent, and people really would be concerned.

Why do we have to do that? Interest rates alone will cause us to do that. If the interest rates go up to what they normally would be—right now we are spending $230 billion, and that is at an interest rate of 1.7 percent. With interest rates rising, we would have to spend $1,745 billion over the next 10 years just on interest.

Another reason we need to get this budget done is so appropriators can get started. They are the ones that do the spending bills. There are 12 spending bills out there that get into the specifics of the things we are spending. All we did was give a blueprint for the overall picture for each of those 12 spending committees. But they need to take a look at what they have jurisdiction over and see where there is duplication, fraud, waste, and programs that are not even working.

We have a bunch of programs out there that we have not reauthorized. That means they have expired, but we are still spending money on them—$293 billion a year on them. We have to do better.

There are two ways we can make a difference. We can look at those 260 programs and see if—if they have not been looked at for a long time, see if there couldn't be some savings there. Secondly, we can try to grow the private sector economy. Private sector growth by 1 percent would provide more than $300 billion in additional tax revenue every year. That almost balances the budget by itself.

There are some things we can do if we start looking at how we can keep from impeding business, get business going and make it more competitive in the United States, and we can do better.

I hope the people will all support the budget we have. It isn't perfect. We had a short time to work on it compared to the time the other side had to work on it in previous years, but we did it, and now we need to finish it.

I ask for my colleagues' support on the budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Under the previous order, all time is yielded back.

The question is on agreeing to the conference report to accompany S. Con. Res. 11.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

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

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 171 Leg.]

YEAS—51

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

NAYS—48

Baldwin	Feinstein	Merkley
Bennet	Franken	Mikulski
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Murphy
Booker	Heinrich	Murray
Boxer	Heitkamp	Nelson
Brown	Hirono	Paul
Cantwell	Kaine	Peters
Cardin	King	Reed
Carper	Klobuchar	Reid
Casey	Leahy	Sanders
Coons	Manchin	Schatz
Cruz	Markey	Schumer
Donnelly	McCaskill	Shaheen
Durbin	Menendez	Stabenow

Tester	Warner	Whitehouse
Udall	Warren	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Vitter

The conference report was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD—VETO

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Chair lay before the Senate the veto message to accompany S.J. Res. 8.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the veto message.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Veto message to accompany S.J. Res. 8, a 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.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to table the veto message to accompany S.J. Res. 8, and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

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

The result was announced—yeas 96, nays 3, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 172 Leg.]

YEAS—96

Alexander	Feinstein	Murkowski
Ayotte	Fischer	Murphy
Baldwin	Flake	Murray
Barrasso	Franken	Nelson
Bennet	Gardner	Paul
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Peters
Booker	Hatch	Portman
Boozman	Heinrich	Reed
Boxer	Heitkamp	Reid
Brown	Heller	Risch
Burr	Hirono	Roberts
Cantwell	Hoeven	Rounds
Capito	Inhofe	Rubio
Cardin	Isakson	Sanders
Carper	Johnson	Sasse
Casey	Kaine	Schatz
Cassidy	King	Schumer
Coats	Kirk	Scott
Cochran	Klobuchar	Sessions
Collins	Lankford	Shaheen
Coons	Leahy	Shelby
Corker	Lee	Stabenow
Cornyn	Manchin	Sullivan
Cotton	Markey	Tester
Crapo	McCain	Thune
Daines	McCaskill	Tillis
Donnelly	McConnell	Toomey
Durbin	Menendez	
Enzi	Merkley	
Ernst	Mikulski	
Udall	Warren	Wicker
Warner	Whitehouse	Wyden

NAYS—3

Cruz	Grassley	Moran

NOT VOTING—1

Vitter

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT—Resumed

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, what is the pending business before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is H.R. 1191, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1191) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Pending:

Corker/Cardin amendment No. 1140, in the nature of a substitute.

Corker/Cardin amendment No. 1179 (to amendment No. 1140), to require submission of all Persian text included in the agreement.

Blunt amendment No. 1155 (to amendment No. 1140), to extend the requirement for annual Department of Defense reports on the military power of Iran.

Vitter modified amendment No. 1186 (to amendment No. 1179), to require an assessment of inadequacies in the international monitoring and verification system as they relate to a nuclear agreement with Iran.

Cotton amendment No. 1197 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 1140), of a perfecting nature.

Cotton (for Rubio) amendment No. 1198 (to amendment No. 1197), to require a certification that Iran's leaders have publically accepted Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the Corker amendment No. 1140 to the desk.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the Corker amendment No. 1140 to H.R. 1191, an act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Mitch McConnell, Bob Corker, Joni Ernst, Rob Portman, Johnny Isakson, Shelley Moore Capito, Thad Cochran, Orrin G. Hatch, David Perdue, Daniel Coats, Jeff Flake, Kelly Ayotte, Cory Gardner, John Hoeven, Roger F. Wicker, John Thune, John Cornyn.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to H.R. 1191 to the desk.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on H.R. 1191, an act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Mitch McConnell, Bob Corker, Joni Ernst, Rob Portman, Johnny Isakson, Shelley Moore Capito, Thad Cochran, Orrin G. Hatch, David Perdue, Daniel Coats, Jeff Flake, Kelly Ayotte, Cory Gardner, John Hoeven, Roger F. Wicker, John Thune, John Cornyn.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorums required under rule XXII be waived.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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 Iowa.

U.S. MARSHALS SERVICE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the U.S. Marshals Service performs many important functions. Marshals protect Federal judges, they transport Federal prisoners, and they apprehend fugitives. The marshals operate the Witness Security Program, and they manage the Asset Forfeiture Program. The work is vital and sometimes even dangerous.

Given the important nature of the work, it is all the more essential that its leaders carry out their mission with integrity and openness. Unfortunately, the evidence suggests that there are serious questions about the leadership of the Marshals Service. The growing number of allegations brought to my office by whistleblowers is very alarming. It suggests there may be a pattern of mismanagement.

In several letters to the Justice Department, I have asked about multiple personnel actions allegedly driven by favoritism rather than merit.

The first example involves the Director of the U.S. Marshals Service, Stacia Hylton. In September 2011, Director Hylton sent an email from her personal email address to Kimberly Beal. At the time, Beal was the Deputy

Assistant Director of the Asset Forfeiture Division. The email included the resume of an applicant for a highly paid contractor position.

Beal apparently went to unusual lengths to ensure that the applicant, who knew Director Hylton in college, was hired. Emails indicate that Ms. Beal inserted herself into the hiring process even though a contractor representative told her the applicant was unqualified. She directed subordinates to remain silent about the applicant's lack of qualifications. Ms. Beal traveled to Boston to interview the applicant in person. According to the whistleblower, she did not travel to interview other candidates for similar positions.

After the contractor hired the applicant, Director Hylton placed Ms. Beal in the position of Acting Assistant Director of the Asset Forfeiture Division—a position she now holds permanently.

In yet another example, an Assistant Director reportedly directed subordinates to offer a lucrative contract position to a person with whom she allegedly had a personal relationship. Gamesmanship of this sort undermines the confidence of dedicated Marshals Service employees in their leaders.

I could go on and on with examples such as these that have been pouring into my office.

Another problem area is the alleged mismanagement of the Assets Forfeiture Fund. The law requires that proceeds generated from asset sales be used to operate the Asset Forfeiture Program, compensate victims, and support law enforcement. Yet, it appears that some in leadership use the funds to feather their own nests. Money is spent on the ''best of the best'' in office furnishings and decorations instead of what is really needed to enhance law enforcement. In one example, the fund was used to purchase a $22,000 conference table. In another example, the fund was used to buy 57 square feet of top-of-the-line granite for the Asset Forfeiture Training Academy in Houston. The Marshals Service claims it cannot even figure out how much the granite cost. Whistleblowers say the official who approved it told the supplier that ''cost was not a factor.'' And that official has dismissed concerns about wasteful spending of asset forfeiture money on the grounds that it does not come from appropriated funds.

That is not responsible leadership. All money collected through the power of government needs to be spent carefully. Every dollar wasted on unnecessary luxuries in Marshals Services offices is a dollar that cannot be used to support real law enforcement priorities as the law requires. The proceeds of asset forfeitures should not be a slush fund for the personal whims of unaccountable bureaucrats.

How has the Justice Department responded to these allegations? When I asked the Department to explain the efforts to have Director Hylton's favorite candidate hired by a contractor, the Department told me that Director Hylton ''did not recommend'' the applicant ''for any position.'' And the words ''did not recommend for any position'' is a quote.

The Marshals Service says it consulted with its Office of General Counsel before the Department sent its letter denying any improper hiring practices. That is disturbing because the Office of General Counsel has known about these allegations since December 2013. Still, the Justice Department told me that no one did anything wrong. Someone in the Marshals Service General Counsel's Office had an obligation to speak up before the Justice Department issued a false denial. They should have known better.

About 3 weeks later, the Department retracted its earlier denial. In a second response, the Department attached additional evidence that, in its words, ''appears to be inconsistent with representations'' that it had previously made. That evidence was an email chain showing that then-Deputy Assistant Beal had, in fact, received the applicant's resume from Director Hylton's personal email address. She then forwarded it to other senior leadership, stating that the ''Director . . . highly recommends'' the applicant. That evidence directly contradicts the denial that the Department initially sent to the Judiciary Committee.

You would think the Department would insist on an independent inquiry after being misled like that. Unfortunately, the Department is still allowing the Marshals Service to investigate itself. Justice Department headquarters is not doing its job when it fails to supervise components within DOJ. There needs to be better supervision and a truly independent inquiry to get to the bottom of these allegations.

Finally, I recognize the courageous whistleblowers who are bringing these shortcomings to Congress's attention. As often happens, many of these whistleblowers have faced retaliation for just speaking up, just telling the truth, just helping Congress do its constitutional responsibilities. But they have been retaliated against, and even today they fear more retaliation will come. Multiple whistleblowers allege that senior leaders submit FOIA requests to seek information on employees who may have made protected disclosures. How sneaky. This is not the purpose of the Freedom of Information Act. Multiple whistleblowers also allege that since receiving my letters, managers within the U.S. Marshals Service have been on the hunt for the identities of those who have made protected disclosures to my office. This behavior is absolutely unacceptable and contrary to the intent of whistleblower protection legislation. Maybe instead of spending time targeting the people who are trying to bring wrongdoing to light, the marshals should focus on providing full and accurate answers to my questions.

The work of the Marshals Service is vital. The men and women doing that work deserve not just our gratitude but our support as well. That support includes demanding responsible and accountable leadership from the Marshals Service.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

MEDICAID

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to speak about one aspect of the budget debate that has been before us, and it involves a major program that affects the lives of not just millions of Americans but literally tens of millions.

We have debates and discussions in this body all the time about our commitment to children, our commitment to older citizens, and a whole range of folks we are concerned about. All of us at one time or another have made pronouncements about how important it is to support children, especially vulnerable children. We also are very concerned that as our parents or older relatives reach a certain age, they get the quality care in the twilight of their lives that we would expect. They are helped through a range of programs and services, actually starting with Medicare.

So we are concerned about our children, we are concerned about our older citizens, and we are also concerned about the middle class. We hear a lot of us speaking about strategies or efforts to help boost the middle class and all of the challenges of the middle class. It is interesting, though, that some issues affect all three of those broad groups of Americans. The issue I am going to talk about is Medicaid. It affects, obviously, children. It affects individuals with disabilities. It certainly affects older citizens across the country. And, indeed, it affects the middle class.

The Senate Republican budget cuts Medicaid funding by more than $1.3 trillion, and in my judgment—and this is an assertion of an opinion—it would end the program as we know it because of the dimensions of those cuts. The budget would repeal the Medicaid expansion, threatening health insurance for some 14 million Americans, and convert much of the program's funding into block grants.

Let me talk about seniors for a moment. We have had lots of debates about the best policy going forward in the budget as it relates to a whole range of issues, especially programs such as Medicaid. But at the end of the day, it is not the rhetoric or the speeches; it is the votes that tell where one stands and what we prioritize.

We all have our own personal stories about those who have gone before us, and we, of course, always remember our own parents. But when we are talking about our seniors, we are talking about Americans who fought our wars, worked in our factories, taught our children, built the middle class, and

did so much for us, including giving us life and love. We want to make sure we are doing everything possible to provide them with the quality care they deserve when they reach the age of 65 or older.

We know Medicaid provides older beneficiaries the dignity in their later years that they should have a right to expect, as well as the flexibility to design where they receive care.

In my home State of Pennsylvania, over 40 percent of Medicaid spending on long-term services and supports goes towards home and community-based care. Many assume the Medicare Program—Medicare, not Medicaid—will cover long-term care. In fact, it is Medicaid that is the largest single provider of long-term care in America—not Medicare, but Medicaid.

Medicaid covers approximately 40 percent of all long-term care services provided in the United States, and 4 out of 10 people is a big number, obviously. It is lots of folks we care about and interact with in the course of a day, whether they are neighbors or family members or coworkers across the board.

As enrollment continues to grow, more Americans are relying upon Medicaid than ever before. Medicaid is the major long-term care program for the middle class. So I would ask we all keep that in mind as we consider the determinations made through the budget process.

Let me give one example of a man living in Philadelphia—his example and his mother's. After her husband's passing, this individual's mom had health problems and her health deteriorated quickly. Kidney problems forced her in and out of the hospital. She was living on a fixed income, with medical bills piling up. She sold her apartment and used that money to pay for a few more years of care. This woman and her son were using every penny they could to help with her care, but it wasn't enough. She needed constant assistance. Her son, as the only child in the family, couldn't do it himself while raising his own two children.

Eventually, this man's mother received Medicaid benefits and moved into a nursing home in Philadelphia. Her son says he doesn't know what his family would have done without Medicaid. Paying for nursing home care would have quickly eaten his salary, and he would have had to sell his family home. Again, he was raising two children. Medicaid allowed him to avoid that vicious cycle.

Like millions of Americans, this man went to school and worked hard to get a good job so he could make a decent living. But despite being employed as a professional, without Medicaid to help his mom, he would have had to impoverish his own family—his two children—to care for his aging mom. This would have put his children's future at risk.

Medicaid offered this individual some help—obviously, his mother some help—in providing for his family and offering a way to have his mother get the care she needed.

This is not atypical. This is reality for so many families. Here is one quick statistic. Then I will move to children, and then I will wrap up.

In Pennsylvania, seniors accounted for just 10 percent of Medicaid enrollees but over 22 percent of spending in 2011. The national numbers aren't much different than that. The number of enrollees might be around 10 percent or in that lower range, but the spending, because of the kind of care they received, is of a higher cost.

Let me talk for a couple of minutes about children. Together, Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, which we know as CHIP, served more than 45 million children in Federal fiscal year 2013, representing one in three children in the United States. So Medicaid plus CHIP is the health care for more than one in three children.

We know CHIP is the health insurance program that impacts a lot of middle-income or at least lower-income families with children. In Pennsylvania, for example, just the Medicaid Program covered 34 percent of children ages 0 to 18. So just a little more than a third of Pennsylvania children rely upon Medicaid—a critically important program for those children.

One of the groups here in Washington that tracks programs and policies for children is First Focus. They had a report in September of 2014 where they reported that in calendar year 2012, 47 percent of rural children were covered by public insurance, meaning Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program or maybe a third option. So 47 percent of rural children were covered by public health insurance and only 38 percent of urban children.

I know that sounds counterintuitive for some here, but rural children in America rely substantially upon Medicaid and the CHIP program. So improving access to health insurance for low-income children not only leads to better health outcomes in the short run and in the long run, but it also improves educational outcomes and government savings in the long term.

Compared to their uninsured counterparts, children covered by Medicaid or CHIP are more likely to complete high school and college. These important programs help children literally succeed in life because they stay in school, whereas they would not at that rate if they were uninsured.

Some claim Medicaid is a highly inefficient program—that is one of the charges against it—whose costs are growing out of control. In fact, Medicaid's cost per child is 27 percent lower than the per-child cost for private insurance. And Medicaid's costs per beneficiary have been growing more slowly—per beneficiary costs—than under private coverage. I would argue it is not only efficient but effective in delivering quality health care to our children.

We know there is more to be done. We know there are improvements that Medicaid could incorporate. We need to improve dental and behavioral health care for children and increase access to screenings and vaccinations to make sure our children are protected.

Let me just close with a couple of observations about children and pregnant women. We know that Medicaid is also an important addition for children, but it is very important for pregnant women, with prenatal, labor, delivery, and postpartum care.

Nationwide, Medicaid finances 45 percent of all births—45 percent. We have a lot of folks in both parties who say how much they care about pregnant women and children. Well, if 45 percent of all births are in Medicaid, we better protect Medicaid. It is vitally important.

Children who have health insurance, such as Medicaid and CHIP, are more likely to receive vaccinations, have regular medical checkups, and avoid preventable childhood illnesses.

So let me conclude with this thought. We know we have to find savings. We know we have to work towards a fiscally responsible budget. But I don't think anyone here believes the way to do that is to do it on the backs of children who are poor but receive good health care through Medicaid or to do it by way of short-circuiting or limiting substantially the opportunities that older citizens have to go to a nursing home. Everyone in this building knows someone who is in a nursing home solely because of Medicaid—not everyone, but plenty of people either we know and love or people we know and encounter during the course of the year.

So if we care about pregnant women, if we care about kids, if we care about older citizens and individuals with disabilities, we should think long and hard before we substantially cut, as this budget does, Medicaid.

With that, I yield the floor.

BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this week, the Senate is poised to pass the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program Reauthorization Act of 2015. The law enforcement community is unified in its support of this program because it quite simply saves lives. To date, this program has provided more than 13,000 State and local law enforcement agencies with nearly 1.2 million bulletproof vests, including nearly 4,400 to officers in Vermont.

Senator GRAHAM and I have been working to address any and all concerns that certain Republican Senators have raised about the bill. We are prepared, for example, to accept an amendment from Senator LEE that would reduce the authorization level from $30 million annually to $25 million. Unfortunately, I learned yesterday that a single Republican Senator

continues to maintain a hold on this bill, continuing a pattern from the last Congress of unwarranted obstructionism. I have been in contact with a number of law enforcement groups representing officers around the country, and I know that they are all incredibly disappointed that this bill continues to be blocked.

The Bulletproof Vest Partnership has helped to establish protective vests as standard equipment for law enforcement agencies across the country. Yet, for far too many jurisdictions—especially rural and smaller agencies—vests still cost too much and wear out too soon. We know that bulletproof vests will not save every officer, but they have already saved the lives of more than 3,000 law enforcement officers since 1987. I have met with police officers who are alive today because of vests purchased through this program, and they will attest to the fact that this program saves lives. These vests also are a comfort for families, to know that their loved ones have them.

While I will keep fighting for passage of this bulletproof vest legislation, we must also make sure that our work to make our communities safer for all continues. Over the past few years, the Senate has come together to protect victims of sexual assault and domestic violence by reauthorizing and reinvigorating the Violence Against Women Act. We have worked to protect racial and religious minorities and the LGBT community when we passed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act. We came together to pass the Innocence Protection Act and the Drug Free Communities Act. And just a few months ago, we came together to enact the Death in Custody Act to bring needed transparency to every death that occurs in police custody, and we need to do more to prevent such tragedies.

In the coming weeks, I hope that the Senate Judiciary Committee will turn its attention to the bipartisan effort to end mass incarceration. I am working with Chairman GRASSLEY on the importance of legal representation for those accused of misdemeanor offenses. Chairman GRASSLEY is working with Senator WHITEHOUSE and others to improve our juvenile justice system. Senator RAND PAUL and I are working to eliminate mandatory minimum sentences. I also support the work of Senators DURBIN and LEE, who are seeking to reduce mandatory minimum sentences for certain drug crimes. We have historic opportunity to restore the faith that Americans should have in the justice system. If we work together, I know we can make meaningful improvements so that our entire justice system lives up to its name.

MAY NOMINATION

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I support President Obama's nomination of Dr. Willie May as the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, NIST, at the Department of Commerce.

NIST sets the standards for innovation in technology from mammograms to motorcycles. NIST scientists have won a MacArthur Genius Award and four Nobel prizes—more than any other Federal agency—including one in my State of Maryland. In the 44 years that Dr. May has spent at NIST, including serving as Acting Director since last June, he has set his own standard for service, dedication, and leadership in this great agency.

Dr. May grew up in Birmingham, AL, graduated from Knoxville College in 1968, and upon graduating with a bachelor of science degree in chemistry, took a job with a Federal laboratory in Oak Ridge, TN. In 1971, Dr. May came to Maryland to work for NIST's predecessor, which was then called the National Standards Bureau. He completed his Ph.D. in chemistry at the University of Maryland while working full-time at NIST and earned his doctorate in 1977. His research on trace organic analytical chemistry has been covered in more than 100 peer-reviewed journals around the world.

His colleagues know him not only for his brilliance in the lab but for his commitment to NIST's mission and employees. He is respected by the scientists at NIST but also by the engineers, lab workers, IT experts, and building staff. His vision will help NIST's 3,000 dedicated employees continue to be the world's leading experts in innovation, from quantum cryptography to 5G communications.

I join my colleagues in supporting Dr. Willie E. May as Director of NIST.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I was unavoidably detained for rollcall vote No. 169 on the nomination of Willie E. May to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

RECOGNIZING FUTURE MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I wish to honor 52 high school seniors in Southern New Jersey for their commendable decision to enlist in the U.S. Armed Forces. Of these 52, 13 have elected to join the U.S. Army: Mark Beverley, Thomas Connor, Jose Espinal, Luis Mansilla, Tyler Trappanese, Luis Rodriguez, Alexander Wallingford, Jacob Hoey, Karl Steinbach, Jason Jastillana, Marlett Eilenberger, Cordell Huesser, and Lorenzo Morales. Six have joined the U.S. Navy: Imani Glover, Jasmine Wilson, Kevin Pawlowski, Michael Livesey, Rebecca Herrera, Darrian Shufford. Four have elected to join the U.S. Air Force: Angel Gomez, Roselynn McPherson, Cachina Stevenson-Bisom, Christopher Pugliese. Thirteen have elected to join the U.S. Marine Corps: Ramon Paige, Jonathan Balonaguilan, Garrett Gudauskas, Nakee King, Howard Morgan, Christian Lidel, Aliyah Ortiz, Christian Godshall, Nhiem Bien, Cheavin Kim, Danvil Coombs, James Boyd, Policarpo Tovar. Sixteen have elected to join the New Jersey National Guard: Andrea Perez, Nini Tran, Thang Ngo, Edward Hutchinson, Muquim Shah, Troy Logan, Michael Wallace, Jr., Richard Scott, Ethan West, Jabari Ashanti, James Bartleson, Paul Mueller, Jr., Kristoffer Flores, Kelsey Hohenberger, Michelle Rivera, Dominic White. These 52 will also be honored on May 19, 2015 at an ''Our Community Salutes of South Jersey'' recognition ceremony in Voorhees Township, NJ.

The future of our Nation remains strong because of young men and women, like these 52 individuals, who have decided to step forward and commit themselves to the defense of our Nation and to upholding the ideals upon which it was founded. Indeed, these New Jerseyans represent the very best of America, and they should rest assured that the full support of the Senate as well as the American people, are with them in whatever challenges may lie ahead.

It is thanks to the dedication of untold numbers of patriots like these 52 that we are able to meet here today, in the Senate, and openly debate the best solutions to the many and diverse problems that confront our country. It is thanks to their sacrifices that the United States of America remains a beacon of hope and freedom throughout the world. We owe them, along with all those who serve our country, a deep debt of gratitude.

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO'S INTEGRATIVE COMMUNITY STUDIES PROGRAM

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate 11 students who will be graduating tomorrow at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. While celebrations will abound across our country for the class of 2015, I want to highlight this very special group who, I must say, stands above the rest for their achievement.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro works with its nonprofit partner Beyond Academics to provide students who have intellectual and developmental disabilities a 4-year course of study that promotes self-determination, life planning, and career development. They call it the Integrative Community Studies program. These students learn how to build their own lives through employment and self-sufficient living. I have long supported these efforts and believe that anyone who cares about outcomes for individuals with disabilities should look no further than UNC-G and Beyond Academics as an example for promoting success.

This is a particularly special graduation day as it is the fifth graduating

class since this course of study was created, and is the largest class to date. In sum, a total of 34 graduates are now better prepared to live self-sufficient lives that will not only make themselves better, but the community around them better as well. I couldn't be prouder of all of them.

What started only about a decade ago as a community-wide effort in my homestate, has grown to, in my opinion, one of the most exciting things being done in the country for this community.

It is with great enthusiasm and awe that I share with my colleagues this truly important day for these graduates and this wonderful program.

RECOGNIZING DR. WALTER NOLTE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to recognize Dr. Walt Nolte, who will retire on June 30, 2015, after 11 years as president of Casper College.

Dr. Nolte and his wife Becky joined Casper College on July 1, 2004, becoming the seventh chief executive officer in the college's 63-year history. He served as an administrator in several States, but Casper College was the institution he chose to call home longer than any other.

Dr. Nolte has been Casper College's ''Great Communicator.'' He is a leader guided by the principle of doing what is best for the team. He has actively encouraged and developed open dialog between the college's governing bodies. He has provided constant encouragement and participation within the college community to uphold Casper College's mission: education for a lifetime. His understanding of the value of community partnership has enabled the college to build one of the highest rates of civic engagement of any Wyoming college.

In addition to guiding an excellent curriculum, Dr. Nolte has always maintained that the campus facilities must be a priority. He is a leader who looks to the future and meets challenges head-on. In just 11 years, he was able to secure voter and community support for critical improvements to Casper College during a national economic downturn.

Dr. Nolte has been recognized at the regional and national level for his leadership. The National Council for Marketing and Public Relations District No. 4 named him their 2011 Pacesetter of the Year. He was also named a distinguished graduate of the University of Texas at Austin College of Education, and in 2011, Walt was named the first recipients of the Tacoma County Community College Distinguished Alumnus Award.

John E. Roueche, Ph.D., arguably the foremost scholar on community college leadership, recently wrote

> Dr. Nolte is one of those rare leaders who practices well what he preaches, leading by his own excellent example. He is also a leader who is quite comfortable in his own skin and delights in the success of all on his team. He truly understands that the community college is of, by and for the community.

Dr. Walt Nolte's legacy will benefit the college, the community of Casper, and the great State of Wyoming for years to come. My wife Bobbi and I wish him the very best as he embarks on the next chapter of his life.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY-PURDUE UNIVERSITY FORT WAYNE 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, IPFW, on its 50th anniversary. I also want to recognize the outstanding faculty and staff for the extraordinary impact they have had on the education and lives of countless students.

IPFW now is the largest university in northeast Indiana, providing a critical foundation for thousands of Hoosiers who then use their skills and education to contribute to the surrounding community. In fact, 75 percent of IPFW alumni live and work in northeast Indiana.

In 1964, Indiana University and Purdue University merged their Fort Wayne campuses to form IPFW, and the campus administration formally combined in 1975. In the 1990s, IPFW opened the doors of some of its major, state-of-the-art facilities, which paved the way for larger student enrollment. By 2000, more than 10,500 students were enrolled, and in 2004, campus housing opened, allowing students to live and learn at IPFW for the first time. The campus went on to set a new enrollment record in the 2010–2011 school year with 14,192 students.

IPFW prides itself on keeping class sizes small in order to maintain high-quality, individualized instruction. This gives IPFW students the chance to be on a first-name basis with experts in their field of study and affords them the opportunity to develop a network of professional contacts. The IPFW curriculum offers a wide variety of classes with more than 200 academic programs, including undergraduate, graduate, and online; more than 230 partnerships with businesses and educational organizations; and a growing number of scholarships that afford Hoosiers from all backgrounds the opportunity to learn and thrive in an academic setting. For the past 50 years, IPFW has worked to fulfill its mission to be an exceptional environment for teaching, learning, and student achievement.

Outside of the classroom, IPFW excels, too. The Mastodons now compete as a member of the NCAA Division I Athletics and fields 14 varsity teams. IPFW previously competed in Division II of the NCAA, where in 1993, the men's basketball team won a school-record 23 games and achieved the No. 4 ranking among Division II teams. IPFW's men's volleyball team, commonly known on campus as the Volleydons, has gained national recognition with strong postseason showings, making six NCAA Tournament Final Four appearances and reaching the 2007 NCAA National Tournament Final. Former Mastodon setter Lloy Ball won an Olympic Gold Medal in the 2008 Beijing Games. IPFW athletics has many achievements to recognize, all the while meeting high academic standards in the classroom.

For five decades, IPFW has provided northeastern Indiana and students across the State and country with the opportunity to achieve their dreams through higher education. IPFW remains representative of the hard work, dedication, and innovation that are fundamental parts of the Hoosier spirit. I want to congratulate Chancellor Vicky L. Carwein, the entire faculty and staff, and students both past and present, on this important anniversary. I am confident IPFW will continue to be a fixture in northeast Indiana and know the faculty and staff will continue to provide an outstanding education to our students in the years to come. On behalf of the citizens of Indiana, I congratulate each and every member of the IPFW community on this 50th anniversary. I wish IPFW continued success and growth for many more years to come.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING GRETCHEN KAFOURY

• Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, long ago, I decided the most complimentary statement one could make about an elected official boils down to four simple words: ''That person really cares.'' Those four words perfectly sum up Gretchen Kafoury's long record of public service in Portland and in Oregon.

From serving in the Peace Corps during the 1960s to teaching at Portland State University four decades later, Gretchen just cared—and then cared some more—about helping everyone have a better life.

Gretchen was the go-to leader in Portland and statewide in the fight to help women escape domestic violence. She was our conscience in the battle to help people of modest means have more affordable housing. And she was a pioneer for equal rights when she organized the campaign to force open the doors at the City Club of Portland for women.

Small in stature, Gretchen Kafoury had the biggest heart in Oregon. If you didn't have power or clout or a political action committee—and you were talking about justice, Gretchen brought her smarts, her energy, and her persistence to your cause.

I met Gretchen shortly after I graduated from law school at the University of Oregon and was starting the Oregon Gray Panthers with another admirer of Gretchen's—Ruth Haefner.

When you visited Ruth's house in Northeast Portland, you would see it

filled with literature from progressive seniors for good causes. And I clearly remember how those progressive seniors thought Gretchen was spot on, for example, in developing the first health clinic for teenagers at Roosevelt High School.

Gretchen was incredibly helpful to the Gray Panthers in those days when she served in the Oregon Legislature as our State passed a generic drug law, home care for seniors, and new rules to stop rip-off artists scamming health insurance to seniors.

Before Gretchen worked to crack down on those scamsters, it was common to see seniors with as many as 8 to 10 worthless health insurance policies that fast-talking salesmen had sold them. Those phony salesmen never stood a chance when Gretchen fought to stop business practices that fleeced the elderly.

When I ran for Congress in 1980, virtually no established elected officials were in my corner. Gretchen was one of those folks in a group so tiny it could have fit in a couple of phone booths. I had never run for public office but—with help and encouragement from Gretchen and seniors—I wanted to go to Washington to work on the very issues Gretchen championed. I was proud she was in my corner every step of the way.

Over the years when I would see Gretchen at a housing rally, a domestic violence conference, or an event to help nurses and other health care providers get better care for Oregonians at lower cost, I would always see Gretchen and start to smile. That is because her caring was so infectious and her passion to help people who needed help was so powerful.

She prompted so many others to become involved in public life, not the least of whom are her two daughters, one of whom is Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury.

How lucky all Oregonians were to have Gretchen, and how lucky I was that she was my friend.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:15 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2028. An act making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 2028. An act making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–1510. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Addition to Certain Persons to the Entity List'' (RIN0694–AG58) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 29, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1511. A communication from the General Counsel of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Minority and Women Inclusion Amendments'' (RIN2590–AA67) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 30, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1512. A communication from the Deputy Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Travelers' Information Stations; American Association of Information Radio Operators Petition for Ruling on Travelers' Information Station Rules; Highway Information Systems, Inc. Petition for Rulemaking; American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Petition for Rulemaking'' ((FCC 15–37) (PS Docket No. 09–19)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 5, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1513. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 15–029); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1514. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 15–011); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1515. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 15–008); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1516. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the status of the Government of Cuba's compliance with the United States-Cuba September 1994 ''Joint Communique'' and on the treatment of persons returned to Cuba in accordance with the United States-Cuba May 1995 ''Joint Statement''; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1517. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fenazaquin; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9925–97) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 1, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1518. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Defensin Proteins (SoD2 and SoD7) derived from spinach (Spinacia oleracea L.) in Citrus Plants; Temporary Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9926–99) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 1, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1519. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Bacillus thuringiensis Cry2Ab2 Protein in Soybean; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9925–85) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 1, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1520. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''1-Octanol; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9924–81) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 1, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1521. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Review Group, Farm Service Agency, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Conservation Compliance'' (RIN0560–AI26) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 30, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1522. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, National Nuclear Security Administration, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Authority of DOE Protective Force Officers That Are Federal Employees To Make Arrests Without a Warrant for Certain Crimes'' (RIN1994–AA03) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 29, 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–1523. A communication from the Administrator, U.S. Energy Information Administration, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''The Availability and Price of Petroleum and Petroleum Products Produced in Countries Other Than Iran''; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–1524. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Effluent Limitations Guidelines and Standards for the Construction and Development Point Source Category; Correcting Amendment'' (FRL No. 9926–32–OW) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 1, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1525. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval of Air Quality Implementation Plans; California; South Coast Air Quality Management District; Stationary Source Permits'' (FRL No. 9926–77–Region 9) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 1, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1526. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; New Mexico; Albuquerque/Bernalillo County; Revisions to Emissions Inventory Requirements, and General Provisions'' (FRL No. 9927–24–Region 6)

received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 1, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1527. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Partial Withdrawal of Technical Amendments Related to: Tier 3 Motor Vehicle Fuel and Quality Assurance Plan Provisions'' (FRL No. 9927–17–OAR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 1, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1528. A communication from the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Inspector General's Semiannual Report for the six-month period from October 1, 2014 through March 31, 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1529. A communication from the Executive Analyst (Political), Office of the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 29, 2015; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1530. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a financial report relative to the Animal Generic Drug User Fee Act for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1531. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report on National HIV Testing Goals; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1532. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a performance report relative to the Animal Generic Drug User Fee Act for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1533. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for the Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Wage Methodology for the Temporary Non-Agricultural Employment H–2B Program'' (RIN1615–AC02 and RIN1205–AB69) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 29, 2015; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1534. A communication from the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, the amendments to the Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure that have been adopted by the Supreme Court of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–1535. A communication from the Chair, U.S. Sentencing Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the amendments to the federal sentencing guidelines that were proposed by the Commission during the 2014–2015 amendment cycle; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–1536. A communication from the General Counsel of the National Tropical Botanical Garden, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to an audit of the Garden for the period from January 1, 2013, through December 31, 2013; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–1537. A communication from the Director of the Office of Information Policy, Office of the Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revision of Department's Freedom of Information Act Regulations'' ((RIN1105–AB43) (OAG 140)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 4, 2015; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–1538. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for the Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Temporary Non-Agricultural Employment of H–2B Aliens in the United States'' (RIN1205–AB76) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 29, 2015; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–1539. A communication from the Chief Impact Analyst, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program'' (RIN2900–AO71) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 30, 2015; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–1540. A communication from the Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, transmitting proposed legislation entitled ''Department of Veterans Affairs Purchased Health Care Streamlining and Modernization Act''; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–1541. A communication from the Inspector General, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Review of Medicare Contractor Information Security Program Evaluations for Fiscal Year 2013''; to the Committee on Finance.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

S. 136. A bill to amend chapter 21 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that fathers of certain permanently disabled or deceased veterans shall be included with mothers of such veterans as preference eligibles for treatment in the civil service (Rept. No. 114–35).

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 579. A bill to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 to strengthen the independence of the Inspectors General, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–36).

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 Mrs. ERNST (for herself, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. PAUL, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 1188. A bill to provide for a temporary, emergency authorization of defense articles, defense services, and related training directly to the Kurdistan Regional Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. MORAN, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 1189. A bill to provide incentives to physicians to practice in rural and medically underserved communities and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. CAPITO (for herself, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 1190. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure equal access of Medicare beneficiaries to community pharmacies in underserved areas as network pharmacies under Medicare prescription drug coverage, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 1191. A bill to direct the Commandant of the Coast Guard to convey certain property from the United States to the County of Marin, California; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 1192. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to raise awareness of, and to educate breast cancer patients anticipating surgery, especially patients who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups, regarding the availability and coverage of breast reconstruction, prostheses, and other options; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. KING, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. SANDERS, and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 1193. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent and expand the temporary minimum credit rate for the low-income housing tax credit program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HATCH:

S. 1194. A bill to require the Commissioner of Social Security to update the medical-vocational guidelines used in disability determinations; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 1195. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to update reporting requirements for institutions of higher education and provide for more accurate and complete data on student retention, graduation, and earnings outcomes at all levels of postsecondary enrollment; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 1196. A bill to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to grant rights-of-ways on Federal land; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. HATCH:

S. 1197. A bill to require the Commissioner of Social Security to make publicly available on-line tools to allow individuals eligible for disability benefits to assess the impact of earnings on the individual's eligibility for, and amount of, benefits received through Federal and State benefit programs; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 1198. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to exclude certain medical sources of evidence in making disability determinations; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. MURRAY:

S. 1199. A bill to authorize Federal agencies to provide alternative fuel to Federal employees on a reimbursable basis, and for

other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

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

S. Res. 167. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the courageous work and life of Argentinian prosecutor Alberto Nisman, and calling for a swift and transparent investigation into his tragic death in Buenos Aires on January 18, 2015; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. BLUNT):

S. Res. 168. A resolution recognizing National Foster Care Month an as opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges of children in the foster care system, and encouraging Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster care system; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. Res. 169. A resolution expressing condolences to the family of Dr. Warren Weinstein, and commemorating the life and work of Dr. Warren Weinstein; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 192

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 192, a bill to reauthorize the Older Americans Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

S. 314

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

S. 320

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 320, a bill to authorize the collection of supplemental payments to increase congressional investments in medical research, and for other purposes.

S. 356

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

S. 366

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 366, a bill to require Senate candidates to file designations, statements, and reports in electronic form.

S. 423

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 423, a bill to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to provide an exception to the annual written privacy notice requirement.

S. 497

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 497, a bill to allow Americans to earn paid sick time so that they can address their own health needs and the health needs of their families.

S. 523

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 523, a bill to coordinate the provision of energy retrofitting assistance to schools.

S. 607

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 607, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a five-year extension of the rural community hospital demonstration program, and for other purposes.

S. 608

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) and the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 608, a bill to prevent homeowners from being forced to pay taxes on forgiven mortgage loan debt.

S. 611

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 611, a bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to reauthorize technical assistance to small public water systems, and for other purposes.

S. 619

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 619, a bill to include among the principal trade negotiating objectives of the United States regarding commercial partnerships trade negotiating objectives with respect to discouraging activity that discourages, penalizes, or otherwise limits commercial relations with Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 621

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 621, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to ensure the safety and effectiveness of medically important antimicrobials approved for use in the prevention and control of animal diseases, in order to minimize the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

S. 682

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 682, a bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to modify the definitions of a mortgage originator and a high-cost mortgage.

S. 812

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) 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. 860

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 860, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the estate and generation-skipping transfer taxes, and for other purposes.

S. 884

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 884, a bill to improve access to emergency medical services, and for other purposes.

S. 890

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 890, a bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to provide consistent and reliable authority for, and for the funding of, the Land and Water Conservation Fund to maximize the effectiveness of the Fund for future generations, and for other purposes.

S. 911

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 911, a bill to direct the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to issue an order with respect to secondary cockpit barriers, and for other purposes.

S. 933

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 933, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act with respect to the timing of elections and pre-election hearings and the identification of pre-election issues, and to require that lists of employees eligible to vote in organizing elections be provided to the National Labor Relations Board.

S. 968

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 968, a bill to require the Commissioner of Social Security to revise the medical and evaluation criteria for determining disability in a person diagnosed with Huntington's Disease and to waive the 24-

month waiting period for Medicare eligibility for individuals disabled by Huntington's Disease.

S. 970

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 970, a bill to allow more small insured depository institutions to qualify for the 18-month on-site examination cycle, and for other purposes.

S. 979

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 979, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 1049

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1049, a bill to allow the financing by United States persons of sales of agricultural commodities to Cuba.

S. 1062

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1062, a bill to improve the Federal Pell Grant program, and for other purposes.

S. 1135

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1135, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for fairness in hospital payments under the Medicare program.

S. 1140

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 1140, a bill to require the Secretary of the Army and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to propose a regulation revising the definition of the term ''waters of the United States'' , and for other purposes.

S. 1170

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1170, a bill to amend title 39, United States Code, to extend the authority of the United States Postal Service to issue a semipostal to raise funds for breast cancer research, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 1195. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to update reporting requirements for institutions of higher education and provide for more accurate and complete data on student retention, graduation, and earnings outcomes at all levels of postsecondary enrollment; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, when my colleagues and I went to college, things were a lot different. Our colleagues took out loans, but those loans were manageable, and there were jobs waiting after graduation. Today, too often, that is simply not the case. In fact, the majority of students today will leave school weighed down with an average of more than $31,000 in debt.

Investment in higher education is an economic imperative. Education is the great equalizer. It enables upward economic mobility and breaks down class structures. A highly skilled and educated workforce is the basis for any healthy economy. It is the foundation of our country's future.

In nearly every financial decision Americans make, individuals and families try to evaluate the economic value of that decision. Like prospective homebuyers who inspect and assess the potential value of their future home, students should be able to compare colleges and programs based on what the likely return on their investment will be.

Our capital markets work best when there is transparency so we can accurately measure the value of what we choose to invest in. We saw what happens when this is not the case with the burst of the housing bubble. Parts of our economy have yet to recover from the mortgage crisis. Misinformed consumers bought a product based on misleading information and, often times, fell victim to bad loans offered by predatory lenders.

Consumers must know what they can expect from their investments. Similarly, students are entitled to know the value of their education before they borrow tens of thousands of dollars from banks and the government to finance their future.

Right now, consumers don't have this information. It is unavailable to students and families who are making critical decisions that will impact not only their future—both their financial future and career path—but also the collective future of our country. That is why today, Senator RUBIO, Senator WARNER and I are introducing an updated version of the Student Right to Know Before You Go Act which will help inform consumers and prevent market failures.

This proposal would ensure future students and their families can make well-informed decisions by creating a market in which specific schools and specific programs can be evaluated based on the average annual earnings and employment outcomes of graduates; rates of remedial enrollment and success of students that participate in remedial education; the percent of students that receive Federal, State, and institutional grant aid or loans by source; the average amount of total Federal loan debt of students upon graduation; the average amount of total Federal loan debt for students that do not complete a program; transfer success rates; and rates at which students continue on to higher levels of education.

The Department of Education has created a College Scorecard which is a step in the right direction. The Scorecard, however, does not fully capture any of the metrics outlined above. The Wyden-Rubio-Warner bill generates this critical information.

Markets fail when there is too little information and until now, it has been impossible to collect this data in a cost-effective way while ensuring student privacy.

This proposal makes it possible to secure a return on investment—for students, parents, policymakers, and taxpayers—while creating a workforce that meets the demands of today's businesses and ensures that American workers can successfully compete in the global economy.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 167—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE COURAGEOUS WORK AND LIFE OF ARGENTINIAN PROSECUTOR ALBERTO NISMAN, AND CALLING FOR A SWIFT AND TRANSPARENT INVESTIGATION INTO HIS TRAGIC DEATH IN BUENOS AIRES ON JANUARY 18, 2015

Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. KIRK) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 167

Whereas the bombing of the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA) in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on July 18, 1994, killed 85 people and wounded more than 300;

Whereas the AMIA bombing case has been marked by judicial misconduct, and the investigation had reached an impasse in 2004;

Whereas, in September 2004, Alberto Nisman was appointed as the Special Prosecutor in charge of the 1994 AMIA bombing investigation;

Whereas, on October 25, 2006, Argentine prosecutors Alberto Nisman and Marcelo Martínez Burgos formally accused the Government of Iran of directing the bombing, and the Hezbollah militia of carrying it out;

Whereas Ibrahim Hussain Berro, a member of the terrorist group Hezbollah, was identified as the AMIA bomber;

Whereas Iranians Ali Fallahijan (former Iranian Intelligence Minster), Mohsen Rabbani (former Iranian cultural attaché), Ahmad Reza Asghari (former Iranian Diplomat), Ahmad Vahidi (former Iranian Minister of Defense), Ali Akbar Velayati (former

Iranian Foreign Minister), Mohsen Rezaee (former Chief Commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps), and Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (former President of Iran) were named as the Iranian suspects in the bombing;

Whereas Imad Fayez Moughnieh (former head of Hezbollah's external security) was named as a suspect in the bombing;

Whereas, in November 2007, Interpol voted to put 5 Iranian and 1 Lebanese suspect in the 1994 AMIA attack on its most wanted list;

Whereas, in 2007, a Guyanese man, Abdul Kadir, plotted to blow up JFK airport in New York and was, according to Mr. Nisman, ''the most important Iranian agent'' in Guyana and influenced by Mohsen Rabbani;

Whereas there are countries in Latin America, especially the group known as the Bolivarian Alliance (ALBA), that actively cooperate with the Government of Iran and maintain special relations with the Islamic Republic at various levels;

Whereas Iranians and other citizens from the Middle East have received passports from Venezuela or purchased them in other countries of the region associated with ALBA countries;

Whereas the Government of Iran has allegedly purchased uranium from Venezuela and Bolivia;

Whereas Hezbollah, Iran's proxy, cooperates with drug cartels in Latin America;

Whereas, in January of 2013, the Argentinian agreement with Iran set up a ''truth commission'' to investigate who was ''really'' responsible for the bombing, despite the fact that Iran remains the main suspect in such attack;

Whereas Alberto Nisman was invited to testify before Congress in February 2013, but was prevented by the Government of Argentina, who denied him permission to travel to Washington, DC, to testify;

Whereas, in May 2013, Prosecutor Alberto Nisman published a 500-page indictment accusing Iran of establishing terrorist networks throughout Latin America, including in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Colombia, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and Suriname, dating back to the 1980s;

Whereas, on January 13, 2015, Alberto Nisman alleged in a complaint that Argentinian President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner and Minister of Foreign Relations Héctor Timerman conspired to cover up Iranian involvement in the 1994 terrorist bombing, and reportedly agreed to negotiate immunity for Iranian suspects and help get their names removed from the Interpol list;

Whereas Alberto Nisman alleged that Iranian oil was to flow to Argentina in exchange for Iran to purchase large quantities of Argentine grain and had evidence that reportedly included wire-taps of phone calls ''between people close to Mrs. Kirchner'' and a number of Iranians, including Mr. Rabbani, the Iranian diplomat;

Whereas Alberto Nisman was scheduled to present his new findings to the Argentinian Congress on January 19, 2015;

Whereas Alberto Nisman was found shot in the head in his apartment located in Buenos Aires on January 18, 2015;

Whereas, Diego Lagomarsino, the prosecutor's office employee who last saw Alberto Nisman alive and had provided Mr. Nisman with the revolver that was found at Mr. Nisman's residence, stated that Mr. Nisman had told him that ''it [the revolver] was for security'' and that the previous day Antonio Jaimie Stiusso (former head of Argentina's Intelligence service) had called, warning him to ''take care of his [Nisman's] security detail and his daughters' safety'';

Whereas officials of the Government of Argentina continue to discredit Mr. Nisman, attempting to ruin his reputation;

Whereas the President of Argentina continues to raise unfounded hypotheses with regard to Mr. Nisman's findings, including imaginary conspiracies she has suggested were orchestrated by United States hedge funds and other entities she considers ''hostile'' to the President of Argentina;

Whereas an Argentinean Federal court dismissed Nisman's findings against the president and other officials and later the accusations were dropped by Javier De Luca, another Federal prosecutor;

Whereas that move has raised questions in Argentina about the objectivity of Mr. De Luca, given his closeness to a group of Ms. Kirchner's supporters;

Whereas the ongoing official investigation into Alberto Nisman's death has yet to determine 2 months later whether his death is a suicide or a homicide;

Whereas an independent investigation launched by Alberto Nisman's family has released its own report by forensic experts and forensic pathologists showing that Mr. Nisman's death was not an accident or suicide, including claims that ''the prosecutor had been shot in the back of the head'', that ''no gun powder residue was found on his hands'', and that ''Mr. Nisman's body had been moved to the bathroom once he was shot''; and

Whereas no one has been brought to justice for the death of Alberto Nisman, nor have any of the named Iranian suspects for the AMIA bombing: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) offers its sincerest condolences to the family of Argentinian prosecutor Alberto Nisman;

(2) recognizes Alberto Nisman's courageous work in dedicating his life to the investigation of the bombing of the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA) in Buenos Aires, Argentina, which killed 85 people and wounded more than 300;

(3) calls for a swift, transparent, and internationally backed investigation into Alberto Nisman's tragic death;

(4) encourages the public release of the results of the investigation, including the forensic and pathological reports by the government, which would show whether Alberto Nisman took his own life, or if his death is a homicide;

(5) urges the President to directly offer United States technical assistance to the Government of Argentina in solving the death of Alberto Nisman, as well as the ongoing investigation of the AMIA bombing;

(6) expresses serious concern about Iran's terrorist network in Argentina, the United States, and all of the Western Hemisphere, mindful of the findings of Mr. Nisman's investigation and reports on this matter, and encourages continued investigations of Iranian terrorist networks based on his work;

(7) urges an independent investigation into the findings of Mr. Nisman regarding the events that led to the memorandum signed between Argentina and Iran;

(8) likewise expresses serious concerns about attempts by President Cristina Kirchner and her government to discredit Mr. Nisman and raise unfounded hypotheses on Mr. Nisman's findings and death findings while the work of the courts on this matter still continues; and

(9) urges the President of the United States to continue to monitor Iran's activities in Latin America and the Caribbean as it is mandated by the Countering Iran in the Western Hemisphere Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–220).

SENATE RESOLUTION 168—RECOGNIZING NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH AN AS OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE CHALLENGES OF CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM, AND ENCOURAGING CONGRESS TO IMPLEMENT POLICY TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. BLUNT) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 168

Whereas National Foster Care Month was established more than 20 years ago—

(1) to bring foster care issues to the forefront of public consciousness;

(2) to highlight the importance of permanency for every child; and

(3) to recognize the essential role that foster parents, social workers, and advocates have in the lives of children in foster care throughout the United States;

Whereas all children deserve a safe, loving, and permanent home;

Whereas the primary goal of the foster care system is to ensure the safety and well-being of children while working to provide a safe, loving, and permanent home for each child;

Whereas approximately 400,000 children are living in foster care;

Whereas nearly 255,000 youth entered the foster care system in 2013, while more than 101,000 youth were eligible for and awaiting adoption at the end of 2013;

Whereas children of minority races and ethnicities are more likely to stay in the foster care system for longer periods of time and are less likely to be reunited with their biological families;

Whereas foster parents—

(1) are the front-line caregivers for children who cannot safely remain with their biological parents;

(2) provide physical care, emotional support, and education advocacy to the children in their care; and

(3) are the largest single source of families providing permanent homes for children transitioning from foster care to adoption;

Whereas children in foster care who are placed with relatives, compared to children placed with nonrelatives, have more stability, including fewer changes in placements, have more positive perceptions of their placements, are more likely to be placed with their siblings, and demonstrate fewer behavioral problems;

Whereas some relative caregivers receive less financial assistance and support services than foster caregivers;

Whereas children in foster care are 4 times more likely to receive psychotropic medications than children enrolled in Medicaid overall;

Whereas youth in foster care are much more likely to face educational instability, with 65 percent of former foster children experiencing at least 7 school changes while in foster care;

Whereas an increased emphasis on prevention and reunification services is necessary to reduce the number of children who are forced to remain in the foster care system;

Whereas more than 23,000 youth ''age out'' of foster care annually without a legal permanent connection to an adult or family;

Whereas the number of youth who age out of foster care has increased during the past decade;

Whereas foster care is intended to be a temporary placement, but children remain in the foster care system for an average of 2 years;

Whereas children in foster care experience an average of 3 different placements, which often leads to disruption of routines and the need to change schools and move away from siblings, extended families, and familiar surroundings;

Whereas children entering foster care often confront the widespread misperception that children in foster care are disruptive, unruly, and dangerous, even though placement in foster care is based on the actions of a parent or guardian, not the child;

Whereas children who age out of foster care lack the security and support of a biological or adoptive family and frequently struggle to secure affordable housing, obtain health insurance, pursue higher education, and acquire adequate employment;

Whereas States, localities, and communities should be encouraged to invest resources in preventative and reunification services and postpermanency programs to ensure that more children in foster care are provided with safe, loving, and permanent placements;

Whereas Federal legislation during the past 3 decades, including the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (Public Law 96–272), the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (Public Law 105–89), the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–351), the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act (Public Law 112–34), and the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (Public Law 113–183) provided new investments and services to improve the outcomes of children in the foster care system;

Whereas May 2015 is an appropriate month to designate as ''National Foster Care Month'' to provide an opportunity to acknowledge the accomplishments of the child-welfare workforce, foster parents, the advocacy community, and mentors for their dedication, accomplishments, and positive impact on the lives of children; and

Whereas much remains to be done to ensure that all children have a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent family, regardless of age or special needs: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the designation of May 2015 as ''National Foster Care Month'';

(2) recognizes National Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges that children face in the foster care system;

(3) encourages Congress to implement policies to improve the lives of children in the foster care system;

(4) acknowledges the special needs of children in the foster care system;

(5) recognizes youth in foster care throughout the United States for their ongoing tenacity, courage, and resilience while facing life challenges;

(6) acknowledges the exceptional alumni of the foster care system who serve as advocates and role models for youth who remain in care;

(7) honors the commitment and dedication of the individuals who work tirelessly to provide assistance and services to children in the foster care system; and

(8) reaffirms the need to continue working to improve the outcomes of all children in the foster care system through parts B and E of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) and other programs designed—

(A) to support vulnerable families;

(B) to invest in prevention and reunification services;

(C) to promote adoption in cases where reunification is not in the best interests of the child;

(D) to adequately serve children brought into the foster care system; and

(E) to facilitate the successful transition into adulthood for children who ''age out'' of the foster care system.

SENATE RESOLUTION 169—EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY OF DR. WARREN WEINSTEIN, AND COMMEMORATING THE LIFE AND WORK OF DR. WARREN WEINSTEIN

Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 169

Whereas Dr. Warren Weinstein was abducted in Lahore, Pakistan on August 13, 2011, and was held captive by al-Qaeda for nearly 4 years;

Whereas Dr. Warren Weinstein is widely recognized as a scholar and humanitarian who devoted his life to improving the lives of men, women, and children around the world;

Whereas Dr. Warren Weinstein selflessly suffered financial hardships and separation from his family, as many foreign service, military, development, and journalism personnel do, in order to serve the greater good and those in need;

Whereas Dr. Warren Weinstein was a Fulbright scholar who earned a master's degree and a Ph.D. in international law and economics from Columbia University;

Whereas Dr. Warren Weinstein served as a tenured professor with the political science department at SUNY Oswego;

Whereas Dr. Warren Weinstein served for 9 years at the Africa Bureau of the United States Agency for International Development and for 7 years at the International Finance Corporation, a division of the World Bank Group;

Whereas Dr. Warren Weinstein served as a Peace Corps Director in Togo and Ivory Coast;

Whereas Dr. Warren Weinstein served for 7 years as a development advisor in Pakistan for J.E. & Austin Associates, a contractor to the United States Agency for International Development;

Whereas Dr. Warren Weinstein was proficient in at least 7 languages;

Whereas Dr. Warren Weinstein had a home in Rockville, Maryland, where he lived with his family; and

Whereas Dr. Warren Weinstein is survived by his wife, 2 daughters, a son-in-law, a granddaughter, and a grandson: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) mourns the death of Dr. Warren Weinstein and expresses condolences to his family;

(2) salutes Dr. Warren Weinstein for his lifelong commitment to humanitarian development work in challenging and dangerous circumstances;

(3) calls on the United States to make the return of all citizens of the United States held captive abroad, regardless of the different circumstances, a top priority and to provide a coordinated and consistent approach to supporting hostages and the families of the hostages; and

(4) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to the family of Dr. Warren Weinstein.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1199. Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. RUBIO) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 97, supporting the goals of International Women's Day.

SA 1200. Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. RUBIO) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 97, supra.

SA 1201. Mr. CORKER (for Mr. LEE) proposed an amendment to amendment SA 1200 proposed by Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. RUBIO) to the resolution S. Res. 97, supra.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1199. Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. RUBIO) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 97, supporting the goals of International Women's Day; as follows:

Strike all after the resolving clause and insert the following: ''That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals of International Women's Day;

(2) recognizes that the empowerment of women is inextricably linked to the potential of countries to generate economic growth, sustainable democracy, and inclusive security;

(3) recognizes and honors individuals in the United States and around the world, including women who are human rights defenders, who have worked throughout history to ensure that women are guaranteed equality and basic human rights;

(4) reaffirms the commitment to ending discrimination and violence against women and girls, to ensuring the safety and welfare of women and girls, to pursuing policies that guarantee the basic human rights of women and girls worldwide, and to promoting meaningful and significant participation of women in all aspects of their societies and communities;

(5) supports efforts to establish a sustainable, measurable and global development framework that seeks to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment; and

(6) encourages the people of the United States to observe International Women's Day with appropriate programs and activities.

SA 1200. Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. RUBIO) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 97, supporting the goals of International Women's Day; as follows:

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas there are more than 3,500,000,000 women in the world as of March 2015;

Whereas women around the world have fundamental rights, participate in the political, social, and economic life of their communities, play a critical role in providing and caring for their families, contribute substantially to the growth of economies and the prevention of conflict, and, as farmers and caregivers, play an important role in advancing food security for their communities;

Whereas the advancement of women around the world is a foreign policy priority for the United States;

Whereas on September 24, 2014, the President highlighted the United States' support for the advancement of women, noting: ''Where women are full participants in a country's politics or economy, societies are more likely to succeed. And that's why we support the participation of women in parliaments and peace processes, schools, and the economy.'';

Whereas women remain underrepresented in conflict prevention and conflict resolution

efforts, despite proven success by women in conflict-affected regions in moderating violent extremism, countering terrorism, resolving disputes through nonviolent mediation and negotiation, and stabilizing societies by improving access to peace and security services, institutions, and decision-making venues;

Whereas on December 19, 2011, the Obama Administration launched the first United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (referred to in this preamble as the ''National Action Plan'') that includes a comprehensive set of national commitments to advance the active participation of women in decisionmaking relating to matters of war and peace;

Whereas the National Action Plan states the following: ''Deadly conflicts can be more effectively avoided, and peace can be best forged and sustained, when women become equal partners in all aspects of peace-building and conflict prevention, when their lives are protected, their experiences considered, and their voices heard.'';

Whereas the National Action Plan requires the National Security Council staff to coordinate a comprehensive review of, and update to, the National Action Plan in 2015 with consultation from international partners and civil society organizations;

Whereas according to the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the Department of State, the full and meaningful participation of women in security forces vastly enhances the forces' effectiveness;

Whereas the ability of women and girls to realize their full potential is critical to the ability of a country to achieve strong and lasting economic growth and political and social stability;

Whereas according to the International Monetary Fund, ''focusing on the needs and empowerment of women is one of the keys to human development'';

Whereas according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, ⅔ of the 781,000,000 illiterate people in the world are female;

Whereas according to the United States Agency for International Development, compared to uneducated women, ''educated women are less likely to marry early and more likely to have smaller and healthier families. They are also more likely to get a job and earn a higher wage.'';

Whereas according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the majority of women living in rural areas of the developing world are heavily engaged in agricultural labor, yet they receive less credit, land, agricultural inputs, and training than their male counterparts;

Whereas according to the United Nations, women have access to fewer income-earning opportunities and are more likely to manage the household and engage in agricultural work, making women more vulnerable to economic insecurity caused by natural disasters and long-term changes in weather patterns;

Whereas according to the World Bank, women own or partly own more than ⅓ of small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries, and 40 percent of the global workforce is female, yet women entrepreneurs and employers have disproportionately less access to capital and other financial services compared to men;

Whereas despite strides in recent decades, women around the world continue to face significant obstacles in all aspects of their lives, including underrepresentation in all aspects of public life, denial of basic human rights, and discrimination;

Whereas despite achievements by individual female leaders, women around the world are still vastly underrepresented in high-level positions and in national and local legislatures and governments and, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, women account for only 21.9 percent of national parliamentarians;

Whereas it is estimated that 1 in 3 women around the world has experienced some form of physical or sexual violence;

Whereas according to the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime's 2012 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, women account for between 55 and 60 percent of all trafficking victims detected worldwide, and women and girls together make up approximately 75 percent of all known trafficking victims;

Whereas 603,000,000 women live in countries where domestic violence has not been criminalized;

Whereas according to the World Health Organization, approximately 800 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth every day, with 99 percent of all maternal deaths occurring in developing countries;

Whereas on August 10, 2012, the President announced the United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally, the first interagency strategy to address gender-based violence around the world;

Whereas violence against women and girls impedes progress in meeting many international global development goals, including efforts to stem maternal mortality and the spread of HIV/AIDS;

Whereas on October 11, 2013, the President strongly condemned the practice of child marriage;

Whereas according to the International Center for Research on Women, ⅓ of girls in the developing world are married before the age of 18, and 1 in 9 girls is married before the age of 15;

Whereas according to the World Health Organization, suicide is the leading cause of death for girls ages 15 to 19, followed by complications from pregnancy and childbirth;

Whereas it is imperative to alleviate violence and discrimination against women and afford women every opportunity to be full and productive members of their communities;

Whereas 2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, where 189 countries committed to integrating gender equality into all dimensions of society;

Whereas 2015 marks the deadline for meeting the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, and progress towards meeting the targets for gender equality and women's empowerment remains uneven; and

Whereas March 8 is recognized each year as International Women's Day, a global day to celebrate the economic, political, and social achievements of women past, present, and future, and to recognize the obstacles that women still face in the struggle for equal rights and opportunities: Now, therefore, be it

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SA 1201. Mr. CORKER (for Mr. LEE) proposed an amendment to amendment SA 1200 proposed by Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. RUBIO) to the resolution S. Res. 97, supporting the goals of International Women's Day; as follows:

Strike the 13th whereas clause of the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas according to the United States Agency for International Development, compared to uneducated women, educated women are less likely to marry as children and more likely to have healthier families;

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 5, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., in room 328A of the Russell Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Review of the U.S. Grain Standards Act.''

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 5, 2015, at 10:30 a.m., in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a Subcommittee hearing entitled ''Surface Transportation Reauthorization: The Importance of a Long Term Reauthorization.''

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 5, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on May 5, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Continuing America's Leadership: Realizing the Promise of Precision Medicine for Patients.''

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 5, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., in room SR–418 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 5, 2015, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CLEAN AIR AND NUCLEAR SAFETY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear

Safety of the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 5, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Legal Implications of the Clean Power Plan.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE, TRANSNATIONAL CRIME, CIVILIAN SECURITY, DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights, and Global Women's Issues be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 5, 2015, at 3:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Review of Resources, Priorities and Programs in the FY 2016 State Department Budget Request.''

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 97 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 97) supporting the goals of International Women's Day.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. CORKER. I further ask unanimous consent that the Corker substitute to the resolution be agreed to; the resolution, as amended, be agreed to; the Corker substitute to the preamble be considered; the Lee amendment to the preamble be agreed to; the Corker substitute, as amended, be agreed to; the preamble, as amended, be agreed to; and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The amendment (No. 1199) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to, as follow:

(Purpose: To provide a complete substitute)

Strike all after the resolving clause and insert the following: ''That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals of International Women's Day;

(2) recognizes that the empowerment of women is inextricably linked to the potential of countries to generate economic growth, sustainable democracy, and inclusive security;

(3) recognizes and honors individuals in the United States and around the world, including women who are human rights defenders, who have worked throughout history to ensure that women are guaranteed equality and basic human rights;

(4) reaffirms the commitment to ending discrimination and violence against women and girls, to ensuring the safety and welfare of women and girls, to pursuing policies that guarantee the basic human rights of women and girls worldwide, and to promoting meaningful and significant participation of women in all aspects of their societies and communities;

(5) supports efforts to establish a sustainable, measurable and global development framework that seeks to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment; and

(6) encourages the people of the United States to observe International Women's Day with appropriate programs and activities.

The resolution (S. Res. 97), as amended, was agreed to.

The amendment (No. 1200) was considered, as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the preamble)

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas there are more than 3,500,000,000 women in the world as of March 2015;

Whereas women around the world have fundamental rights, participate in the political, social, and economic life of their communities, play a critical role in providing and caring for their families, contribute substantially to the growth of economies and the prevention of conflict, and, as farmers and caregivers, play an important role in advancing food security for their communities;

Whereas the advancement of women around the world is a foreign policy priority for the United States;

Whereas on September 24, 2014, the President highlighted the United States' support for the advancement of women, noting: ''Where women are full participants in a country's politics or economy, societies are more likely to succeed. And that's why we support the participation of women in parliaments and peace processes, schools, and the economy.'';

Whereas women remain underrepresented in conflict prevention and conflict resolution efforts, despite proven success by women in conflict-affected regions in moderating violent extremism, countering terrorism, resolving disputes through nonviolent mediation and negotiation, and stabilizing societies by improving access to peace and security services, institutions, and decision-making venues;

Whereas on December 19, 2011, the Obama Administration launched the first United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (referred to in this preamble as the ''National Action Plan'') that includes a comprehensive set of national commitments to advance the active participation of women in decisionmaking relating to matters of war and peace;

Whereas the National Action Plan states the following: ''Deadly conflicts can be more effectively avoided, and peace can be best forged and sustained, when women become equal partners in all aspects of peace-building and conflict prevention, when their lives are protected, their experiences considered, and their voices heard.'';

Whereas the National Action Plan requires the National Security Council staff to coordinate a comprehensive review of, and update to, the National Action Plan in 2015 with consultation from international partners and civil society organizations;

Whereas according to the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the Department of State, the full and meaningful participation of women in security forces vastly enhances the forces' effectiveness;

Whereas the ability of women and girls to realize their full potential is critical to the ability of a country to achieve strong and lasting economic growth and political and social stability;

Whereas according to the International Monetary Fund, ''focusing on the needs and empowerment of women is one of the keys to human development'';

Whereas according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, ⅔ of the 781,000,000 illiterate people in the world are female;

Whereas according to the United States Agency for International Development, compared to uneducated women, ''educated women are less likely to marry early and more likely to have smaller and healthier families. They are also more likely to get a job and earn a higher wage.'';

Whereas according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the majority of women living in rural areas of the developing world are heavily engaged in agricultural labor, yet they receive less credit, land, agricultural inputs, and training than their male counterparts;

Whereas according to the United Nations, women have access to fewer income-earning opportunities and are more likely to manage the household and engage in agricultural work, making women more vulnerable to economic insecurity caused by natural disasters and long-term changes in weather patterns;

Whereas according to the World Bank, women own or partly own more than ⅓ of small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries, and 40 percent of the global workforce is female, yet women entrepreneurs and employers have disproportionately less access to capital and other financial services compared to men;

Whereas despite strides in recent decades, women around the world continue to face significant obstacles in all aspects of their lives, including underrepresentation in all aspects of public life, denial of basic human rights, and discrimination;

Whereas despite achievements by individual female leaders, women around the world are still vastly underrepresented in high-level positions and in national and local legislatures and governments and, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, women account for only 21.9 percent of national parliamentarians;

Whereas it is estimated that 1 in 3 women around the world has experienced some form of physical or sexual violence;

Whereas according to the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime's 2012 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, women account for between 55 and 60 percent of all trafficking victims detected worldwide, and women and girls together make up approximately 75 percent of all known trafficking victims;

Whereas 603,000,000 women live in countries where domestic violence has not been criminalized;

Whereas according to the World Health Organization, approximately 800 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth every day, with 99 percent of all maternal deaths occurring in developing countries;

Whereas on August 10, 2012, the President announced the United States Strategy to

Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally, the first interagency strategy to address gender-based violence around the world;

Whereas violence against women and girls impedes progress in meeting many international global development goals, including efforts to stem maternal mortality and the spread of HIV/AIDS;

Whereas on October 11, 2013, the President strongly condemned the practice of child marriage;

Whereas according to the International Center for Research on Women, ⅓ of girls in the developing world are married before the age of 18, and 1 in 9 girls is married before the age of 15;

Whereas according to the World Health Organization, suicide is the leading cause of death for girls ages 15 to 19, followed by complications from pregnancy and childbirth;

Whereas it is imperative to alleviate violence and discrimination against women and afford women every opportunity to be full and productive members of their communities;

Whereas 2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, where 189 countries committed to integrating gender equality into all dimensions of society;

Whereas 2015 marks the deadline for meeting the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, and progress towards meeting the targets for gender equality and women's empowerment remains uneven; and

Whereas March 8 is recognized each year as International Women's Day, a global day to celebrate the economic, political, and social achievements of women past, present, and future, and to recognize the obstacles that women still face in the struggle for equal rights and opportunities: Now, therefore, be it

The amendment (No. 1201) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the preamble)

Strike the 13th whereas clause of the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas according to the United States Agency for International Development, compared to uneducated women, educated women are less likely to marry as children and more likely to have healthier families;

The amendment (No. 1200), as amended, in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, with its preamble, as amended, reads as follows:

S. RES. 97

Whereas there are more than 3,500,000,000 women in the world as of March 2015;

Whereas women around the world have fundamental rights, participate in the political, social, and economic life of their communities, play a critical role in providing and caring for their families, contribute substantially to the growth of economies and the prevention of conflict, and, as farmers and caregivers, play an important role in advancing food security for their communities;

Whereas the advancement of women around the world is a foreign policy priority for the United States;

Whereas on September 24, 2014, the President highlighted the United States' support for the advancement of women, noting: ''Where women are full participants in a country's politics or economy, societies are more likely to succeed. And that's why we support the participation of women in parliaments and peace processes, schools, and the economy.'';

Whereas women remain underrepresented in conflict prevention and conflict resolution efforts, despite proven success by women in conflict-affected regions in moderating violent extremism, countering terrorism, resolving disputes through nonviolent mediation and negotiation, and stabilizing societies by improving access to peace and security services, institutions, and decision-making venues;

Whereas on December 19, 2011, the Obama Administration launched the first United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (referred to in this preamble as the ''National Action Plan'') that includes a comprehensive set of national commitments to advance the active participation of women in decisionmaking relating to matters of war and peace;

Whereas the National Action Plan states the following: ''Deadly conflicts can be more effectively avoided, and peace can be best forged and sustained, when women become equal partners in all aspects of peace-building and conflict prevention, when their lives are protected, their experiences considered, and their voices heard.'';

Whereas the National Action Plan requires the National Security Council staff to coordinate a comprehensive review of, and update to, the National Action Plan in 2015 with consultation from international partners and civil society organizations;

Whereas according to the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the Department of State, the full and meaningful participation of women in security forces vastly enhances the forces' effectiveness;

Whereas the ability of women and girls to realize their full potential is critical to the ability of a country to achieve strong and lasting economic growth and political and social stability;

Whereas according to the International Monetary Fund, ''focusing on the needs and empowerment of women is one of the keys to human development'';

Whereas according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, ⅔ of the 781,000,000 illiterate people in the world are female;

Whereas according to the United States Agency for International Development, compared to uneducated women, educated women are less likely to marry as children and more likely to have healthier families;

Whereas according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the majority of women living in rural areas of the developing world are heavily engaged in agricultural labor, yet they receive less credit, land, agricultural inputs, and training than their male counterparts;

Whereas according to the United Nations, women have access to fewer income-earning opportunities and are more likely to manage the household and engage in agricultural work, making women more vulnerable to economic insecurity caused by natural disasters and long-term changes in weather patterns;

Whereas according to the World Bank, women own or partly own more than ⅓ of small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries, and 40 percent of the global workforce is female, yet women entrepreneurs and employers have disproportionately less access to capital and other financial services compared to men;

Whereas despite strides in recent decades, women around the world continue to face significant obstacles in all aspects of their lives, including underrepresentation in all aspects of public life, denial of basic human rights, and discrimination;

Whereas despite achievements by individual female leaders, women around the world are still vastly underrepresented in high-level positions and in national and local legislatures and governments and, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, women account for only 21.9 percent of national parliamentarians;

Whereas it is estimated that 1 in 3 women around the world has experienced some form of physical or sexual violence;

Whereas according to the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime's 2012 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, women account for between 55 and 60 percent of all trafficking victims detected worldwide, and women and girls together make up approximately 75 percent of all known trafficking victims;

Whereas 603,000,000 women live in countries where domestic violence has not been criminalized;

Whereas according to the World Health Organization, approximately 800 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth every day, with 99 percent of all maternal deaths occurring in developing countries;

Whereas on August 10, 2012, the President announced the United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally, the first interagency strategy to address gender-based violence around the world;

Whereas violence against women and girls impedes progress in meeting many international global development goals, including efforts to stem maternal mortality and the spread of HIV/AIDS;

Whereas on October 11, 2013, the President strongly condemned the practice of child marriage;

Whereas according to the International Center for Research on Women, ⅓ of girls in the developing world are married before the age of 18, and 1 in 9 girls is married before the age of 15;

Whereas according to the World Health Organization, suicide is the leading cause of death for girls ages 15 to 19, followed by complications from pregnancy and childbirth;

Whereas it is imperative to alleviate violence and discrimination against women and afford women every opportunity to be full and productive members of their communities;

Whereas 2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, where 189 countries committed to integrating gender equality into all dimensions of society;

Whereas 2015 marks the deadline for meeting the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, and progress towards meeting the targets for gender equality and women's empowerment remains uneven; and

Whereas March 8 is recognized each year as International Women's Day, a global day to celebrate the economic, political, and social achievements of women past, present, and future, and to recognize the obstacles that women still face in the struggle for equal rights and opportunities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals of International Women's Day;

(2) recognizes that the empowerment of women is inextricably linked to the potential of countries to generate economic growth, sustainable democracy, and inclusive security;

(3) recognizes and honors individuals in the United States and around the world, including women who are human rights defenders, who have worked throughout history to ensure that women are guaranteed equality and basic human rights;

(4) reaffirms the commitment to ending discrimination and violence against women

and girls, to ensuring the safety and welfare of women and girls, to pursuing policies that guarantee the basic human rights of women and girls worldwide, and to promoting meaningful and significant participation of women in all aspects of their societies and communities;

(5) supports efforts to establish a sustainable, measurable and global development framework that seeks to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment; and

(6) encourages the people of the United States to observe International Women's Day with appropriate programs and activities.

DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR EBOLA ORPHANS

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of and the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 155.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 155) establishing May 2, 2015, as a Day of Recognition for Ebola Orphans to express support for the children and families affected by the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa by promoting awareness of the children of West Africa who have been orphaned by the 2014 Ebola epidemic, celebrating those who have recognized and are working to fulfill the needs of those children, and encouraging the people of the United States to continue to support the people of West Africa.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. CORKER. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 155) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD on April 29, 2015, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY OF DR. WARREN WEINSTEIN

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 169.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 169) expressing condolences to the family of Dr. Warren Weinstein, and commemorating the life and work of Dr. Warren Weinstein.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. CORKER. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 169) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2015

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, May 6; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, and that the time be equally divided, with the majority controlling the first half and the Democrats controlling the second half; finally, that following morning business the Senate then resume consideration of H.R. 1191.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:01 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, May 6, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING BRIAN KADING ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM IOWA ASSOCIATION OF ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

HON. DAVID LOEBSACK

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Mr. LOEBSACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Brian Kading on his retirement from the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. He has spent the last 19 years as the Executive Vice President leading the organization during times of unprecedented change in the electric utility industry. Brian successfully guided the membership of the IAEC through deregulation in the mid-90s and has been the steady hand ever since.

When winter storms struck the co-ops, Brian's leadership ensured that the IAEC was prepared to provide the high level coordination necessary to get the trucks and the crews from in and out of state to the areas that were most needed.

Brian has been a tireless defender of the cooperative business model always keeping the organization focused on the cooperative principles. In recognition of his achievements, he received the William F. Matson Democracy Award, but in typical Brian Kading fashion, refused to accept the award and instead had the award given the IAEC grassroots advocates. Under his leadership the organization also received the Paul Revere Award which is a very proud accomplishment that recognizes a well-organized, highly motivated, broad based grassroots advocacy program.

Brian Kading has exemplified the cooperative principles and has truly lived the phrase he coined: "Truth, Justice and the Cooperative Way."

IN HONOR OF THE LAUNCHING OF DIRECT FLIGHTS BETWEEN DALLAS/FT. WORTH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (DFW) AND BEIJING CAPITAL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (PEK)

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the May 7th launch of American Airlines Flight #89, a Boeing 777–200ER which is scheduled to depart DFW at 11:20 a.m. for the first direct flight to Beijing. This will be a significant milestone achievement, as obtaining direct service for North Texas to Beijing has been years in the making. I congratulate DFW Airport, the scores of state and local officials involved, and business and community leaders for their years of effort to land this new direct service from the 24th Congressional District to the capital of China.

American Airlines Flight #89 will add to the growing list of direct flights from DFW to Asia. North Texas passengers, as well as countless connecting passengers from across the United States and other countries, can now take advantage of American's direct service from DFW to Beijing, Hong Kong, Seoul, Shanghai, and Tokyo-Narita. Many businesses have operations in my district because of the easy and frequent access to direct flights from DFW. The Beijing service will make it easier for my constituents to travel to China and destinations throughout Asia for both business and leisure.

The new flight to Beijing continues the largest expansion in new international destinations from DFW in the airport's rich history. The Beijing flight will complement other recently added international service from DFW that spans the globe from Bogota to Sydney. This global route expansion will not stop with Beijing, as in June new service from DFW will begin to both Grand Cayman and Managua. Each of these new international routes results in new jobs and economic benefits for my constituents and all of North Texas.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize and congratulate Dallas/Ft. Worth International Airport and American Airlines on their starting direct service to Beijing.

HONORING THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART, CHAPTER 393

HON. BETO O'ROURKE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to recognize the Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 393, a distinguished Veteran Service Organization in El Paso, Texas.

Since 1932, Chapter 393 has served our veteran population not just in El Paso County but also southern New Mexico. It has also been there for our Service Members stationed at Fort Bliss. Chapter 393 upholds the tenants of the Order of the Purple Heart by assisting veterans' families, providing memorial services, and engaging the community to help better serve veterans.

Chartered by Congress in 1958, The Military Order of the Purple Heart is composed of military men and women who received the Purple Heart Medal for wounds suffered in combat. Although its membership is restricted to the combat wounded, the organization supports all veterans and their families with a number of programs led by dedicated members like Robert Macias in El Paso. Mr. Macias is a national certified service officer and works tirelessly at the El Paso VA Outpatient Facility to ensure our community's veterans receive the care they deserve. I thank him for his leadership.

The Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 393 is an asset to our veteran community and the El Paso area. I thank the Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 393 for their commitment to honoring our veterans in the El Paso community.

RECOGNIZING THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF ORANGE MOUND IN MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 125th anniversary of Orange Mound, an historic and cultural hub in Memphis, Tennessee. Founded in 1890, Orange Mound was the first American community developed specifically for African-Americans to buy land and purchase homes. From the early twentieth century into the 1970s, the community was said to be home to the largest concentration of African-Americans outside of Harlem, New York, and like Harlem, Orange Mound has a rich history of talent and economic independence.

Orange Mound is home to some of the most well-known leaders and entrepreneurs in Memphis. Its residents have included the late Judge Otis Higgs, Jr., the first African-American sheriff in Shelby County, Tennessee and an instrumental figure in overturning the runoff provision in Memphis' citywide races, which led to the election of the city's first African-American mayor. Fred Davis, the first African-American insurance policy writing agent in Tennessee, the first African-American to own an insurance agency in the South, the first African-American member of the Independent Insurance Agents of America and the first African-American Chairman of the Memphis City Council was also a noteworthy Memphian who claimed Orange Mound as his home.

Orange Mound is also well-known for Melrose High School, an all-black school that was also founded in 1890 and remains revered in the community today. Many great athletes lived in Orange Mound and attended Melrose, including NFL cornerback Barry Wilburn who played for eight seasons from 1985 to 1996 and won a Super Bowl ring with the Washington Redskins in their 42–10 victory at Super Bowl XXII. His father, Jesse, coached football at Melrose from 1959 to 1968 and his mother, Margaret, was a track and field bronze medalist in the 1956 Summer Olympics. Bobby "Bingo" Smith was a college All-American basketball player at the University of Tulsa, a top ten pick in the 1969 NBA Draft and played for the San Diego Rockets, the Cleveland Cavaliers and the San Diego Clippers. Track star and Olympic gold (1996) and silver (1992) medalist Rochelle Stevens also attended Melrose and in 2007, the Memphis City Council renamed a street in her honor. Memphis State University (MSU) men's basketball coach Larry Finch, who helped ease race relations during a sharply divided era, led

the Memphis State Tigers to the NCAA Tournament finals as a teammate, and then coached the team to its greatest number of wins, was also from Orange Mound and attended Melrose High School.

Other notable Melrose alumni athletes include 1968 to 1971 NFL player Sam Walton, who played for the New York Jets when they won Super Bowl III; Ronnie Robinson, who played at MSU with Larry Finch and helped lead the team to the 1973 Final Four; Melrose 1974 state champion and MSU point guard Alvin Wright, who also helped MSU to a four year record of 80–34; John ''Big John'' Gunn played for MSU from 1974 to 1976; power forward for MSU and 1979 NBA Round 2 draft pick James Bradley; All-American William Bedford who also played in the NBA from 1986 to 1993; and NFL player Jerome Woods from 1996 to 2005.

Melrose High School has also graduated top scholars, including Dellarontay Readus. Dellarontay scored a 31 on the ACT, is Melrose's class of 2015 valedictorian and was awarded a full academic scholarship by Stanford University. Melrose has also graduated three ''all college expenses paid'' Bill Gates Scholars.

In addition to being home to many Memphis greats, Orange Mound has served as a hub for live music and entertainment. The W.C. Handy Theater located on Park Avenue was built by a group of Memphis businessmen and was a popular entertainment attraction for several years. Such premier acts of the day included Count Basie, Sarah Vaughan, Lionel Hampton, and Memphis legends B.B. King, Bukka White and Willie Mitchell. Internationally famed jazz saxophonist and CEO of the Soulsville Foundation, Kirk Whalum, got his start in music playing for the Melrose High School band.

Religion has also been central to the Orange Mound community. It is the only community in America with six churches over 100 years old and many more that are over 75 years old. Particularly well-known churches include Mt. Pisgah CME Church at the corner of Park Avenue and Marchaneil, which was founded in the late 1870s and played a role in assisting activists during the Civil Rights Movement, and Mount Moriah Baptist Church, which was founded in 1879 before moving to its present-day location at the corner of David and Carnes Streets in 1883. Today, descendants of the founders of many churches in Orange Mound still attend these historic houses of worship and serve in the community.

Since 1990, Memphis has played host to the Southern Heritage Classic football game between Tennessee State University and Jackson State University at the Liberty Bowl Stadium, which helps form the northern border of Orange Mound. In that same year, the Orange Mound Parade Committee was formed to honor Memphian Fred Jones for his dedicated work in establishing the Southern Heritage Classic. As the Congressman for Tennessee's Ninth District, which includes Orange Mound, I have been honored to participate in this parade as it travels down Park Avenue and passes Melrose High School, homes, local businesses and Orange Mound's historic churches. I have met with the residents of Orange Mound and am always inspired by their commitment to the revitalization and renaissance of this historic community in America.

In commemoration of the anniversary, the United States Postal Office has issued a special postmark cancellation honoring Orange Mound. It was designed by the residents of Orange Mound and I was happy to work with the new Memphis Postmaster, Jennifer Vo, to make this a reality. As the first all African-American community in America that has been home to many internationally known African-Americans who have contributed to American culture, the Orange Mound community is truly part of American history and is deserving of this special recognition. As such, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in recognizing the 125th anniversary of Orange Mound in Memphis, Tennessee.

RECOGNIZING MARY AGEE ON HER RETIREMENT AS PRESIDENT AND CEO OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA FAMILY SERVICE

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Mary Agee and her service as president and CEO of Northern Virginia Family Service (NVFS). She will step down in June after leading the agency, with distinction, for 27 years.

The organization we know today as the NVFS originated in 1924 in Alexandria, Virginia, as an organization with one volunteer and no operating budget. Mary Agee joined the staff of this organization as a family counselor in 1972 and rose to the position of deputy director in 1978. When she received this promotion NVFS had 11 staff and an annual operating budget of $178,000. Under her leadership the organization grew to its current size of 350 employees, 3,600 volunteers and operating budget of $32 million. NVFS is now the largest private, nonprofit human service organization in Northern Virginia.

Mr. Speaker, every year, almost 34,000 families and individuals utilize the human service programs offered by NVFS which include: housing and emergency services, early childhood programs, health & mental health services, workforce development programs legal assistance, anti-hunger programs, and intervention & prevention programs. The NVFS has taken an aggressive role supporting community partnerships under the leadership of Mary Agee and has been able to collaborate with other human services agencies to provide comprehensive multi-agency service provisions for their clients. NVFS's dedicated approach to serving others has earned them an impeccable reputation for their ability to stabilize and assist families in crisis. They are truly angels in our community.

Following the devastating September 11th Terrorist Attacks at the Pentagon, NVFS was selected by the Community Foundation of the National Capital Area to manage the 9/11 Survivors' Fund. Mary Agee has said that the ability of the NVFS to directly provide the families of the victims of the attack with vital human services is the proudest moment in her nearly four decades of service to her community.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mrs. Mary Agee upon her retirement from the Northern Virginia Family Service. Her dedicated hard work and service in the Northern Virginia Community has touched and improved the lives of countless families and individuals. We know she will continue to provide years of service to her community in whatever she chooses to do and we sincerely thank her for her service, and wish her the best on all future endeavors.

HONORING DR. ALAN RAY

HON. MIKE QUIGLEY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of Dr. S. Alan Ray. After seven years of exemplary service as President of Elmhurst College he will be retiring in June of this year.

Since beginning his tenure at Elmhurst College in July of 2008, he has been vital to the development and execution of many transformative projects. On his first day he announced the first strategic planning process in the school's history. This plan set the ground work for the many improvements that would follow.

Under Dr. Ray's leadership, Elmhurst College has improved its standing in the Chicago Metropolitan area by forming partnerships with John Marshall Law School, Elmhurst Memorial Healthcare, Roosevelt University, and a variety of other institutions. Elmhurst College has also seen an increase in diversity, with a 20% increase in students of color during his 7 years.

In 2012, the School for Professional Studies was launched under the supervision of Dr. Ray. This new school is a source of graduate education as well as adult learning. These opportunities help those already in the workforce to remain competitive in our ever-changing economy.

I invite my colleagues to join me honoring Dr. S. Alan Ray for the work he has done for Elmhurst College, his community, and this great nation by helping to improve the lives of thousands of students. We thank him for his invaluable service, and wish him well in his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING ASIAN-PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

HON. AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in observance of Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month. I extend my warm wishes to all Asian-Pacific Americans (APA), whose contributions to our society cannot be understated. From our unique culture, culinary practices and art, to the construction of vital infrastructure and contributions to science and technology, APA's have always been at the forefront of American innovation.

In 1977, Congress declared the first week of May as Asian-Pacific American Heritage week; and in 1992 passed a resolution that set aside the entire month to recognize APA's and the many contributions that they have made to American culture, science and industry.

As the Senior, APA Republican in Congress, I want to take this opportunity to celebrate the beginning of Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month. I could not be more proud of the influence and contributions of those who came before me. It is their memory and sacrifices that drive me while performing my duties as the Member of Congress who represents American Samoa and I look forward to continuing the important work that they began.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in recognizing the many contributions that APA's have made to this great nation and I ask that we carry this spirit throughout the entire year.

HONORING CAPTAIN GEORGE KLEIN

HON. ROBERT J. DOLD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Captain George Klein of the United States Army. Captain Klein served during World War II and fought valiantly during the invasion of Normandy. As a member of the 2nd Ranger Battalion, Captain Klein took part in the dangerous mission of scaling the cliffs at Pointe Du Hoc.

On June 6, 1944, Captain Klein led Fox Company as they began the invasion of Normandy. Upon landing, the Company charged the cliffs of Pointe Du Hoc and began to climb the 100 feet to the top. After scaling the cliffs Captain Klein was injured by a German soldier. Thankfully, Captain Klein was given medical treatment and recovered from his wounds in England.

Captain Klein will be returning to the cliffs at Pointe Du Hoc this year in recognition of the 71st anniversary of D-Day. Captain Klein's unwavering courage and gallantry displayed during the landing at Normandy deserves our utmost respect and gratitude. He is truly an American hero, and Illinois' 10th Congressional District is lucky to have him as a resident.

RECOGNIZING CINCO DE MAYO

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the holiday of Cinco de Mayo commemorating the victory of the Mexican Army 1862 over France at the Battle of Puebla during the Franco-Mexican War.

Certain of Victory, 6,000 French troops led by General Charles Latrille de Lorencez attacked the city of Puebla de Los Angeles, but the 2,000 Mexican soldiers led by the Texas-born General Zaragoza defeated the French with 100 casualties as opposed to the 500 soldiers lost by the French.

Cinco de Mayo has evolved in the United States into a celebration of Mexican culture and heritage.

Different traditions surrounding Cinco de Mayo include parades, mariachi music performances, and street festivals and the serving of foods such as tacos and mole poblano; specifically in areas with a large Mexican-American population.

Houston, Texas, along with Los Angeles, and Chicago are home to the largest Cinco de Mayo celebrations in the nation.

As of March 2014, Latinos made up 38.2% of the Texas population, so it is very important to recognize and celebrate their culture.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in the recognition of Cinco de Mayo and celebrate Mexican culture as well as the victory at the Battle of Pueblo.

HONORING THE AMERICAN LEGION, PASO DEL NORTE POST 58

HON. BETO O'ROURKE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today to recognize the American Legion Post 58 located in Northeast El Paso on Vulcan Avenue, also known as the El Paso Del Norte Post. I am pleased to recognize them as a distinguished Veteran Services Organization in my district.

As one of the largest VSOs in Texas, the Paso Del Norte Post's engagement with our veteran community is exemplary. Several of the officers at this post serve or have served on national committees and commissions of the American Legion. In the fall of 2014, a team from the American Legion national organization visited El Paso and worked with the El Paso VA to provide medical care to veterans in need. The visiting group of the American Legion, led by Verna Jones, Director of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division in Washington, D.C., also hosted a town hall at the El Paso Del Norte headquarters where over 400 veterans attended.

Post 58 further provided accommodations to their national counterparts for four additional days to assist veterans through their ''Veteran Crisis Command Center'' where a team known as a ''triage team'' was available to help veterans get access to the medical care they deserve. The American Legion Post 58's commitment to our community's veterans is remarkable and their team is comprised of dedicated veterans who volunteer their time to serve fellow veterans. The American Legion in my district is currently led by Richard Britton. I thank him for his leadership.

The American Legion Paso Del Norte Post 58 is an asset to our veteran community and El Paso. I thank Post 58 for their commitment to honoring our veterans and for helping strengthen the bonds in the El Paso community.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF HAVEN

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize HAVEN and its staff and volunteers for their 40 years of service to domestic and sexual violence victims and their families. HAVEN is a nationally recognized non-profit leader whose survivor-centered services honor survivors as experts of their own experiences. HAVEN empowers nearly 30,000 people each year by providing shelter, counseling, advocacy and education programming.

HAVEN's vision of promoting a world of safe, equal and accountable communities is inspiring and moves us ever closer to eradicating sexual assault and domestic violence, especially against women and girls, who are disproportionately victimized by their partners and others. Their programs educate our community about recognizing abusive behaviors, understanding the problem and our role in prevention, and how we can refuse to contribute to a culture of domestic abuse. I join them in asserting their guiding principle, that we all have a right to live without fear.

HAVEN should also be commended on their recent groundbreaking for a new facility. The new campus will only expand their ability to provide medical, legal, educational, and economic support to survivors and their families. When they opened in 1975, there were no laws to protect victims from stalking or assault. This new facility will serve as a beacon of hope and a statement that their community will support and protect them.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today to honor HAVEN for their 40 years of leadership in combating domestic violence and sexual assault. I thank them for their commitment to our community and wish them many more years of success.

HONORING JAN ALDERTON OF THE CUMBERLAND TIMES-NEWS

HON. JOHN K. DELANEY

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Mr. DELANEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize and honor Mr. Jan Alderton, Managing Editor at the Cumberland Times-News, for his incredible career and his retirement after nearly 48 years of journalism.

Jan started at the Cumberland News in 1967 as a proofreader. Eventually, he worked his way through almost every newsroom position. From his coverage of the Maryland General Assembly in the 1970's, to his work as a sports reporter, Jan showed true commitment to his craft, and worked hard to publish the best stories each day.

In 1987, Jan was named Managing Editor of the Times-News for the first time. There, Jan strived to make sure readers of the Times-News had access to breaking stories and the best reporting. His service to the people of Allegany County will be dearly missed.

Local journalism, like that at the Cumberland Times-News, provides a critical service for communities nationwide, highlighting events that aren't covered elsewhere. When it comes to reading hometown news, there's only one place to find it, and that's your hometown paper.

I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues help me in honoring Mr. Jan Alderton, for his dedication to honest reporting and his commitment to the people of Cumberland. Let's wish Jan a happy and healthy retirement.

IN HONOR OF BOB ROBERTS

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to the House's attention that Bob Roberts, the President of the renowned California Ski Industry Association is retiring. Perhaps we ought to alert the federal agencies to be on the lookout for the impending consequences. Ski lifts will stop running, avalanches will start falling, snow accumulation will dramatically decrease. My God, Mr. Speaker, how can this country even exist without Bob Roberts at the helm? And it's not even just the U.S. who will be affected, for he is known as the Peace Corps volunteer who put Peru on the map. Will the Andes now disappear without him? Take a look at his distinguished career.

Mr. Roberts began his career in the ski industry in 1969 as operator of Mt. Shasta Ski Area. He held this post until 1975, after which, he founded the California Ski Industry Association. He has stood at the helm of the CSIA for 40 years, working from the ground up to create an organization which has effectively continued to improve and enhance the thriving ski industry in my home state of California. Through successful campaigns such as the ''Ski California USA'' and an award winning cooperative promotion with Virgin Atlantic Airways, Bob and the CSIA have been able to attract unprecedented levels of domestic and international visitors to California's alpine and cross-country resorts.

Bob Roberts received his undergraduate BA in political science from Stanford University and an MBA in international business from Columbia University. After graduation, he was one of the very first Peace Corps volunteers sent to Peru. During his time in Peru he served in the Andes as a supervisor on the development and construction of a hotel and thermal baths. He then continued his work with the Peace Corps, serving as regional director in Bolivia and then director for the Latin American training center in Escondido, California. Bob's selfless work with the Peace Corps would equip him with a political aptitude, a disposition towards public service and a keen interest in the resort business.

A true icon in the tourism industry, Mr. Roberts was also instrumental in the creation of the California Travel and Tourism Commission. He was elected Vice Chair of the first commission and also served for six years as chair of the marketing committee, directing California's tourism programs.

As well as a tireless advocate for the tourism industry, Bob is also a devoted husband to his wife, Betty, and a father of two, Kirsten and Christopher, and grandfather to five.

Mr. Speaker, I know that I speak on behalf of the entire House in thanking my friend from the Peace Corps for his exceptional service and I wish him the very best in the next chapter of his life.

HONORING THE DAILY BREEZE NEWSPAPER FOR WINNING THE PULITZER PRIZE

HON. TED LIEU

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Mr. TED LIEU of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Daily Breeze newspaper, which won a Pulitzer Prize for local reporting for their investigation into the corruption at Centinela Valley Union High School District.

I want to commend the Daily Breeze for their exceptional journalism and congratulate them on this honor. I was overjoyed to hear that they had received the award. All of the Daily Breeze's editors, journalists, and staff should be enormously proud, and they do great credit to the 33rd Congressional District.

The Daily Breeze excels in many areas, including political journalism, acting as a vital watchdog to address problems in government. Their investigation into the Centinela School District exposed the culture of corruption within the district's administration. Despite the excessive salaries given to the administration's leadership, the district was cutting important academic programs, scoring poorly on student performance evaluations, and hurting the educations of students whose job it was for them to help.

The Daily Breeze's investigation resulted in the removal of the school superintendent and led the FBI and Los Angeles District Attorney to open investigations into the district's shady dealings. Without the Daily Breeze's fine reporting, this waste of taxpayer money and abuse of the public's trust might never have been brought to light.

The paper has served as the voice of Torrance and the entire South Bay area since 1894. For more than a hundred years, the Daily Breeze combines comprehensive national reporting with innovative and hard-hitting local coverage. As a Torrance resident, I have been reading the Daily Breeze for nearly two decades. Whether reporting on government, local entertainment or criminal investigations, the Daily Breeze exemplifies the best ideals of journalism: creativity, civic service, and integrity. I am proud to honor the Daily Breeze leadership, reporters, and employees as they celebrate their first Pulitzer Prize.

DISAPPROVAL OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH NON-DISCRIMINATION AMENDMENT ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2015

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I rise to express my opposition to H.J. Res. 43, a bill that aims to overturn the Reproductive Health Non-discrimination Amendment Act (RHNDA) which was recently passed by the DC City Council.

The purpose of the RHNDA is to prevent DC employers from discriminating against workers for making personal reproductive health decisions that conflict with the expressed values of their employer. For example, the law prevents the firing of an employee for getting pregnant outside of marriage.

Supporters of H.J. Res. 43 say the bill's intent is to protect the rights of employers who do not want to be forced to support the reproductive decisions of their employees. However, the RHNDA imposes no new requirements on employers to provide health insurance and does not change the insurance policies of current workers in any way. RHNDA's aim is simply to ensure that workers are judged based on their work decision-making, rather than on their personal health decision-making.

This Republican bill is not only an assault on workers' rights; it is also an assault on the rights of self-determination of the people of Washington D.C. Why should an Idaho congressman be able to overturn the unanimous decision of an elected body which is simply expressing the will of the DC voters that elected it?

For these reasons, I oppose this bill and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

SPEECH OF

HON. DAVID N. CICILLINE

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2015

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2028) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes:

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Chair, I am concerned that the Fiscal Year 2016 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill passed on May 1st limits investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency at the expense of increased investment in fossil fuels, risking the future of America's clean energy future. It is vitally important that the United States continue to make strong investments in clean energy technologies, so that we can move away from reliance on dirty and expensive fossil fuels. By adhering to sequester level caps for non-defense spending risks the future of an American clean energy economy.

In addition to the spending cuts, I am deeply concerned about misguided rider included in the bill that would prevent funding of the National Ocean Policy, which permits better coordination among federal agencies responsible for coastal and ocean planning.

In 2011, ocean industries supported 2.8 million jobs and $282 billion in GDP. Our 21st century economy depends on our oceans, but there is increasing pressure on and competition for resources. Ocean planning seeks to reduce these conflicts and strengthen the resilience of ocean communities and ecosystems.

In the Northeast, our Regional Ocean Council has allowed our states to pool resources and businesses to have a voice in decision-making and has coordinated with federal partners to ensure all stakeholders have a voice in the process.

Allowing federal agencies to coordinate implementation of over 100 ocean laws and giving state and local governments a voice in the ocean planning process is smart public policy, and I hope that as the Appropriations process moves forward we will remove this harmful provision from the Energy and Water Bill.

I would like to note that this year's Energy and Water bill includes $10 million for environmental infrastructure projects within the Army Corps of Engineers' General Construction account. These funds are vitally important to communities that desperately require improvements to their water and sanitation infrastructure, and may require additional funds to do so.

We require, quite rightly, water and sewage treatment plants to maintain federally mandated standards to keep our water supply safe and sustainable. About 72% of the population is served by sewage treatment plants, but 3.8 million of those people are served by facilities providing less than secondary treatment, which is a basic requirement by federal law. Often, the financial burden to meet these requirements falls on state and local governments. This can leave communities experiencing financial distress with outdated infrastructure and facing down huge costs to bring them in line with requirements. And this affects all of us, as aging wastewater management systems discharge billions of gallons of untreated sewage into U.S. surface waters each year.

For example, in my home state of Rhode Island a large-scale restoration is underway to improve the 143 year old waterworks infrastructure that runs through Cranston and Providence and serves a majority of the state. According to local news reports the project may take up to 40 years. In the northern part of our state, Woonsocket is planning its own major reconstruction of its water infrastructure, built in the 1930s, as they grapple with aging equipment that can no longer comply with environmental regulations.

I applaud the excellent planning and fundraising being done in Rhode Island to meet the needs of our aging water infrastructure, and I note the benefit that having access to Army Corps of Engineers expertise and funds adds to local governments striving to meet the infrastructure needs of their communities.

I urge my colleagues to include robust funding for Army Corps environmental infrastructure programs in the final Energy and water spending bill.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate agreed to the Conference Report to accompany S. Con. Res. 11, Budget Resolution.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S2611–S2658

Measures Introduced: Twelve bills and three resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 1188–1199, and S. Res. 167–169. **Pages S2650–51**

Measures Reported:

S. 136, to amend chapter 21 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that fathers of certain permanently disabled or deceased veterans shall be included with mothers of such veterans as preference eligibles for treatment in the civil service. (S. Rept. No. 114–35)

S. 579, to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 to strengthen the independence of the Inspectors General, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 114–36) **Page S2650**

Measures Passed:

International Women's Day: Committee on Foreign Relations was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 97, supporting the goals of International Women's Day, and the resolution was then agreed to, after agreeing to the following amendments proposed thereto: **Page S2656**

Corker/Rubio Amendment No. 1199, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S2656**

Corker (for Lee) Amendment No. 1201 (to the language proposed by Amendment No. 1200), to amend the preamble. **Page S2656**

Corker/Rubio Amendment No. 1200, to amend the preamble. **Page S2656**

Day of Recognition for Ebola Orphans: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 155, establishing May 2, 2015, as a Day of Recognition for Ebola Orphans to express support for the children and families affected by the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa by promoting awareness of the children of West Africa who have been orphaned by the 2014 Ebola epidemic, celebrating those who have recognized and are working to fulfill the needs of children, and encouraging the people of the United States to continue to support the people of West Africa, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S2658**

Dr. Warren Weinstein: Senate agreed to S. Res. 169, expressing condolences to the family of Dr. Warren Weinstein, and commemorating the life and work of Dr. Warren Weinstein. **Page S2658**

Measures Considered:

Protecting Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Responders Act—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, taking action on the following amendments proposed thereto: **Page S2644**

Pending:

Corker/Cardin Amendment No. 1140, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S2644**

Corker/Cardin Amendment No. 1179 (to Amendment No. 1140), to require submission of all Persian text included in the agreement. **Page S2644**

Blunt Amendment No. 1155 (to Amendment No. 1140), to extend the requirement for annual Department of Defense reports on the military power of Iran. **Page S2644**

Vitter Modified Amendment No. 1186 (to Amendment No. 1179), to require an assessment of inadequacies in the international monitoring and verification system as they relate to a nuclear agreement with Iran. **Page S2644**

Cotton Amendment No. 1197 (to the language proposed to be stricken by Amendment No. 1140), of a perfecting nature. **Page S2644**

Cotton (for Rubio) Amendment No. 1198 (to Amendment No. 1197), to require a certification

that Iran's leaders have publically accepted Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state. **Page S2644**

A motion was entered to close further debate on Corker/Cardin Amendment No. 1140 (listed above), and, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur on Thursday, May 7, 2015. **Page S2644**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the bill, and, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of Corker/Cardin Amendment No. 1140. **Page S2644**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the bill at approximately 10:30 a.m., on Wednesday, May 6, 2015. **Page S2658**

Veto Messages:

National Labor Relations Board Veto Message: Senate continued consideration of the veto message to accompany S.J. Res. 8, 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. **Pages S2613, S2644**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 96 yeas to 3 nays (Vote No. 172), Senate tabled the veto message to accompany the joint resolution. **Page S2644**

Conference Reports:

Budget Resolution—Conference Report: By 51 yeas to 48 nays (Vote No. 171), Senate agreed to the conference report to accompany 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. **Pages S2613–44**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 53 yeas to 44 nays (Vote No. 170), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to consideration of the conference report to accompany the concurrent resolution. **Page S2613**

Messages from the House: **Page S2649**

Measures Referred: **Page S2649**

Executive Communications: **Pages S2649–50**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S2651–52**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S2652–54**

Additional Statements: **Pages S2648–49**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S2654–55**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S2655–56**

Record Votes: Three record votes were taken today. (Total—172) **Pages S2613, S2643–44, S2644**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:01 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, May 6, 2015. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S2658.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

U.S. GRAIN STANDARDS ACT

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the U.S. Grain Standards Act, after receiving testimony from Bill Gordon, American Soybean Association, Worthington, Minnesota; David Ayers, American Association of Grain Inspection and Weighing Agencies, Urbana, Illinois; Tim Paurus, CHS Inc., Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota, on behalf of the National Grain and Feed Association; and Steve Campbell, Louis Dreyfus Commodities, Kansas City, Missouri, on behalf of the North American Export Grain Association.

APPROPRIATIONS: SEC AND CFTC

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Securities and Exchange Commission and Commodity Futures Trading Commission, after receiving testimony from Mary Jo White, Chairwoman, Securities and Exchange Commission; and Tim Massad, Chairman, Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security concluded a hearing to examine surface transportation reauthorization, focusing on the importance of a long term reauthorization, after receiving testimony from Utah State Senator Curt Bramble, Salt Lake City, on behalf of the National Conference of State Legislatures; Mayor Brian C. Wahler, Piscataway Township, New Jersey, on behalf of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities; and Nick Yaksich, Association of Equipment Manufacturers, and Janet Kavinoky, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, both of Washington, D.C.

WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the Federal government's role in wildfire management, the impact of fires on communities, and potential improvements to be made in fire operations, after receiving testimony from Tom Tidwell, Chief, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; Robert Eisele, County of San Diego, Santee, California; Stephen J. Pyne, Arizona State University, Tempe; Sharon M. Hood, University of Montana, Missoula; and Bruce Hallin, Salt River Project, Phoenix, Arizona.

CLEAN POWER PLAN

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety concluded a hearing to examine the legal implications of the Clean Power Plan, after receiving testimony from Oklahoma Attorney General E. Scott Pruitt, Oklahoma City; West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, Charleston; Kelly Speakes-Backman, Maryland Public Service Commission Commissioner, Baltimore; and Roger R. Martella, Jr., Sidley Austin LLP, and Lisa Heinzerling, Georgetown University Law Center, both of Washington, D.C.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE BUDGET

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights, and Global Women's Issues concluded a hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2016 for the Department of State, after receiving testimony from Catherine M. Russell, Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, John D. Feeley, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, and Virginia Bennett, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, all of the Department of State.

PRECISION MEDICINE

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee concluded a hearing to examine precision medicine for patients, after receiving testimony from Francis S. Collins, Director, National Institutes of Health, Karen B. DeSalvo, National Coordinator, Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, and Jeffrey Shuren, Director, Center for Devices and Radiological Health, Food and Drug Administration, all of the Department of Health and Human Services.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of David J. Shulkin, of Pennsylvania, to be Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs, who was introduced by Senator Casey, and LaVerne Horton Council, of New Jersey, to be an Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Information and Technology), after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES QUOTA PROCESS MANAGEMENT

United States Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control: Caucus concluded a hearing to examine improving management of the controlled substances quota process, after receiving testimony from Marcia Crosse, Director, Health Care, Government Accountability Office; Captain Valerie Jensen, Associate Director, Drug Shortages Program, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services; and Joseph T. Rannazzisi, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Diversion Control, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 10 public bills, H.R. 2233–2242; and 3 resolutions, H.J. Res. 49; and H. Res. %1–252 were introduced.

Pages H2798–99

Additional Cosponsors: Pages H2799–H2800

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

H.R. 1735, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe

military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 114–102). **Page H2798**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Messer to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H2797**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Reverend Anthony Craig, Diocese of Duluth, Pequot Lakes, Minnesota. **Page H2797**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H2797.

Senate Referral: S. 665 was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. **Page H2797**

Quorum Calls—Votes: There were no yea-and-nay votes, and there were no Recorded votes. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 11:30 a.m. and adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

Committee Meetings

No hearings were held.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2015

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, to hold hearings to examine global health problems, 10 a.m., SD–124.

Subcommittee on Department of Defense, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Department of Defense, 10:30 a.m., SD–192.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Daniel R. Elliott III, of Ohio, to be a Member of the Surface Transportation Board, and Mario Cordero, of California, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner, 10 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2015 for the Fish and Wildlife Service, and S. 1036, to require the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to provide certain Western States assistance in the development of statewide conservation and management plans or the protection and recovery of sage-grouse species, S. 855, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to permit Governors of States to regulate intrastate endangered species and intrastate threatened species, S. 736, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to require disclosure to States of the basis of determinations under such Act, to ensure use of information provided by State, tribal, and county governments in decision making under such Act, S. 655, 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. 468, to provide a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 to allow the Director of the Bureau of Land Management and the Chief of the Forest Service to remove Pinyon-Juniper trees to conserve and restore the habitat of the greater sage-grouse and the mule deer, S. 293, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to establish a procedure for approval of certain settlements, S. 292, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to require publication on the Internet of the basis for determinations that species are endangered species or threatened species, S. 112, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to require the Secretary of the Interior to publish and make available for public comment a draft economic analysis at the time a proposed rule to designate critical habitat is published, and S. 1081, to end the use of body-gripping traps in the National Wildlife Refuge System, 9:30 a.m., SD–406.

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy, to hold oversight hearings to examine multilateral and bilateral international development programs and policies, 2:30 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: to hold hearings to examine reauthorizing the Higher Education Act, focusing on the role of consumer information in college choice, 10 a.m., SD–430.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: business meeting to consider S. 280, to improve the efficiency, management, and interagency coordination of the Federal permitting process through reforms overseen by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, S. 1180, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to modernize the integrated public alert and warning system of the United States, S. 750, to achieve border security on certain Federal lands along the Southern border, S. 282, to provide taxpayers with an annual report disclosing the cost and performance of Government programs and areas of duplication among them, S. 1109, to require adequate information regarding the tax treatment of payments under settlement agreements entered into by Federal agencies, S. 1172, to improve the process of presidential transition, S. 434, to strengthen the accountability of individuals involved in misconduct affecting the integrity of background investigations, to update guidelines for security clearances, to prevent conflicts of interest relating to contractors providing background investigation fieldwork services and investigative support services, H.R. 623, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize the Department of Homeland Security to establish a social media working group, S. 179, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 14 3rd Avenue, NW, in

Chisholm, Minnesota, as the ''James L. Oberstar Memorial Post Office Building'', S. 994, 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'', 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'', and the nominations of David Michael Bennett, of North Carolina, Mickey D. Barnett, of New Mexico, Stephen Crawford, of Maryland, and James C. Miller, III, of Virginia, each to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine ensuring an informed citizenry, focusing on examining the Administration's efforts to improve open government, 9:30 a.m., SD–226.

Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Dale A. Drozd, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of California, Lawrence Joseph Vilardo, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of New York, and LaShann Moutique DeArcy Hall, and Ann Donnelly, both to be a United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York, 2:15 p.m., SD–226.

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: to hold hearings to examine the impact of federal labor and safety laws on the U.S. seafood industry, 2:30 p.m., SR–428A.

Special Committee on Aging: to hold hearings to examine aging in place, focusing on advances in technology that help seniors live independently, 2 p.m., SH–216.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:30 a.m., Wednesday, May 6

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond one hour), Senate will continue consideration of H.R. 1191, Protecting Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Responders Act.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

11 a.m., Friday, May 8

House Chamber

Program for Friday: House will meet in Pro Forma session at 11 a.m.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

Cicilline, David N., R.I., E658
Cohen, Steve, Tenn., E655
Comstock, Barbara, Va., E656
Delaney, John K., Md., E657
Dingell, Debbie, Mich., E657
Dold, Robert J., Ill., E657
Farr, Sam, Calif., E658
Jackson Lee, Sheila, Tex., E657
Lieu, Ted, Calif., E658
Loebsack, David, Iowa, E655
Marchant, Kenny, Tex., E655
O'Rourke, Beto, Tex., E655, E657
Quigley, Mike, Ill., E656
Radewagen, Aumua Amata Coleman, American Samoa, E656
Van Hollen, Chris, Md., E658

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