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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 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.

Eternal Lord God, sustainer of nations, continue to heal our land. We claim Your promise that if people of faith will humble themselves and fervently seek You in prayer as they turn from evil, that You will hear their intercession, forgive their sins, and heal their land.

Use our lawmakers as instruments of unity. As they model the bridge building necessary to bring harmony and healing to nations, may their positive example transform lives. Lord, lead our Senators in righteous paths that will keep our Nation strong. Equip them to conduct the work of freedom with justice and humility.

Teach us all to disagree without being disagreeable, to seek to understand before being understood, to plant seeds of love to counteract hate, and to sow seeds of hope to eliminate despair.

We pray in Your sacred 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. PAUL). The majority leader is recognized.

TRADE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday's TPA vote was a long-overdue victory for the American worker and the American middle class. It was not easy. Many thought it would never happen. We even saw corks pop in the facts-optional lobby a few weeks ago. But that proved to be premature because here is what we have always known about the legislation we will vote to send to the President today. It is underpinned by a simple but powerful idea: For American workers to have a fair shot in the 21st-century economy, it makes sense to remove the unfair barriers that discriminate against them and the products they make.

Some may disagree. They certainly were not quiet in voicing their opinions. It is OK if they do not share our passion for ending this unfair discrimination against American workers. It is OK if they would rather rail against them tomorrow. But a bipartisan coalition in the House and the Senate thought it was time for forward progress instead.

We were very pleased to see President Obama pursue an idea we have long believed in. We thank him for his efforts to help us advance this measure. We thank all of our friends across the aisle for their efforts, too, Senator WYDEN most of all. Over in the House, I commend Speaker BOEHNER and Chairman RYAN for everything they have done. It hasn't been easy, and without them it would not have been possible. Of course, let me thank Chairman ORRIN HATCH for demonstrating such patience, persistence, and determination throughout this process. He never lost sight of the goal. He never gave up. The people of Utah are lucky to have him.

The Senate's work on trade does not end today. I said the Senate would finish pursuing the rest of the full trade package, and it will. We will take another cloture vote today to that end. That process continues. But the key victory for American workers and products stamped ''Made in the U.S.A.'' comes today. The bill we are about to pass will assert Congress's authority throughout the trade negotiation process. It will ensure that we have the tools we need to properly scrutinize whatever trade agreements are ultimately negotiated. It will make clear that the final say rests with us.

We had plenty of bumps along the road—frankly, a few big potholes, too—but we worked across the aisle to get through all of them. That is an example of how a new Congress is back to work for the American people. I thank everyone who helped us get where we are. Now let's vote again to support the American worker and the American middle class by approving the bipartisan TPA bill.

CYBER SECURITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, here is a headline from an Associated Press article that ran yesterday: ''Federal Agencies Are Wide Open to Hackers, Cyberspies.'' That headline is scary enough, but read just a little further, and it gets even worse.

Passwords written down on desks. Outdated anti-virus software. ''Perceived ineptitude'' in information-technology departments.

The federal government, which holds secrets and sensitive information ranging from nuclear blueprints to the tax returns of hundreds of millions of Americans, has for years failed to take basic steps to protect its data from hackers and thieves, records show. In the latest example, the Office of Personnel Management is under fire for allowing its databases to be plundered by suspected Chinese cyberspies in what is being called one of the worst breaches in U.S. history. OPM repeatedly neglected to implement basic cybersecurity protections, its internal watchdog told Congress.

Let me repeat that—''one of the worst breaches in U.S. history.'' If you are looking for something scary to tell the kids around the campfire tonight, I would suggest reading the rest of the article. It gets a lot worse. To call this alarming would be quite an understatement.

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

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So when the head of the agency that allowed that big breach to happen testified before a Senate subcommittee yesterday, you would think she would have come with a detailed action plan. You would think she would have announced that heads were rolling. You would think she said this could never ever be allowed to happen again under her watch. That is what the American people expect when a breach happens in the private sector and information is stolen. Why should they not expect as much from the public sector? But what did we hear instead? World-class buck-passing. World-class buck-passing. A complete lack of accountability and urgency. That tired and predicable excuse that the absence of leadership can be solved by throwing a few more dollars at the problem.

Well, Congress can certainly look at the funding angle. I know we will. But as we learned yesterday, it was not just the old stuff that was breached, it was the new stuff, too. More money is not going to solve a management problem, either. Let's be honest. This appears primarily to be a management problem. This appears primarily to be a management problem.

Here is what the American people were really looking for the OPM Director to address: Accountability. Accountability. A plan for the future. Confidence in the ability of the bureaucracy they hired and rarely, if ever, can fire to break out of the stereotype and show they can put the people's concerns first.

I thank Chairman BOOZMAN for holding that hearing. We learned a lot, but it is not the end of the story. The OPM Director will testify tomorrow before Chairman RON JOHNSON's homeland security committee, too. I hope she will take that opportunity to articulate a credible plan of action. I hope she will better address the legitimate concerns of the American people. That means a resolve to get to the bottom of what happened. That means giving the American people renewed confidence in a creaking bureaucracy. And that means pledging to work with policymakers to enact real reforms rather than simply accepting failure.

Whatever happens tomorrow, one thing does not change: the need for the Intelligence Committee's cyber security bill we tried to pass earlier this month. I am going to continue working with my colleagues toward that end. In the meantime, I look forward to seeing what happens in tomorrow's committee meeting.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CYBER SECURITY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the senior Senator from Kentucky is certainly right that we need to move on cyber security. I have known that for many years, and we have tried. Why have we not done something on it? Because of filibusters by the Republicans. We had a bill that had been worked on for years that we brought before the Senate. But instructions were given from the Chamber of Commerce, and the Republicans dutifully walked down here and voted no, stopping us from moving forward on the bill. The Chamber said—and obviously Republicans agreed—this is not something for the government. It should be done in-house.

Well, my friend the Republican leader rails against the government, but he should also understand that this is a situation which involves the private sector also. We could name 25 companies, 50 companies, 100 companies that have been hacked and hacked very badly, not the least of which are Sony and Target.

It is hard for me to comprehend that my friend, my counterpart, is here talking about the need to do something about cyber security when he is the leader of the Republicans who have stopped us from doing this.

There is a bill—it is not a perfect bill; it is far from it—a bipartisan bill. It has the support of the chairman and ranking member of the Intelligence Committee. We could get to work on that right now. We should do that. I repeat, it is not perfect legislation, but it is certainly a step forward.

My friend said he wants heads to roll. If that were the case, then there are a lot of heads to roll in the public sector and the private sector because they do not have the tools to do much about this hacking. We need to help them with appropriate legislation. I hope we can do that and do it very soon. I remain committed to turning to cyber security as quickly as we can. We need to get that done. I hope we can get that done. On that issue, we could go to that legislation right now. Do you know why we are not going to go to it right now? Because the Republicans have holds on the bill. So the Republican leader will file a motion to invoke cloture on moving forward on this legislation. We are ready to move on it now. Again, the problem is on the Republican side, not our side.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Mr. REID. Mr. President, our great country faces yet another manufactured crisis. In just a few weeks from now, the end of July—and that is coming quickly—on July 31, the authority for the recent extension of the highway trust fund will expire. The U.S. Department of Transportation will not be able to make payments to our States for highways, bridges, railways. All transportation agencies will likely postpone or cancel roadwork during the busy summer construction season. Why? Because they have no money. They know the highway Surface Transportation Program has been stymied as a result of 33 short-term extensions forced upon us by the Republicans in the Senate—33. How can these agencies plan ahead? They can't.

Before this crisis becomes full-blown, Democrats want to work with Republicans on a long-term reauthorization of the highway program. I know there are Members of the majority who want to do something about this.

The Presiding Officer has a plan to take care of highways. Is it a perfect plan? Of course it is not perfect, but it sure is a good step forward to do something about this program, something that is long term.

This crisis is about jobs, hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of high-paying construction jobs throughout the country. That is why we challenged the Republican leader to move forward with a robust, long-term surface transportation bill ahead of that deadline.

I am pleased Republicans have joined with Democrats to schedule a markup—in fact, it is going on right now in the Environment and Public Works Committee—on a 6-year surface transportation bill. This, of course, is an authorization only, but what terrific work done by Senators BOXER and INHOFE. They are an unmatched pair usually in all issues that come before this body, but on this legislation they are a matched pair. I admire and appreciate what they are going to mark up in just a few minutes. It is an authorization but a big step forward.

But next comes the need for funding what they authorize and maybe a little more. Their legislation will modernize our Nation's crumbling infrastructure. The bill the EPW Committee will consider is $275 billion. That includes modest increases of funding over the next 6 years. But modest increases, while important, will not allow us to make the investments our transportation system really needs. Every day we learn of new examples about the state of disrepair of our roads, bridges, our highways, and of course our transit systems.

The highway trust fund is no longer sufficient to fund the investments we so desperately need to rebuild them. Why? Because people's habits have changed. Vehicles have changed. People don't drive—every car they have is not a gas guzzler. We have a lot of electric cars. We have cars that run sometimes on gasoline, sometimes on electricity. We have cars that run on gasoline all the time, but they don't burn much gasoline.

So the trust fund, which was set to take care of all the road needs we have, surface transportation needs—we simply don't have the resources anymore, so we have to look for other resources because, I repeat, the highway trust fund is no longer sufficient to fund these investments we so desperately need to rebuild them. We know this because over the past few years Congress has transferred billions of dollars to make up the shortfall in the trust fund revenues.

Today, it is important to thank again Senators INHOFE and BOXER for

their leadership in marking up this bill.

I hope the new chairmen of the Banking, Commerce, and Finance Committees will demonstrate the same sense of urgency and schedule markups for their portion of the surface transportation legislation. Despite the common knowledge about the expiration of surface transportation funding, Republicans have delayed the important work of writing a bipartisan bill for far too long.

Our good citizens don't deserve another exercise in crisis management like we are seeing this week in the Export-Import Bank. Democrats have laid out a clear timetable and process for bipartisan negotiations. A long-term, robust bill can pass before the August recess.

To recap, we requested a number of things, but let me mention a few of them: hearings in each of the authorizing committees by June 23—we know how that has already passed—bipartisan markups in all authorizing committees by July 10 that include robust increases for highways, transit, passenger rail, and of course all kinds of new safety programs and maintain those we have; and basically a long-term bill on the Senate floor by July 20.

If the Republican leader continues to avoid conducting business on Fridays, we have only 15 session days in the month of July; that is, 15 days to address our country's major surface transportation needs and help our struggling economy by providing lots and lots of jobs. The clock is ticking.

At a hearing on the funding gap last week, Senator HATCH said: ''As chairman of the [Finance] committee, I intend to solve this problem.''

Well, I appreciate that very much. I am taking him at his word. Senate Democrats are ready to work with Republicans to grow, not cut, our transportation funding. But I say to my friend the senior Senator from Utah, please, please do something that is more than another short-term extension. We need a 6-year bill. Every State in the Union needs that. We have had them in the past, but now the Republicans, learning how to filibuster—they have stopped, basically, everything we have tried to do in this regard.

We cannot—I say to my friend from Utah—we cannot have another extension. I repeat, this would be the 34th short-term extension. Enough is enough. We need to move forward with a plan that funds our Nation's infrastructure, supports jobs, and grows our economy, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs. Americans rely on a strong transportation system to travel. They do this to commute and also, of course, to move goods across the country.

This program was the brainchild of Dwight D. Eisenhower, the President of the United States, when he called upon his experience as a young military officer in trying to bring military equipment and men across the country. It was very difficult. As a young military officer he said: Someday, if I have any ability to change this, I will—and he did. The National Highway System is Eisenhower's highway system. This is not a program that was developed by anyone other than Dwight Eisenhower.

So temporary funding for the highway trust fund leads only to uncertainty, slowing construction, and of course hurting economic development in every State of our Nation. The Republican leadership should act now to avoid this looming deadline and support long-term investment into our Nation's crumbling infrastructure.

Mr. President, I see no one on the floor so I would ask what the business of the day is.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

DEFENDING PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 2146, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 2146, an act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal law enforcement officers, firefighters, and air traffic controllers to make penalty-free withdrawals from governmental plans after age 50, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill.

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with amendment No. 2060 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2061 (to amendment No. 2060), of a perfecting nature.

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

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

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, we had a wonderful event last night here in Washington that I was able to attend. It was a night honoring champions for anti-gun violence measures across the country. It was put on by Sandy Hook Promise, which is an organization that has grown up out of the tragedy in Sandy Hook. A number of parents have become the organizers of an effort to try and learn from what happened at Sandy Hook and make sure we don't repeat the mistakes of the past.

We actually got to honor two of our colleagues there. We honored Senator PAT TOOMEY for his work 2 years ago on the background checks bill, as well as Senator STABENOW, who, of course, has been a great advocate for increasing resources in our mental health system. And as wonderful a night as it was to honor these champions of change, it also was a night in which we were reminded about that terrible morning in December of 2012.

We watched a short video of the news coverage, and we listened to the parents of Daniel Barden and Dylan Hockley. The husband of Mary Sherlach talked to us about what their lives have been like in the years since that shooting at Sandy Hook.

I remember the hours and days after the shooting. I remember feeling like I needed to be really restrained about talking about the obvious policy issues that, to me, were due for airing and that sort of tumbled out of the facts surrounding that tragedy. I mean, this kid—this really troubled young man—walked into a school with a semiautomatic weapon designed for the military and shot 20 kids in less than 5 minutes. This gun was designed for the military, designed to kill as many people as quickly as possible, and it killed every single kid it hit. There were 20 kids shot. Twenty kids were dead in a matter of minutes.

So it seemed to me we should have an immediate discussion about why this kind of gun is still legal. But I held back because it felt like the mourning and the grieving should take precedence over action. It took me only up to the first wake that I attended to realize I was wrong. Senator BLUMENTHAL and I went to every single wake and every funeral we could over the course of that first week—and there were dozens.

At first, I remember waiting in a really long line, standing next to Senator BLUMENTHAL. I remember as if it were yesterday, talking to a sobbing mother, who was standing in front of us waiting in that line and telling us about how her child survived the shooting only because she had been sick that day and she stayed home from school. But all her daughters' friends were dead. As we approached that family, I remember struggling with what to say. I am lucky that the senior Senator from Connecticut, who sits behind me in the Chamber, had the right words ready. He said to the parents something like this: If you are ever ready or willing to talk about how we make sure this doesn't happen again, we will be waiting. The dad didn't pause more than a few seconds before he said, clear as day: We are ready now.

In the years since, these mass shootings have become as commonplace as rain storms. Since 2011, the number of mass shootings in the United States has tripled—tripled. After each one, the forces of the status quo—the defenders of the gun industry—tell us we can't talk about policy reform in the days after a shooting. One prominent commentator called those of us who dared talk about change in the wake of Charleston ''sick.'' How convenient that is. How convenient that, at the moment when the world is watching, when the country is asking itself what we can do to make sure another mass slaughter doesn't happen again, the rules say we can't say a word.

But think about how these rules would work, because Charleston happens 10 times over, every single day, across this country. Eighty-six people die, on average, every day because of guns.

Last Thursday the families of Clementa Pinckney, Cynthia Hurd, Tywanza Sanders, Sharonda Coleman Singleton, Myra Thompson, Ethel Lee Lance, Susie Jackson, Daniel Lee Simmons, Sr., and DePayne Middleton-Doctor mourned the loss of their loved ones in Charleston.

But the day before, on Wednesday, the families of Angel Feliciano, Malik Mercer, Eric Ferguson, Michael Kidd, Jr., Thomas Whitaker, Roy Brown, Martarese Gentry, Keith Battle, and Ronald Collins mourned their loss. And those were just nine. There were dozens more on Wednesday, the day before the Charleston shooting, who were killed by guns.

If we can't talk about anti-gun violence policy the day after a large number of Americans are shot, then we will never talk about anti-gun violence policy, because on average 86 people die from gun violence every single day. But even if we accept that there is never a bad time to talk about how we can end this carnage, then we also have to have the courage to take on all the other ridiculous arguments about why we can't act.

Now, the first one is familiar because it comes right after the mass shooting happens. A former NRA board member trotted this one out within hours of Charleston: He said that the solution was to just arm more pastors and parishioners in churches so they can defend themselves. The more there are people who have guns, the less people will die from guns—so goes this logic. So don't act.

The simple argument is that more good guys with guns equals less gun deaths. The problem with that argument is it is a boldfaced lie. Study after study shows that the more guns there are in a community, the more crime there is. The more guns there are, the more gun homicides there are. New evidence makes the case even clearer. As States more clearly separate between those with lax gun laws and those with stricter gun laws, we can look to see what happens.

The second argument is one that I have heard from my Republican colleagues in the Senate just in the last few days—that these laws can't stop a madman such as Dylann Root or Adam Lanza from perpetrating violence. Some of my colleagues say the only recourse is to close our eyes and pray this doesn't happen again. But again, these stubborn facts betray that argument. As I said, now that we have States that have loose gun laws and States that have tougher gun laws, we can see what happens. Over and over research shows us that jurisdictions that make it a little bit harder for bad guys to get guns have less gun deaths.

In my State of Connecticut, Johns Hopkins researchers concluded that our permit-to-carry laws have reduced gun crimes by 40 percent. Similarly, they concluded that in Missouri, the repeal of a similar law increased gun homicides by 25 percent. Now, both studies controlled for all other possible factors influencing gun crimes, and they still found these shocking results.

While the facts are still fresh out of Charleston, there is evidence that a different set of laws could have—not would have—stopped Dylann Root without having any effect on law-abiding gun owners in South Carolina.

Root had charges pending for trespassing and drug crimes. Alone, neither would have disqualified him from owning a gun. But what if our laws were different so that multiple misdemeanors—a pattern of criminal behavior—disqualified you from buying a firearm? Or what about a permit-to-carry law?

Maybe local law enforcement knew enough about Root—his criminal past or his association with extremist right-wing organizations—to know he shouldn't carry a weapon. Now, maybe not, but if South Carolina had a permit-to-carry law, at least there would have been a chance law enforcement would have withheld a permit from a young man as plainly unstable as Root.

But even if you don't believe that any specific law could have prevented the tragedy in Charleston or in Newtown, I am not sure that it matters, because separate and aside from the specific case-by-case impact of any law is the collective moral and psychological effect of nonaction. No matter how maligned Congress becomes, we still set the moral tone for the Nation. When we declare something to be morally out of bounds, especially when we do it in a bipartisan or nonpartisan manner, Americans listen. They take cues from our endorsements and from our approbations.

That is why, in my heart of hearts, I believe that our silence has made us complicit in these murders. I don't care that an assault weapons ban or universal background check maybe wouldn't have stopped the slaughter in Charleston. When we do nothing year after year, our silence sends a silent message of endorsement to the killers. I am not saying we are in conscious alignment with these assassins, but when all we do in the wake of Newtown, Tucson, Aurora, and Charleston is rhetorical, then those on the fringe, those hanging on the edge of reason, those contemplating the unthinkable take a cue that we don't really mean it when we condemn mass violence, because if we did, we would, at the very least, try to do something—anything—to stop it, and we don't.

Quite frankly, removing one flag from one building in South Carolina doesn't cut it, and neither does a handful of retailers ceasing to sell Confederate flag paraphernalia. Don't get me wrong. I actually think the tidal wave of sentiment to remove the last vestiges of this symbol of slavery and racism is significant. That flag has quietly endorsed conscious and subconscious racism, particularly in the South—but really all across the country—for as long as it has continued to be perceived as a mainstream American symbol.

The events of the last few days are also important because they show that people of all political stripes—conservatives and liberals, Democrats and Republicans—have been so emotionally moved by the shooting in Charleston that they were inspired to some sort of action. That matters.

But removing the Confederate flag is a necessary but totally, completely insufficient response to Charleston. Taking down a flag from a building is a pretty easy giveback. Deciding to spend billions of dollars to make sure that troubled young men get the help they need for their sickness is harder, and so is taking on the gun industry and listening to the 90 percent of Americans who want to make sure criminals aren't a continued profit center for the gun makers and sellers.

Now, Walmart should be congratulated for ceasing sales of the Confederate flag, but they still advertise an assault weapon online that even their description concedes is designed for use by law enforcement and the military. Did you know that last year there were at least 92 shootings in Walmart? Some 16 people died, and 42 people were injured by guns in Walmart. Getting rid of the Confederate flag from their shelves isn't going to help that unbelievably disturbing trend.

So we need real action, a real debate. We need a real, honest policy to happen here. And, no, it is not all about guns. It is about mental health, it is about law enforcement, and it is about a culture of violence and hate that we have just become immune to.

In South Carolina, Reverend Pinckney knew something about real action. He supported things like expanded background checks and body cameras for police, maybe because he came from a family of action. His father and grandfather were both pastors who fought to end White-only political primaries and segregated school busing. He wasn't just about condemnation. He lived his life to effectuate political

change. Last night, at the Sandy Hook Promise dinner, I chatted with my friend Mark Barden. His son, Daniel, massacred at Sandy Hook Elementary School by a young man wielding a military-style assault weapon with cartridges of 30 bullets apiece, would have just finished third grade last week. Mark recalled how special Danny was and how Daniel, just 6 years old, lived a life of action, too. Daniel was that kid who sensed when other children were hurting. His dad told me last night how Daniel would see little kids sitting alone at lunch with no one to talk to, and Daniel would go over, sit down next to them, and make a new friend, just because it was the right thing to do.

Reverend Pinckney and little Daniel Barden knew the difference between words and actions. They understood that actions are what really count.

The U.S. gun homicide rate is 20 times higher than that of our 22 peer nations. And 86 people die every day from guns—that is 4 Sandy Hooks, 10 Charlestons every day. Since Sandy Hook, there has been a school shooting, on average, every week.

How on Earth can we live with ourselves if we do nothing or, worse, if we don't even try.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

KING V. BURWELL DECISION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I wish to spend the next few minutes speaking about the Supreme Court and particularly the fact that the Supreme Court has some big cases they are going to hand down probably tomorrow, Friday, and Monday, before they adjourn for the summer.

I particularly wish to speak about King v. Burwell, which, as the Presiding Officer knows, could be the beginning of the end of ObamaCare. In the process, it also will potentially disrupt the health care coverage for more than 6 million Americans. The Court could issue its decision, as I said, as early as tomorrow. What they will decide is whether the IRS is bound by the law which Congress writes and which is signed by the President or whether they can make it up on their own.

Specifically, the case challenges the legality of subsidies provided to 6 million people in up to 37 States that they have depended on to buy their ObamaCare-approved policies, including about 1 million in my State of Texas.

If the Court rules against the IRS, it will literally be the third strike against ObamaCare from the Supreme Court of the United States. It would serve as yet another reminder of the administration's overreach of its authority under the Constitution—a practice that has become disturbingly routine.

This administration and our friends across the aisle have failed to own up to the repeated demonstrations of the flaws of ObamaCare since it passed in March of 2010. The biggest problem is that this is partisan legislation jammed through Congress that no Republican in the Senate voted for, so the responsibility lies clearly at their feet.

Through this law, the administration has wasted billions of dollars on exchanges that have failed to function properly. My colleagues may recall that the President even called the healthcare.gov exchange—which was so broken and just didn't work—a disaster. The President himself said that.

It is also based on a system that grows the bureaucracy at the expense of legitimate, needed health care delivery. I would have thought that if Congress was going to reform health care, it would certainly include reducing the cost and making it more affordable. However, time after time, we have seen that ObamaCare has actually driven up costs. Just last month, one study noted that nearly $274 billion of projected ObamaCare spending will end up going to its implementation—bureaucratic and administrative costs—and not actually for health care. That is $274 billion. Do we think that money could have been better spent providing people with health care policies they can afford and access to the doctors and the hospitals they need?

Today, ObamaCare has utterly failed to live up to the many promises the President and congressional Democrats made to the American people. Seeing the Presiding Officer in the chair reminds me that both he and I served as attorneys general in our States. One of my responsibilities in Texas—and no doubt the Presiding Officer's as well—was to enforce our consumer protection laws. Can my colleagues imagine, if anybody other than the Federal Government had made the series of promises the President and congressional Democrats made under ObamaCare that proved over time to be demonstrably false, whether a company in the private sector could withstand the flood of lawsuits by the Attorney General and other consumer protection officials against that company?

I guess the fact is that there is very little recourse to the American people—certainly the courts—to enforce our consumer protection laws against the outright deceit and misleading promises that were made in order to sell ObamaCare, which are clearly, as time has demonstrated, not true.

The President's trail of broken promises has instead led us to a damaged health care system and a limping economy. There is a reason why the economy shrunk last quarter by 0.7 percent. What that means is that fewer people can find work and their wages are depressed. We need our economy to grow. But as long as additional and heavy burdens, such as ObamaCare and unnecessary regulations, are imposed on the private sector, those jobs and those rising wages are simply not going to exist.

This week, many are rightly concerned that, depending on what the Supreme Court decides, millions of people will lose their access to health care should the Court rule against the President. I must point out that is a feature of ObamaCare. That is not the fault of the Supreme Court, and it is not the fault of the opponents of ObamaCare; it is the fault of the President and of the people who passed ObamaCare because this will be a feature of ObamaCare, this failed law.

Having said where the responsibility lies, while we didn't contribute to getting the country in this mess, we are ready, willing, and able to provide an off-ramp for the millions of people who may have their health care interrupted. My State, as I indicated earlier, is not immune. Close to 1 million Texans could suddenly see their costs shoot up. So I am here to emphatically say to the Texans whose health care coverage may be disrupted: We will not leave you out in the cold as a casualty of this flawed law, and we will no longer allow this flawed piece of legislation to cause additional hardship for hard-working Texas families.

In order to protect Americans and Texans who may lose their health care coverage if the Court decides against the President and against the IRS, we are prepared, having worked for months now, to protect those who need it as they transition out of ObamaCare.

Make no mistake about it—this will be the beginning of the end of ObamaCare if the Court rules for the plaintiff in King v. Burwell.

At the same time, we plan to provide an end to the individual and employer mandates, the opportunity for States to opt out of ObamaCare, and finally, an end to government-backed health care that the American people don't want, don't need, and cannot afford.

There is a better alternative. If the Supreme Court rules for King, we will offer the American people what ObamaCare never could—options, choices, and the freedom to choose the health care coverage they want at a price they can afford. Most importantly, we want to allow individuals as well as the States to opt out of this disastrous law all across the country. In doing so, Americans can get what they actually need and not what government tells them they must buy. By empowering States to opt out, we put the States back in the driver's seat. I must say, every public opinion poll I have seen indicates that the people have a lot more confidence in the ability of the States to deal with their health care needs than they do the Federal Government, particularly in light of the failed experiment over the last 5 years. We put the States back in

the driver's seat and allow them the flexibility they need to more effectively lower costs and increase choices.

So while we didn't create this mess, we are ready to do our best to work together to protect the American people from any more harm caused by this legislation. The American people deserve real, patient-centered reforms which, again, lower costs, making it more affordable, and increase access to care—not the opposite.

If the Court delivers what could be a third strike against ObamaCare, my colleagues and I are eager to provide the American people with the freedom and the options they need in order to get the best health care available at a price they can afford.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, as we are moving toward concluding debate on trade promotion authority, I rise to speak about what the Trans-Pacific Partnership will mean for our Nation's global standing. As we have heard throughout this debate, the potential economic benefits from TPP for our Nation are simply enormous. According to the Congressional Research Service, total trade in goods between TPP member countries reached $1.6 trillion in 2014; that is, the nations represented in TPP, $1.6 trillion in trade between those countries, representing nearly 40 percent of all global trade.

In my own State of Colorado, trade with countries involved in TPP currently supports over 265,000 jobs. The nations represented by the TPP agreement—the negotiations that are taking place right now—265,000 jobs in Colorado result from those nations. But we know the TPP is more than just an economic agreement. It is a critical test of U.S. strategic leadership in the Asia-Pacific region, a region that will be integral to our economic and national security for generations to come.

As stated in the 2015 National Security Strategy:

> Sustaining our leadership depends on shaping an emerging global economic order that continues to reflect our interests and our values. Despite its success, our rules-based system is now competing against alternative, less-open models. . . . To meet this challenge, we must be strategic in the use of our economic strength to set new rules of the road, strengthen our partnerships, and promote inclusive development.

Those are important words from the National Security Strategy issued just this year. Defense Secretary Ash Carter echoed that sentiment when he said on April 6, 2015, the ''TPP is as important to me as another aircraft carrier.'' If we fail to pass the TPP, we know others will rush to fill the vacuum left behind with such ''alternative, less-open models,'' as the National Security Strategy laid out.

So we should not be surprised when a rising China tries to fill the vacuum and that they would, indeed, exert efforts to fill that vacuum with policies and programs crafted from their own vision of what is beneficial for themselves and their region.

Let's take China's recent establishment of the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank, the AIIB, as an example. On the face of it, the AIIB is a positive response to address the infrastructure challenges in the region. It is also the clearest evidence yet that the United States faces a very serious credibility gap in the Asia-Pacific region. The AIIB is envisioned as a $100 billion enterprise, with China as the largest shareholder that will hold veto power over major investment decisions. Its rules of governance and standards remain unclear.

Yet 56 nations, including some of the strongest U.S. allies, including the United Kingdom, Australia, South Korea, have indicated they will join the Chinese-led AIIB. We need to understand why. Do they believe the AIIB is primarily an economic opportunity for their companies? They might. But I would contend that the reason is a lack of leadership from the United States, again going back to that credibility gap.

China is also part of ongoing negotiations for another regional trade pact, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which would join China, Australia, India, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea with nations comprising the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN. In addition to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, Beijing is also entering negotiations to consider 6 agreements comprised of an additional 11 countries.

That brings China's total trade agreement portfolio to 33 countries. While the United States should continue bilateral and multilateral economic engagement with China that brings high levels of transparency and accountability, the fundamental question before us today is this: Do we want the United States or do we want China writing the rules?

It is clear that while our partners and allies in the region may welcome additional Chinese investment, they want more American leadership, not less. They want more American standards, not fewer.

We know the standards TPP and U.S. engagement brings include not only important economic benefits, such as removal of tariff or nontariff barriers, but fundamental American values such as transparency, good governance, respect for the rule of law, and basic human rights.

U.S. economic statecraft in the Asia-Pacific reflects our values and cements our leadership in the critically important region. We must look at TPP as just one step forward in this enduring commitment. Despite the crises of the day that are occurring in the Middle East, where the United States does and should play an important role, our Nation's future lies in Asia.

Just consider the following estimates from the Asian Development Bank. By 2050, Asia will account for over half of the global population and over half of the world's gross domestic product. The Asian middle class will rise to a staggering 3 billion people. Per capita GDP income in the region will rise to around $40,000, making it similar to the Europe of today.

We cannot miss the opportunity to be a part of this historic transformation. Working with Japan and regional partners, we must ensure that our policies strengthen existing friendships and build new partnerships that will be critical to U.S. national security and economic well-being for generations to come. Unfortunately, the administration's efforts to date with regard to the Asia-Pacific region have fallen short.

While I commend the President's leadership on TPP and our Asia rebalance, which many of us agreed to, the Asia rebalance policy has yielded few tangible results, and it is in need of a serious overhaul. The administration has consistently stated that the rebalance represented a ''whole-of-government'' effort to redirect U.S. military, diplomatic, and commercial service resources toward the Asia-Pacific region.

But in April of 2014, just a year ago, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee released a report stating that ''while the United States has successfully moved forward with the initial phases of implementing the military aspects of the rebalance,'' the State Department and the Department of Commerce have not substantially prioritized their resources to increase engagement with the Asia-Pacific region.

The report concluded that ''the administration can improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the rebalance policy by increasing civilian engagement, strengthening diplomatic partnerships, and empowering US businesses.''

It is clear we need an integrated, multiyear planning and budget strategy for a rebalancing of the U.S. policy in Asia. That is why I was proud to offer an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act that passed unanimously that would require the President to submit a strategy within 120 days to promote U.S. interests in the Asia-Pacific region. Our partners in the region must know every day that the United States is here to stay. The TPP is the first step in the process.

This is an important debate that we have this week. Later on today, we will have the opportunity to vote for trade promotion authority. I hope this Chamber will see the wisdom of passing that legislation—265,000 jobs in Colorado from a region responsible for TPP,

responsible for increasing economic opportunity, increasing wage growth, and the number of jobs that we have not only in Colorado but around this country.

I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to fast-track trade promotion authority.

I am a blue-collar Senator. My heart and soul lies with blue-collar America. I spent most of my life in a blue-collar neighborhood. My mother and father owned a neighborhood grocery store and when Bethlehem Steel went on strike, my dad gave those workers credit.

Blue-collar workers in the labor movement stood with me during my first campaign for the House in 1976. I wish there were more of them left to stand with me now, but the great manufacturing unions have been whittled away. On this fast-track trade vote, and in my last years in the Senate, I will continue to stand with the unions.

Let me be very clear that I support and encourage trade. Trade is very important to my State. It is vital to The Port of Baltimore and Maryland's agricultural industries such as poultry on the Eastern Shore.

In the past I have supported bilateral trade agreements. We have leverage in those situations to get strong enforceable labor and environmental provisions into those agreements. We can improve living standards and stop child labor in sweatshops. And Maryland workers can compete successfully in a global marketplace if they are given a level playing field.

But I have always been suspicious of multilateral agreements such as NAFTA. I have seen too many of these big deals fail to deliver the promises of new jobs and businesses. Every time somebody talks about a big multilateral trade agreement that will provide a cornucopia of opportunity, we lose jobs in Baltimore. And my constituents in Dundalk don't have a steel industry anymore. They wonder why Congress didn't do more to protect them from the effects of trade.

I believe that a renewal of fast-track trade authority for the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership means more Americans will lose their jobs.

We should use the leverage of our trade agreements to ensure fair competition. That means workers in other countries should have the right to organize into unions. Without the strength of collective bargaining, their wages will always be below ours. They should also have worker safety protection and retirement and health care benefits.

We should use the leverage of our trade agreements to encourage countries to respect the basic human rights of their citizens. Everyone deserves the right to live in a healthy, clean, unpolluted environment. And every worker should be guaranteed fundamental rights at work.

Why is the role of Congress so important in trade agreements? To make sure that the American people get a good deal. I am ready to support trade agreements that are good for America, good for workers, and good for the environment. Congress should consider trade legislation and amendments using the same procedures we use to consider other legislation.

I have to base my decision on the facts and what I know to be true in my State. I know that proponents of fast-track say it is inevitable that there will be winners and losers. The problem with these big trade deals is that America's workers and their families always seem to be the losers. They lose their jobs. If they keep their jobs, or find new jobs, they lose the wage rates they have earned. Working people have faced the loss of jobs, lower wages, and a reduced standard of living, and a shrinking manufacturing base.

I have to stand with my constituents who have felt repeatedly betrayed by the trade deals. I have to vote against fast-track trade authority.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

KING V. BURWELL DECISION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, across the street from the Senate Chamber is the U.S. Supreme Court. The Court this week has several important cases pending. We are waiting anxiously for decisions, but probably the one that affects as many Americans as any other is a case called King v. Burwell. King is a case that was brought by someone who was objecting to the Affordable Care Act—ObamaCare.

They are arguing that the bill we passed in the Senate and the House did not include a subsidy, a tax credit, for those who are under Federal marketplace plans. My State of Illinois is one of those States. In Illinois, there are about 232,000 individuals who receive a tax credit that allows them to pay for their health insurance. Their income levels are such that they need a helping hand, otherwise the health insurance premium would be too expensive.

In my State, the average tax credit that goes to these 232,000 is $1,800 a year—not insubstantial—$150 a month. Now, those who brought the lawsuit say that the law does not provide this tax credit. I believe it clearly does. No one during the course of debating this bill ever suggested otherwise. In fact, there were many times when we calculated the impact of this law. We always assumed the tax credit would be there for families, whether their State had its own State insurance exchange or used the Federal exchange, as we do in the State of Illinois.

But the big problem we have is that if the Court rules the other way, if those who are critical of the Affordable Care Act—and some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have been on the floor this morning talking about getting rid of the Affordable Care Act—if the Court rules in that direction, we are going to have a problem on our hands because at least in my State, 232,000 people will see their health insurance premiums go up 35 percent, on average, based on that Court ruling.

There are not many working families who can face that kind of increase and say, well, it really does not make any difference. It makes a big difference—on average $150 a month. For families living paycheck to paycheck and struggling who qualify for this tax credit, it is a big problem. Many of them will not be able to afford health insurance.

So what happens next? We go back to where we were before: More uninsured Americans. I don't know how many people in the Senate Chamber who serve here have ever been in a position in their lives where they did not have health insurance and needed it. I have. Newly married, my wife and I had a baby with a serious health issue. We had no health insurance. It is a humbling experience, as a father, as a husband, to be in that position. It means hoping you get the best medical care and hoping you can pay for it.

For many families across America, that was the standard before the Affordable Care Act. But because of the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare, we now have fewer people uninsured in America. That is a good thing, not just because it gives you peace of mind and access to quality health care but because uninsured people still get sick. When they get sick and go to the hospital, their expenses that they can't cover because they don't have health insurance are passed along to everyone else. How can that possibly be a good outcome?

So the Affordable Care Act has increased the number of people across America who have health insurance by about 11 million people—not insubstantial. It has reduced the uninsured rate, as I mentioned, 3½ percent in just a 1- or 2-year period of time. Six million receive these tax credits. So there are 6 million families who may not know it, but what happens across the street at the Supreme Court this week or next week could have a big impact on the family budget.

I struggle to try to understand those who hate the Affordable Care Act like the devil hates Holy water. They cannot stand this notion that 11 million people have health insurance. They want to get rid of it. There are proposals from the other side of the aisle to get rid of the Affordable Care Act. They want to eliminate the individual mandate. What does that mean? That is the part of the law that says: You have a personal responsibility to have health insurance.

Now, do we run into any other aspect of life where we are required to have insurance? Drive a car in my State, you better have automobile insurance. Buy a home in my State, virtually every bank requires fire insurance. It is a matter of responsibility. So the individual mandate not only says to everyone: You need to buy health insurance, it helps those who are in low-income

categories, and it is a critical part of the big picture.

Here is the big picture: If we are going to say, as we do in this law, that no health insurance company can discriminate against you because of a preexisting condition that you have or that someone in your family has—if we are going to say that, the only way it works in the insurance business is if you have a lot of people who are in that insurance pool. That includes people with preexisting conditions.

So when the Republicans argue: We are going to get rid of the individual mandate, you can sign up if you want to, the people who run insurance companies say: It doesn't work. You have to have a pool with a lot of people in it: healthy and those not so healthy. Otherwise, you cannot write insurance that is going to work. What else has happened because of the Affordable Care Act? The rate of growth in health care costs has started—just started—to come down. It does not have to come down much to have a dramatic impact on our economy.

This Affordable Care Act, incidentally, which many on the other side are cheering to have it abolished—this Affordable Care Act, according to the Congressional Budget Office, is going to cut $353 billion in deficit. How could that be?

Because one of the largest drivers of cost to the Federal Government is the cost of health care. If the rate of growth in the cost of health care just takes a little dip down and you project it out, it is big dollars.

We even used what many Republicans believe is holy writ called dynamic scoring. We even said: Take a look. Use dynamic scoring, and tell us what impact it has on the deficit.

It turns out that even with dynamic scoring, our Affordable Care Act reduces the deficit by $137 billion. It works. More people are being insured. Folks cannot be denied insurance because of a preexisting condition. The overall cost of health care is starting to dip down. It brings down the deficit. What part of that isn't good news? I think it is all good news.

For a lot of individuals who live in my home State of Illinois, it is pretty personal. I have met with them. Last week, in my newsletter I asked people to share with me their experiences with the Affordable Care Act. The response was overwhelming, and the majority was positive.

Danny Blight lives in Germantown Hills, IL. He was diagnosed with bladder cancer in 2005. At the time, he was lucky enough to have a job with health insurance, but then he was fired and let go. He lost his health insurance, and he couldn't afford coverage because of his preexisting condition, his history of cancer, and he required surgery to treat his cancer. According to Danny, he relied on the local sisters of St. Francis to provide basic care for him and his family when he couldn't afford health insurance until the Affordable Care Act became the law. Now Danny Blight and his family have health insurance. Is this an important law for them? It may be the most important thing we have done in Congress when it comes to this family.

I got in a debate back in my own hometown once with a group who opposes this law. They were of the opposite political faith, and I knew it. They had some pretty strong feelings about the role and the size of government, and they said as much. I would answer them by saying: Well, let me tell you about a family I met. Let me tell you about this family.

Finally, one man stood, raised his hand, and said: Stop telling stories. We don't want to hear these stories.

I know why they didn't want to hear it—because these stories are reality. These stories don't reflect political philosophy so much as the reality of life for a lot of people across America.

We know that discriminating against families because of preexisting conditions is a real problem. We know there are many families, for example, with a history of some illness, even mental illness, who in days gone by had no chance to have health insurance.

There were two other things we did in this law, and I don't understand why the other party wants to get rid of these provisions. The Affordable Care Act says that if you have a child graduating from college, your family health insurance plan can cover them until they reach the age of 26. Why is that important? Because many times young people coming fresh out of college have a lot of student debt and no job—no full-time job—and very few of them have health insurance immediately, and they think they are invincible.

I remember reaching out to my daughter when she graduated from college.

I said: Jen, what about health insurance?

Dad, don't worry about it. I feel fine.

Well, I did worry about it, and a lot of parents do. So our law says you can keep your recent college graduate under your family plan until they reach the age of 26. Why would you want to get rid of that? Why would someone want to eliminate that provision in the law?

The other thing it says is that if you are a senior and you are on Medicare—the Part D, which provides your prescription drugs, used to have what is called a doughnut hole in it. What that meant was Medicare would cover your prescription drugs to a certain point and then stop, and you had to go to your savings account, pull out about $1,200, pay for your prescription drugs, and then coverage would start again. The doughnut hole is what we called it. We filled it. We filled it so seniors don't have to worry about going to their savings to make sure they can keep taking prescriptions that keep them independent, strong, and healthy. What is wrong with that idea? Why do they want to get rid of that? That is part of the Affordable Care Act as well.

I just wonder sometimes if those who get all tied up over the philosophy of this legislation deal with the reality of family life in America.

Jean Terrien and her husband Michael live in Evanston, IL. They are both cancer survivors. Jean had breast cancer at age 45, and Michael had prostate cancer at the same age. Neither could purchase insurance before the Affordable Care Act because of preexisting medical conditions in their family. Because of this law, they have an affordable policy, and Jean is able to do freelance work without having to worry about health insurance. She told me she worries about losing her coverage if the Supreme Court goes the wrong way or if the majority party here gets their wish and abolishes the Affordable Care Act. I think we owe it to them to strengthen the law and not to repeal it.

The Affordable Care Act, incidentally, has been very good when it comes to Medicare. Because of the Affordable Care Act and the slowdown in the rate of growth in health care costs, Medicare will have an additional 13 years of solvency. How about that. I worried about it for many years. I still do. But it is good news to us, to know that we have, in the Medicare Part A trust fund, 13 years more solvency since the passage of the Affordable Care Act. The trustees of the Medicare Program in 2010 said that the Affordable Care Act ''substantially improved'' the financial status of Medicare. Is that a good thing for America? Forty million Americans think it is. Those are the people who depend on Medicare.

The law is helping seniors with their prescription drugs, as I mentioned earlier, and it is a savings of about $925 a year for each senior in America.

So for those who are cheering and hoping the Supreme Court will somehow derail the Affordable Care Act, my questions are very direct: What do you have to replace it? What will you do to deal with preexisting conditions and denying health insurance? What will you do to make sure parents can keep their kids under their health insurance plans until the kids reach age 26? What will you do to fill the doughnut hole? What will you do to replace the deficit reduction the Affordable Care Act has achieved? What will you do in terms of the long-term solvency of Medicare to make up for the 13 years the Affordable Care Act has purchased?

And the answer is, they don't have an idea. They just don't like it. They don't like ObamaCare, and they don't want to hear these stories, just like the folks whom I debated with in my hometown, because these stories reflect the reality of life.

NORTH CENTRAL ILLINOIS TORNADOES

Mr. President, it was 2 months ago when I came to the floor and talked about tornadoes in my State of Illinois, the north central part of the State. We

had it again on Monday night. Nine twisters tore through the small towns in five Illinois counties Monday evening, accompanied by baseball-sized hail, flooding rains, and wind damage. Grundy, Lee, Kankakee, Will, and Whiteside Counties all experienced severe damage.

One of the towns that was hardest hit was Coal City in Grundy County, IL. Here is a photo of Grundy County and some of the damage. You can see the destruction. The National Weather Service said the tornado that struck this town was an EF–3, winds of 160 miles an hour. Some of the homes had the roofs ripped off and others were just flattened. Debris was scattered across the town. Many roads were impassible. There were downed power lines and trees, and there was flooding. This is the second tornado to hit Coal City in 2 years.

As soon as the twister passed Monday night, the first responders—God bless them—went door to door to try to make sure the 5,000 people there were accounted for. Thank goodness there were no fatalities or life-threatening injuries.

This tight-knit community is pulling together to help the victims. One man who lives in Coal City, Rick Druse, said he was lucky that one of his neighbors came to find him and his family—they were trapped in a crawl space. The homeowner across from Rick also was trapped in his home, which had been flattened by the storm. Power was knocked out for roughly 61,000 customers, and some are still waiting for it to be restored.

Yesterday, we reached out to Terri Halliday, the mayor of Coal City. We have spoken with Grundy County Board chair David Welter and Lee County Board chair Rick Ketchum.

My staff connected with Sterling mayor Skip Lee and Whiteside County Board chair Jim Duffy about the tornado that struck Sterling. That is another town which is also dealing with flooding. I reached out to each of them last night and, not surprisingly, had to leave voice mails. I know they were out and about. But we are there to help them if we can.

As is so often the case with disasters such as this, first responders, friends, and family waste no time helping their neighbors. It isn't just a Midwestern thing, but we are pretty proud of it in the Midwest. I have no doubt that the people in Coal City, Sublette, Sterling, and all of the others are going to stand up and help one another clean up, rebuild, and get on with their lives.

My thoughts are with the many people today who have lost their homes and other property.

I yield the floor.

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

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

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I wish to speak a little bit about an agreement that very well could be reached between now and the time that the Senate returns right after the Fourth of July. The agreement has been negotiated for 2 years now with Iran, although it seems to me that using the term ''negotiation'' is a stretch. As to most of what we said we wanted to achieve in this so-called negotiation, the Iranians have said they didn't want to achieve it. We seem then to move forward to the next point once we concede that point.

Yesterday, I read in press reports that the State Department has now decided it will not demand a full accountability for the past nuclear research on the part of Iran before they conclude a deal. One of the early statements was: We want to know what Iran did, how long they had been doing it, what scientists were involved, what material, and what information they had achieved in their efforts to actually have a nuclear weapon.

It appears now that we are happy if Iran is just nuclear-weapons capable, with a clock that would start at some time, and we seem to feel we suddenly have a new ability to monitor everything Iran does even though we don't appear to have the ability to get them to tell us what they have done.

As I have said before, this is one of the areas where there is no question that no deal is better than a bad deal.

According to the State Department, which recently reported again that Iran should still be considered a country that encourages terrorism; that, in fact, you can make the case that there is no greater encourager of terrorist activities in the world today than Iran—but all of those things seem to be off the table as we talk to Iran.

The true nature of the regime, and why we want to have an agreement on just a nuclear program and not all of the other things Iran has going on, continues to be of great concern to me.

The news reports today were that the Iranian Parliament, the Iranian legislature will now finalize legislation demanding that we not be able to look at military sites as part of our inspection. If the goal here is to stop Iran from having a nuclear capability, having a nuclear weapon, having a military capacity to use a nuclear weapon, why would we take military sites off the list of things we are supposed to pay attention to? Where would we expect them to be finally developing a weapon if not at a military site?

The Iranian Parliament appears to have a whole lot more to say about this negotiation than the Senate. In fact, I am afraid we are going to find with the legislation that we did vote on that it is going to be a lot easier to prevent disapproval than it would have ever been to get approval of this agreement that looks like it is headed toward a very bad agreement.

The Supreme Leader of Iran has ruled out any long-term freezes of nuclear activities and demands that sanctions be lifted immediately. A few weeks ago, when the United States said what our understanding of the framework moving forward would be—it seems to be about 180 degrees different from what Iran is announcing every day. They want immediate sanctions relief. We say they are only going to get sanctions relief when they begin to comply. They don't want to have inspections at military sites. We say one of the reasons we want to have this agreement is so we can ensure that nothing happens at military sites.

Meanwhile, Iran advances violence and instability around the world. Supported by Iran, Assad in Syria is massacring his own people. So far, at least 190,000 Syrians have been killed in what is going on in Syria today. Iran is supporting that regime. Shiite militias support Assad. They promote division and wage violence outside of Syria, now into Iraq, encouraged by Iran. Supported by Iran, Houthi rebels have seized key territory in Yemen and seek to overthrow the government.

By the way, I remind the President that this was something which less than a year ago President Obama said was a great example of how our foreign policy under his leadership was working, that Yemen was an example. Only a few months later, we are fleeing the country and closing our Embassy. Actually, the President may have been right. Maybe Yemen is a great example of how our foreign policy is working.

Hezbollah and Lebanon wage terrorism against Israel, encouraged by Iran.

Palestinian terrorists in Gaza, encouraged by Iran, continue to lob mortars and rockets into Israel.

Last April, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard stopped a Marshall Islands-flagged ship in the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran continues to hold hostages without any reasonable charge. Three American citizens—Pastor Saeed Abedini, former U.S. marine Amir Hekmati, and Washington Post journalist Jason Rezaian—are being held by Iran. A fourth American, former FBI official Robert Levinson, is missing and is in Iran, with no assistance from Iran to find him. In fact, they don't know exactly where he is. I have repeatedly called, as others in the Congress have, on the administration to just stop negotiations until there is a show of good faith to let these Americans go.

I saw a few days ago that Pastor Abedini was beaten again in the prison he has been put in, the most dangerous prison in Iran.

How could we not get three people whom they are holding under charges that will not stand up to any public view? How could we allow them to continue to hold these people while we continue to have talks about something like letting this country become nuclear capable?

Washington Post reporter Jason Rezaian was arrested after security forces raided his home. His case was referred to a Revolutionary Court on January 14 of this year, but details of his charges and details of his court date have not been released. His mother is concerned—as we all should be—about his health, which is deteriorating as he is being imprisoned. Recent reports would suggest that this Washington Post reporter is being charged with espionage.

Pastor Abedini was imprisoned in September of 2012. In January of 2013, he was sentenced to 8 years in prison for ''practicing his religion.'' That is his crime—practicing his religion. The Iranian Government charged that Pastor Abedini was undermining the Iranian Government by creating a network of Christian house churches and attempting to sway Iranian youth away from Islam. In August of 2013, his appeal was denied. He was then put in the worst prison in the country. He has been beaten up in prison. I think he was beaten in the hospital when he had to be taken there, as his life had almost ended with prison beatings. Why do they still have him?

Why do they have Amir Hekmati, a former U.S. marine who was arrested while visiting his family in Iran in August of 2011? The Iranian Government sentenced him to death for espionage. Fortunately, his death sentence was overturned by an appeals court in March of 2012. However, he was still convicted of aiding a hostile nation—that would be us, by the way—and was found guilty of espionage.

Bob Levinson, who is a retired DEA and FBI agent, disappeared in March of 2007 while visiting Iran's Kish Island. It is very likely, many people believe, that Mr. Levinson is currently a prisoner in Iran. Just 3 weeks after he disappeared, Iranian state television reported that he was in the hands of Iranian security forces.

Why are we assuming that the Iranians will agree to something much more complicated when they will not let these four people go? Why wouldn't we insist on that?

Finally, Iran is responsible for killing and maiming thousands of American service men and women in Iraq and Iran from deadly, armor-piercing improvised explosive devices that originated in Iran. They don't deny it. I think they take pride in it.

The destabilizing impact of a nuclear weapons-capable Iran is hard to overstate. If you want to do one thing to cast a huge shadow over the next decade and perhaps decades of this century—unless that shadow somehow is removed before the end of the decade, it is hard to imagine.

Sanctions, with the credible threat of military force, were doing good until we decided we would ease those sanctions if Iran would come to the negotiating table. That began 2 years ago. Two years ago we said things we would insist on. Two years later, none of those things appear to be things that are still being discussed in these Iranian so-called negotiations.

Sanctions should stay in place until Iran fundamentally changes its course and its behavior.

I am greatly concerned that the agreement on Iran's nuclear program will not be presented to the Congress in a way that allows the Congress to really weigh in, and I am concerned that this program as it will be presented to the Congress will establish Iran as a nuclear-capable, nuclear-threshold state. When that happens, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Jordan have all stated they will claim the exact same rights to do whatever it is we allow Iran to do. If we come up with an agreement that says Iran will be within 6 months of having a nuclear weapon and that they have to tell us when they start that 6-month clock, other countries will also want to be within 6 months of a nuclear weapon.

If we believe we can monitor Iran within 6 months or 12 months or whatever the number is, I think we are kidding ourselves, and most of the world doesn't believe we can do this either.

Turkey and other countries outside of the immediate neighborhood will also want to view nuclear weapons capability as a new status quo in a dangerous world.

An agreement that doesn't change the terror threat from Iran, an agreement that doesn't allow inspection of military facilities, an agreement that doesn't disclose past secret research for nuclear weapons, an agreement that doesn't ensure long-term inspections, an agreement that doesn't maintain sanctions in place until important compliance benchmarks are made is not an agreement that would be good enough.

We are facing a dangerous time. Iran is one of the chief perpetrators of terrorism in the world today. How we let that country that has one example of bad behavior after another, one example of hatred for Israel after another, one example of contempt for the United States after another, how we let that country become nuclear capable is amazing to me, as it is to the world. That is why our friends question whether they can depend on the United States of America any longer and why our enemies aren't afraid of us, as you would want your enemies to be.

I hope we don't settle for a bad deal. I will say again that a bad deal is worse than no deal at all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, last night a number of us from this Chamber and many of us from across the country gathered for a remarkable evening to support and honor an organization called Sandy Hook Promise. It is an organization that was created in the wake of the horrific, unspeakable tragedy in Newtown that involved the mass murder of 20 beautiful, innocent children and 6 great educators. Sandy Hook Promise was created to make some good come of this horrific evil, to protect children against violence and prevent more gun violence around the country, to advance the cause of mental health and wellness, and to make sure that no one is alone, no one eats alone, no one suffers alone, and no one endures mental illness alone.

Sandy Hook Promise is a wonderful, inspiring organization, and I was proud to serve as the cochairman of this event, along with my great colleague, CHRIS MURPHY, who has been a partner in efforts to stop gun violence in this Chamber and in Connecticut and around the country. I was also proud that the dinner and evening honored two of our colleagues, Senator DEBBIE STABENOW, a wonderful friend and distinguished Member of this body from Michigan, and PAT TOOMEY, our friend from Pennsylvania, who added his name and the weight of his support to a measure in the last session that seeks to protect children against gun violence by imposing a universal background check.

The evening was designed to honor our two colleagues, but it was also so inspiring for me to hear from Nicole Hockley, Mark Barden, and Bill Sherlach, whose lives were transformed and changed forever on that horrific day.

I will never forget that day when I arrived at the firehouse in Sandy Hook and seeing the grief and pain experienced by those families who learned for the first time that their beautiful children would not be coming home that night. The searing memory of their faces and voices will be with me forever. Their courage and strength in the wake of that tragedy will inspire me forever.

It inspired many of our colleagues to vote for the commonsense, sensible measures that Senator TOOMEY and Senator MANCHIN of West Virginia helped to spearhead. It was a bipartisan package of measures that was advanced and advocated so ably by them and many of us tirelessly in those days before the vote. A majority of Senators voted in favor of that package of measures. Unfortunately, that majority did not reach 60 votes. But last night was a time to renew and redouble our efforts to prevent gun violence and to take positive, constructive, commonsense, sensible steps to help prevent it around the country.

At the very outset of the evening, both Senator MURPHY and I requested a moment of silence to honor the loved ones and families in Charleston, SC. Our hearts and prayers go out to them, as they have since that unimaginable tragedy. It was a violation of not only human life but the sanctity of a place of worship, just as Newtown involved the violation of a place we regard as among the safest, our schoolhouse—killing our schoolchildren.

When we finished that moment of silence, I am sure all of us retained the

grief and pain. We in Connecticut know and understand that grief and pain and outrage because we remember that day when we felt it in the same way the people of Charleston felt it when nine people were killed. Their families were left with holes in their hearts just as we were on that day in Newtown.

But the message of last night was not one of despair or desperation, it was one of hope and energy. That message came from Nicole Hockley, Mark Barden, and Bill Sherlach, the families of the Sandy Hook tragedy who came here to Washington. They have continued their work through Sandy Hook Promise and other organizations to make some good come from that evil.

We can do it. We can make sure this country does more than grieve and remember. We need to redouble our commitment as a nation to make our Nation safer and better, not just for those 9 innocent people in the church in Charleston or the 26 innocent people in a schoolhouse in Sandy Hook but for the 11,000 people who are killed every year on the streets of Hartford, New Haven, Stamford, in our rural and suburban communities, and on our military bases. Every year, 11,000 people throughout our country die from gun violence.

We will never eliminate all gun violence. We will never stop all of the deaths and killings, but we can save lives. That is what the families of Newtown said to me in the wake of their tragedy, and that is what I hope our Nation will say to itself in the wake of the Charleston tragedy. We will never stop all evil, but we can take a stand and stop some of it.

Last night, I recalled the conversation I had with one of the moms when I was at the funeral of her child. When I approached her, I said, somewhat apprehensively: When you are ready, I would like to talk to you about what we can do together to stop gun violence in this country. And she said, with tears in her eyes: I am ready now. That was the spirit the families from Newtown brought to our Capitol. That is the spirit I hope we can honor with action and not just with words on the floor of the Senate or in the eulogies that will be given tomorrow.

We need to have an answer for those victims of Charleston and Newtown and the 11,000 people who die needlessly and senselessly every year from gun violence. We need to answer the question that all of us have: What can we do to stop gun violence? And there are some answers, such as background checks, a ban on illegal trafficking, an end to straw purchases, mental health initiatives, and school safety. Those are some answers, and we should think of other solutions. We need to work together, just as Sandy Hook Promise has done, regardless of party, race or religion, where we live or what our interest is because we have a common, shared interest in making our Nation safer and better.

That is why honoring both PAT TOOMEY and DEBBIE STABENOW was so meaningful, because they have given so much with their courage and leadership and have helped to make our Nation safer and better.

The killer in Charleston was not just a murderer, he was a domestic terrorist. He meant to terrify, not just kill. He meant to start a race war. He was a racist and White supremacist, and, rightly, has been regarded as someone who came to that church not just to target innocent worshippers but an entire community. He targeted the town of Charleston, the State of South Carolina, and our Nation. His message was not about hate for specific individuals, it was hate for an entire race.

We should recognize domestic terrorism and racism for what it is. We are not the only country with racists, but we are a country with a uniquely high number of gun violence incidents.

The shooting in Charleston was a physical manifestation of ideas that go beyond this murderer. To prevent future shootings, we must understand and undercut the ideas for which he killed so he could advance. We need to call this problem for what it is and understand it and fight it. Hate-inspired domestic terrorism is an evil all its own.

We can make progress against gun violence. We know we can, just as surely as 10 days ago no one thought the Confederate flag on State grounds in South Carolina would ever be removed. No one ever thought, plausibly, that the Governor of South Carolina would ever advocate it, and now that has happened, just as commonsense, sensible measures against gun violence can happen. We can prevail. Nobody thought before Ronald Reagan was almost assassinated and Jim Brady was paralyzed that the Brady bill would ever be passed. In fact, it took 10 years.

So we are here in a marathon, not a sprint. We are here for the long haul. We are not going away, not giving up, not abandoning this fight, and not surrendering to the forces of domestic terrorism or racial hatred or gun violence. We are better than that as a nation.

As we leave and go back home for this recess, I hope we will not only share the grief and pain of those brave and courageous families in South Carolina who were so heroic in the face of evil but resolve that we will redouble our efforts to raise awareness and organize people who are of good will and want to stop gun violence and who need to be heard because the vast majority of the American people want us to take commonsense, sensible measures to make America safer and better.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from Indiana.

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, today, I am back on the floor of the Senate for the 15th installment of the waste of the week. We all know the debt clock is ticking and that the Federal Government is racking up trillions of dollars of debt, which will have to be paid off at some point in the future by our generation and more likely our children and our grandchildren.

It is unsustainable. It is going to cause immense harm. It is something that has been ignored as of late, but we are unable to move forward with any kind of constructive solution to this problem or putting us on a path to deal with this because the President of the United States simply refuses to come to an agreement in terms of how to deal with this and, in fact, doesn't even bother to mention it.

We also have an issue that is part of the problem; that is, an inefficient, ineffective use of taxpayer money here in Washington. The money that was hard-earned by the people back home and then deducted from their payroll income and sent to the Federal Government. It is not always used in an effective, efficient way to address the necessary and essential issues the Federal Government deals with and that we talk about here every day. Instead, it goes into programs that can only be deemed as waste, fraud, and abuse, and that is what I have been trying to highlight for the past 15 weeks as we deal with the waste of the week.

Today, what I would like to talk about is a sweet deal. Everyone likes a sweet deal, right? Well, no, not quite everyone and not always. But, unfortunately, in this case what is a sweet deal for some is actually a raw deal for the American taxpayer. I am talking about the sugar subsidy.

Currently, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the USDA, issues loans to sugar producers and allows them to repay those loans with raw sugar if sugar prices fall below a certain price. After obtaining the sugar through this so-called loan, the USDA ends up with a bunch of sugar that it needs to resell, and it resells that sugar at a discounted price. As a result, these loans function as a price support for sugar, ensuring that sugar producers never sell their product below the price determined by the government—not the fair market but by the government. This cost taxpayers nearly $300 million in 2013 alone. I don't have the figures yet for 2014. I assume that they are the same or that they may have fluctuated a little bit up or down, depending on the world sugar price.

If this sweet loan deal for sugar producers isn't enough—$300 million a year in cost—there is more. In addition to providing a subsidy to sugar producers through the program I just described, the Federal Government also enforces a system of quotas and tariffs on imported sugar, thereby blocking Americans' fair-market access to cheaper sugar and resulting in a large difference between the international or global price of sugar and domestic sugar prices. In fact, the USDA's sugar program has caused the price of American sugar to be about 40 percent higher than the global price, resulting in an

estimated cost to consumers of $3.5 billion annually between the years 2009 and 2012.

So when we take these two programs and put them together, they effectively function as a mass Federal subsidy of sugar, which drives up prices for consumers and provides a double benefit to the sugar industry.

As a result of these two sweet policies, thousands of jobs in sugar-using industries, particularly candy manufacturers, have been lost, and the American taxpayer pays for it all.

Now, why were these policies put in place in the first place? Well, the global price of sugar was much higher in the early 1980s. So the idea was that higher sugar prices would result in more sugar growers, and the more sugar growers we had, the more sugar would be produced, thus lowering the price. That is how fair and free markets work. It is a supply-and-demand issue. But government interference through subsidies distorts the free-market price of goods, and in the case of sugar, it results in a direct hit to the taxpayer and much higher costs for the consumer of sugar-based products.

To this day, the sugar subsidy remains a giveaway to sugar producers and a raw deal for sugar consumers. Ice cream, doughnuts, cakes, pies—we know they are not the healthiest foods to eat, but they are some of the more desirable foods that we like to eat, particularly after we have been forced to eat broccoli and greens. Our mothers raised us saying that you can't have ice cream or cake or pie after dinner unless you eat what is on your plate. And so we should suffer through eating some of that green stuff—I don't mean to belittle that, it is healthy and we should do that, but I'm not going to tell the public what to eat. Nevertheless, it is these products and many others that incorporate the cost of sugar in making the product that drive up the price of the product simply because of the subsidies that are provided by this government through its policies to sugar producers.

The end result is companies not being able to provide the jobs they would like to provide or to be the dynamic industry they would like to be, and that puts them in a less than competitive position against our overseas producers. Many companies in my home State of Indiana have been affected by this subsidy. Let me give a couple of examples.

The Albanese Confectionery Group, Inc., is a renowned Indiana-based manufacturer of confections, including the World's Best Gummi Bears—in Germany they call them Gooies; here we call them Gummis—Gold Label Chocolates, and other products. They are a very successful manufacturer. They estimate they could save $3 million annually by having access to sugar from the world market price. But, no, they are not allowed to do that. They are forced to buy it at the U.S.-subsidized producer price, which is, as I indicated earlier, roughly 40 percent more than what they could otherwise pay.

Lewis Bakeries is headquartered in Evansville, IN, and is one of the few remaining independent bakeries in the Midwest and the largest wholesale bakery in Indiana, and they have the same issue.

Artificially high sugar prices contribute directly to increased costs that hamstring budgets of businesses such as Lewis Bakeries and other bakeries throughout Indiana.

Artificially high sugar prices affect the large companies also, such as Kraft Foods. It has a marshmallow and caramel plant in Kendallville, IN. They say that dismantling the sugar program would enhance the competitiveness of U.S. food manufacturers.

If Congress were to terminate the sugar subsidy program, which we have tried to do year after year after year and have not succeeded in passing it, we could save billions of dollars for U.S. taxpayers, not just from the U.S. Treasury but also in the grocery bills of American families. These savings could have extremely positive consequences for our economy if they were allowed to be used to support the economy.

According to an Iowa State University study, if the sugar program were abolished, domestic sugar prices would fall by roughly a third—earlier we were talking about 40 percent—saving consumers, said this study, at least $2.9 billion to $3.5 billion a year. And according to a recent report by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, eliminating this subsidy could save the Federal Government at least $116 million over 10 years.

So here we have a subsidized program by the Federal Government that is costing consumers billions per year. And here we have a second subsidized program by the Federal Government that through its policies of pricing and unfair practices, in my opinion, is costing nearly $116 million a year to American taxpayers. This is a perfect example of an outdated government program that is hurting consumers and wasting taxpayer dollars. The net effect of the program is that Americans are paying higher prices for sugar and more taxes to pay for the sugar subsidy.

So what is a sweet deal for the sugar producers is a raw deal for the American consumer. It is a subsidy—a package of subsidies that only go to the producers and deny the consumers the right to have reasonable prices for sugar in accordance with international pricing.

I have joined with a bipartisan group of my colleagues in supporting legislation, the Sugar Reform Act, introduced by Senator SHAHEEN from New Hampshire, that would end the sugar subsidy. If we could pass this legislation, it would result in a savings of at least $116 million, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

So today I add to our chart $116 million of savings that the government can claim, moving our chart ever closer to our goal of $100 billion of savings.

How do we pay for some essential programs here, and where are we going to get the money? Why don't we start here? Why don't we start by eliminating some of these programs? Better yet, why don't we let the taxpayers keep their hard-earned money rather than send it to Washington to pay for waste and abuse that occurs almost on a daily basis.

We are gradually creeping up to our $100 billion goal. I think we are going to have to go way beyond that, because these examples just keep rolling in. They are documented through nonpartisan agencies related to Congress and related to the Federal Government, including inspectors general and various programs. Why are we spending this money in the first place? The program is wasted, it is abused, and it is misused. It doesn't need to be in place.

So we are going to keep coming to the floor week after week talking about the waste of the week. No. 16 is on the way. Stay tuned.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MERKLEY. 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. MERKLEY. Mr. President, in just a short period of time here in the Senate Chamber we will be voting on fast-track legislation designed to create a very quick path through the Senate for the Trans-Pacific Partnership and for trade agreements to come thereafter.

So I rise now to share with my colleagues and to share with the American people my concerns about this course of action. It is President Kennedy who once said: ''The trade of a nation expresses, in a very concrete way, its aims and aspirations.'' What are our aims and aspirations in the context of this trade agreement and fast-track?

From my perspective, the thing that really matters is whether this trade agreement will create good-paying jobs or will destroy good-paying jobs. Will this trade agreement make the American economy work better for working Americans? I feel it fails the test. I am going to explain why.

Now, it is true that the trade agreement is complex. It is multidimensional. It has a dimension that deals with intellectual property, with the extension of copyrights and patents and protections for trade secrets. That is certainly a win for protecting an innovation economy and innovation by Americans and American companies.

It has an agricultural section. We have sought out an analysis of the agricultural section, but don't have one yet. But those in the know say there is a good chance that the tariffs that are

struck down and the nontariff barriers that are struck down as barriers to U.S. products may on balance benefit the U.S. agricultural economy. I look forward to an analysis to really examine that in detail.

But the heart of the trade agreement is about manufacturing. We have multinational companies that are seeking to be able to make things at the lowest possible cost. That is the heart of this trade agreement, as with other trade agreements. That means being able to incorporate into an economic circle countries where the costs are very low to make things. That is certainly the case with this trade agreement.

This trade agreement includes a couple of countries that have no minimum wage and others that have a very low minimum wage. We are really talking about Vietnam, Malaysia, and Mexico. In Vietnam they have a regional minimum wage. So it varies from place to place. You hear different amounts, but roughly it is 60 to 75 cents per hour. In Malaysia it is $1.54. In Mexico it is 66 cents. Well, those are all incredibly low compared to the American minimum wage of $7.25.

Of course, many of our States have State minimum wages that are higher. But the minimum wage is only a part of the puzzle. When you include the cost of labor in the United States, you have to include such things as workers' compensation and set aside expenses for Social Security and disability insurance and the cost of maintaining safe working standards, which are rigorously enforced.

So when you compare all of that, you probably have a labor ratio that is on the order of about 20 to 1. That is a playing field tilted against the American worker at a 20-to-1 ratio for manufacturing. That is certainly not a level playing field. Our companies will say time and again: Here in America, we will thrive with anyone in the world on a level playing field. But when the costs are 20 to 1—that is, when the costs overseas in countries such as Vietnam, Malaysia, and Mexico are lower than in the United States on a 20-to-1 ratio—that is a playing field steeply tilted against the United States.

So it is no wonder that in previous agreements we have seen an increase in trade deficits and a big loss of jobs here in the United States of America. Let's take a look at three of those cases.

In 1993, we signed the North America Free Trade Agreement. That incorporated Mexico into our economic circle. So let's compare the trade deficit in 1992, a year before, with 2014. In the course of those years, the trade deficit increased from $5.3 billion to $53.8 billion. That is a massive, massive change. Now, by various estimates that translates into a job loss of between 480,000 to 680,000 jobs. So half a million Americans lost good-paying jobs as a result of NAFTA.

Let's take a look at China. China came into the World Trade Organization, or WTO, in the year 2000. So let's compare 1999 with 2014. The trade deficit went from $68.7 billion to $343 billion. That is an increase of one-quarter of a trillion dollars. That is not a collective amount. That is an annual amount. By various estimates that resulted in job losses of between 2.7 million and 3.2 million American jobs.

Or let's look at South Korea. Remember how folks said that this would facilitate so much access to consumers in South Korea, and it would not have a big impact on our trade deficit? The South Korea agreement was signed in 2011 or ratified. So comparing 2010 to 2014—just 4 years—the trade deficit ballooned. It ballooned from $10 billion to $25 billion. The resulting job losses are estimated to have been between 75,000 and 150,000 jobs. Now, when I say jobs, maybe that is abstract. So let's translate this to families. Between the low estimates and the high estimates, we are talking about 3.3 to 4 million American families losing their jobs—good-paying manufacturing jobs. You know, there is no better foundation for a family than a good-paying job.

So when we pull away that foundation by striking agreements that send our jobs overseas, that is utterly devastating to families across our Nation and certainly to families in my home State of Oregon and certainly to families in every single State. So you cannot be pro-family and also be for shipping our good-paying jobs overseas. There is no government program that substitutes for a good-paying job.

That is why I am so deeply disturbed about the outline of the agreement that we are undertaking. Each and every time that improvements to wages here in the U.S. come up, the makers will say: If you raise your wages, if you add family vacation or family leave or sick leave or medical leave or help with daycare for your children—you know what—we may just have to move our manufacturing overseas or we may have to move our supply chain overseas or we may have to produce less at the factory here and more at the factory overseas.

It does not stop there. The construction that is envisioned by our multinational manufacturers in pursuit of their low-cost production is not just to play off the United States against Malaysia or the United States against Mexico or the United States against Vietnam—although all of that will happen—it is also to play off each of those low-cost countries against each of them.

So they can say to China, which has a certain cost structure and is not yet envisioned to be part of the Trans-Pacific Partnership but does benefit from WTO access: China, your costs are going up. Oh, you are enforcing those environmental laws, and your costs are going up. Oh, you are adding health standards, labor standards, and your costs are going up. You are paying overtime, and your costs are going up. We are going to shift more of our manufacturing to Malaysia, and if you keep at it, we will shift all of it.

Or to Malaysia: You are just close by to Vietnam. Your costs go up, and we are going to ship more to Vietnam.

Or to Vietnam: You raise your standards, you raise your costs, you raise your pay, and you raise your standard of living. So we are going to move those jobs to Mexico.

This is tremendous leverage if you are an owner of a multinational, if you own stock in a multinational, if you are an investor in a multinational, because you can sell—you can produce your product at lower costs by playing off economy against economy—at the world market price and you make more money.

But if you are a worker in the United States who is being played against a worker in Vietnam, it is a bad deal. If you are a worker in Vietnam being played off against a worker in Malaysia, it is a bad deal.

That is not all that is wrong with this arrangement. Let's look at the various things that could have made fast-track stronger and that are not in fast-track. We have heard a lot of conversation and a lot of presentation that this is a gold-standard framework, that this is a new style of trade agreement. But the fact is that key provisions that could have made it a gold standard or a new strategy are not there.

Let's start with the fact that there is no minimum wage required in this agreement—not even a minimum wage of $1 an hour, which would have certainly affected Mexico or Vietnam—and no mechanism for where there is a minimum wage, to increase it gradually over time to help lift up workers in our poorest nations and to reduce the gap and level out the playing field between low-wage countries and high-wage countries such as the United States.

Second, the agreement does not address currency manipulation. Everyone in international trade understands that tariffs can be replaced by a pseudo-tariff through currency manipulation, through intervention in the currency market. In 2009, when I came to the Senate, our Congress estimated that the currency manipulation by China amounted to a 25-percent tariff on American products and a 25-percent subsidy to Chinese products. Why would we agree to an arrangement where currency manipulation can produce a tariff against our products and a subsidy to our competitors within that framework?

Third, we have had a problem with the loss of our sovereignty on health issues, environmental issues, and consumer issues by giving that sovereignty away and that decision-making away to an international panel. Just weeks ago, under the World Trade Organization structure—the WTO structure—we lost a case, and the outcome of that case was that here in America we are not allowed to label our meat ''Produced in America.''

That is a loss of our sovereignty. I want to live in an America where if our consumers, if our policymakers, if our legislators believe it is in the best interest of this Nation for our consumers to be able to know where their meat is raised, if our consumers want to exercise some patriotic decisionmaking and support American ranchers, they ought to be able to do so. We ought to be able to have that law and not give away our lawmaking authority to an international panel.

So this is an investor-state dispute settlement panel of three corporate lawyers, who can be advocates in one case and the judges in the next. It does not provide anything close to an appropriate mechanism to decide issues of health, safety, and the environment. We could have taken those off the table so that if we wanted to control a dangerous environmental toxin such as cancer-causing flame retardants in our carpets, we could do so without going afoul of trade agreements.

But there was no effort to protect our health and safety here in America in this trade agreement. If we really believed that we were going to have a new-order agreement, we would have an enforcement mechanism for labor standards and for environmental standards. We have heard folks talk on the floor that there are such new enforcement standards. So I am aggrieved to report to you that that is simply not the case.

Now, let's start with the fact that we could have required the passage of laws before countries are admitted into the trade agreement and required that they bring their environmental standards, their legal standards, and their labor standards up to snuff before admission and then show that they were actually implementing them and have a 2-year demonstration period to show that they were actually enforcing them. Because that is the easiest point at which to bring nations accountable before they are members of the trade agreement, before they get the lower tariffs. That is the point you have incentive. That is the point you have leverage. But there was no effort to force countries, to require countries to meet those minimum standards before being admitted into this trade agreement.

We could have had some form of snapback provision that said: If you fail in bringing your laws into accordance on the environmental side or the labor side, if you fail to enforce your laws, then tariffs snap back. But there is no snapback provision in this agreement.

We could have expanded the dumping provisions in international law to give a way to take on situations where countries are producing at low cost because they are not abiding by the goals in the environmental or the labor area, but there is no such provision envisioned or required in fast-track or anticipated in the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

In the course of our trade agreements, there has been only one situation where we challenged labor laws, and it was with Guatemala. We challenged them 7 years ago, and to date that case has never been adjudicated. It is virtually impossible, after a country has failed to come up to standards, to go back and retroactively enforce those standards without some new mechanism, some new strategy. But there is no new mechanism or strategy that applies in this situation, nothing that would solve the Guatamala case and actually end with it being adjudicated.

To continue with the challenges to this fast-track, the failures of this fast-track, there is nothing in this that provides for Congress to be consulted when other nations dock; that is, tie on to the framework that will exist in the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

We had an amendment here on the floor that if China was to try to dock with the TPP and become a TPP fully privileged member, it would have to come back to the United States for consideration. That would give us a chance to look at China's currency manipulation or China's cheating on international intellectual property. That would give us a chance to examine a whole facet of things. But no requirement like that exists.

To add on to everything else, now, because of the way this process has proceeded, there is no guarantee that there will be trade adjustment assistance for families who lose their jobs when their jobs go overseas, no assistance in training.

I find it absurd that the same folks who say that there will be virtually no jobs lost proceed to say that the cost of compensating families by giving some minimal training to them when they lose their jobs will be vastly expensive and that America can't afford it. So on the one hand they say there will be no jobs lost. On the other hand they say that so many jobs will be lost that it will be too expensive for our Nation to afford. So they are OK with leaving American families not only stranded without jobs but stranded with no training to try to find new jobs in the economy.

If we go back to where I started with President Kennedy and his vision that the trade of a nation expresses in a concrete way its aims and aspirations, our aim should be to create good-paying jobs here in America. Our aspiration should be to create a trade agreement that works for working families. Unfortunately, this trade agreement is constructed around a different aspiration, one of maximizing the value of stock in the multinational manufacturing corporations, and that is done by shipping our jobs overseas. That is the wrong aim for this Nation. That is the wrong aim for our working families. We have seen the impact of Korea. We have seen the impact of China joining the WTO. We have seen the impact of Mexico and NAFTA. As a result, we have lost millions of good-paying jobs in our Nation and undermined the success of millions of American families.

There is a lot of conversation on the floor of the Senate about inequality in our Nation. Do you know what drives inequality? Well, I will tell you. It is this: When you create trade agreements that are great for investors but are terrible for workers, that drives inequality. That is why I encourage my colleagues to vote no when it comes to the fast-track legislation being voted on later today. It is wrong for America because it is wrong as far as solving inequality. It is wrong for America because it is wrong for working families to have their jobs shipped overseas. It is wrong because it does not fulfill the vision of working for working Americans.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes as in morning business.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am on the floor today for the 104th time—one of these days, I am going to get it right—to urge that we wake up to the dangers of climate change.

The scientific community has been sounding the alarm for decades. Our most respected scientific institutions are virtually unanimous in their verdict: Carbon pollution from humans' burning of fossil fuels is warming our atmosphere and oceans, raising and acidifying our seas, loading the dice for more extreme weather, and disrupting the natural systems upon which we all depend. They are not alone.

Our defense and intelligence communities warn us of the threats these climate disruptions pose to our national security and to international stability.

Public health officials warn that greenhouse gas pollution and its effects trigger human health risks.

Economists—even very conservative ones—have long recognized the distortion of energy markets ignoring the true cost of carbon pollution.

Our government's accountants now list climate change as one of the most significant threats to America's fiscal stability. The new Republican CBO chief even put sea level rise and increased storm activity from climate change into his budget outlook just last week.

Of course, voices of faith call to us. They plead that we heed the moral imperatives of protecting God's creation, seeking justice for all people, and meeting our own responsibilities to future generations.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has called for us to ''develop a sense of the oneness of humanity'' and address climate change.

The Archbishop of Canterbury recently issued a declaration, along with other British religious leaders, warning of the ''huge challenge'' of climate change and supporting an international climate treaty to be negotiated in Paris this December.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of Orthodox Christians worldwide, has called climate change ''a matter of social and economic justice.''

More than 350 rabbis have signed a rabbinic letter on the climate crisis calling for vigorous action against climate disruption and global socioeconomic injustice, reminding us that ''social justice, sustainable abundance, a healthy Earth, and spiritual fulfillment are inseparable.''

Last week, Pope Francis, the worldwide leader of the Catholic Church, which is the largest Christian denomination in the world, the largest Christian denomination in the United States, and the largest Christian denomination in my home State of Rhode Island, added his charismatic voice to the call.

In the Roman Catholic Church, an encyclical is a papal letter sent to all bishops. It is considered among the most authoritative documents of Catholic teaching. Rather than just an internal communication to the clergy, however, this encyclical of Pope Francis on climate change is explicitly addressed to ''every single living person on this planet.'' It is entitled ''Laudato Si','' or ''Praise Be to You,'' a reference to the ''Canticle of the Sun'' by St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of the environment, friend of the poor, and namesake of this Pope.

This encyclical accepts and affirms what we know about climate change: that most is due to the greenhouse gases emitted by human activity; that seas are rising, oceans acidifying, polar ice melting; that weather is worsening at the extremes; and that basic systems of life on our planet home are being disrupted.

He writes:

> [W]e need only take a frank look at the facts to see that our common home is falling into serious disrepair. . . . [T]hings are now reaching a breaking point. . . . [H]umanity has disappointed God's expectations.

The Earth herself, he says, ''groans in travail.''

Pope Francis tells us that ''humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production, and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it.'' Specifically, he says that ''technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels needs to be progressively replaced without delay.''

The Pope reminds us that as we in power sleepwalk through this crisis, we are hurting people who have no voice today. First, we harm future generations, leaving them a world that, to use his own words, ''is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth.''

''[T]he world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others,'' the Pope writes. ''Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice.''

The Pope also emphasizes that when we damage that gift, we inflict particular harm on the poor, who live close to the Earth—outside of our privileged bubble of consumption. They rely on agriculture, fishing, and forestry for their livelihoods and sustenance. As climate change disrupts natural systems, the poor take the hit most directly. As a result, Pope Francis says, we who have profited most from burning fossil fuels owe a debt to the rest of the world. He calls it our ''ecological debt.''

The United States has produced more carbon dioxide than any other nation. Our historical responsibility calls us to help other nations develop cleaner energy, relieve their systematized poverty, and soften the blow of climate change. This responsibility, this call from Pope Francis matters particularly for America, the indispensable and the exceptional nation. Years ago, Daniel Webster described the work of our Founding Fathers as having ''set the world an example.'' From John Winthrop to Ronald Reagan, we have called ourselves a city on a hill, set high for the world to witness, to emulate.

Should we ignore the climate disruption we have caused, Pope Francis warns, ''those who will have to suffer the consequences of what we are trying to hide will not forget this failure of conscience and responsibility.'' In saying that, Pope Francis aligns squarely with Daniel Webster's warning from that same speech—his warning about our American experiment in popular liberty: ''The last hopes of mankind, therefore, rest with us; and if it should be proclaimed that our example had become an argument against the experiment, the knell of popular liberty would be sounded throughout the earth.''

Pope Francis's encyclical even has something to say directly to us in Congress. He says:

> To take up these responsibilities, and the costs they entail, politicians will inevitably clash with the mindset of short-term gain and results which dominates present-day economics and politics. But if they are courageous, they will attest to their God-given dignity and leave behind a testimony of selfless responsibility.

Remember the Pharisees. Remember the traders and the money changers in the temple. If we choose to ignore the call of the Pope and of leaders of faith around the world and choose to protect the side that is polluting and destroying, even when we see right before our faces its ravage of our natural world, its harm to the poor, its robbery of future generations, what are we then? What are we then? Jesus himself, the Lamb of God, lost his temper twice, the Bible tells us; once at the Pharisees and once at the traders and money changers in the temple. He went after them with a lash, actually. Are we to take their side now? Must we, in the Senate, serve Caesar in every single thing? Is there no light left here at all?

Here in the Senate, the hand of greed lies so heavily upon us. Please, may the Pope's exhortation give us the courage to stand up against the power of these selfish forces and do what is right for our people and for our planet.

The fossil fuel industry has been a particular disgrace, polluting our politics as well as our planet. Ever since the Citizens United ruling gave polluters the ability to inject unlimited and untold amounts of money into our elections, the tsunami of their slime has drowned honest debate on climate change. Senators who once supported commonsense legislation have gone silent as stones under the threat of the polluters' spending. Getting past the dark influence of the fossil fuel industry will indeed take some light and some courage, especially on the part of the Republican majority whom they so relentlessly bully and cajole. But we must do it. Again, mankind will not forget this failure of conscience and responsibility.

Senator SCHATZ and I have even offered legislation rooted in conservative free-market principles. We would put a fee on carbon pollution and return all the revenue to the American people. It would reduce carbon pollution 40 percent by 2025 and be a significant downpayment on our ecological debt to the world and, by the way, it would generate significant tax cuts and economic benefits for American families and businesses in the process. I urge friends across the aisle, please, take a serious look at our bill.

In seeking a solution to the climate crisis, Pope Francis asks each of us to ''draw constantly from [our] deepest convictions about love, justice, and peace.'' He dares us even ''to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering''—into our own personal suffering—''and thus discover what each of us can do about it.'' He urges us to recognize the systems around us—the financial systems, the industrial systems, the economic systems, the political systems—are drawing us down a destructive and unjust path.

But his encyclical to the world illuminates another path—a compassionate path, blazed with abiding faith in the human family, a path toward the preservation of our common home and our common decency. The choice of which path we take will be a fateful one.

I yield the floor.

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

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, before he leaves the floor, let me just commend the Senator from Rhode Island. He has made a number of important points this afternoon, but I am particularly pleased my colleague has laid out, in such a thoughtful way, the implications of the Pope's encyclical. This was very important as a major new focus of the debate, and I really commend my colleague.

I suspect we are now on 101 or 102—oh, 104. I was there for 100, so I must have missed one along the way. But I

commend my colleague and thank him for his commitment. He knows I share many of his views with respect to creating a fresh set of approaches to deal with this climate change question, and I look forward to working with him.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator very kindly.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today the Senate is taking major steps toward a new, more progressive trade policy that will shut the door on the 1990s North American Free Trade Agreement once and for all.

One of the major ways this overall package accomplishes this goal is by kicking our trade enforcement into high gear. Later today, the Senate is going to vote to go to conference with the House on strong bipartisan legislation that was passed by the Chamber only a few weeks ago by a vote of 78 to 20.

It has long been my view that vigorous enforcement of our trade laws must be at the forefront of any modern approach to trade at this unique time in history. One of the first questions many citizens ask is, I hear there is talk in Washington, DC, about passing a new trade law. How about first enforcing the laws that are on the books?

This has been an area I long have sought to change, and we are beginning to do this with this legislation and I want to describe it. For me, this goes back to the days when I chaired the Senate's Subcommittee on International Trade and Competitiveness. We saw such widespread cheating, such widespread flouting of our trade laws, my staff and I set up a sting operation. We set up a sting operation to catch the cheats; in effect, almost inviting these people to try to use a Web site to evade the laws. They came out of nowhere because they said: Hey, cheating has gotten pretty easy. Let's sign up. And we caught a lot of people.

So we said, from that point on, that we were going to make sure any new trade legislation took, right at the center, an approach that would protect hard-working Americans from the misdeeds of trade cheats. In fact, the core of the bipartisan legislation that heads into conference is a jobs bill—a jobs bill that will protect American workers and our exporters from those kinds of rip-offs by those who would flout the trade laws.

The fact is, when you finally get tough enforcement of our trade laws, it is a jobs bill—a true jobs bill—because you are doing a better job of enforcing the laws that protect the good-paying jobs of American workers.

I guess some people think we are going to get that tougher enforcement by osmosis. We are going to get it because we are going to pass a law, starting today with the conference agreement that is going to have real teeth in it—real teeth in it—to enforce our trade laws.

Foreign companies and nations employ a whole host of complicated schemes and shadowy tactics to break the trade rules, and they bully American businesses and undercut our workers. So what we said in the Finance Committee, on a bipartisan basis, is the name of the game will be to stay out in front of these unfair trade practices that cost our workers good-paying jobs. My colleagues and I believe the Senate has offered now the right plan to fight back against the trade cheats and protect American jobs and protect our companies from abuse.

It really starts with what is called the ENFORCE Act, which is a proposal I first offered years ago that will give our Customs agency more tools to crack down on the cheaters. Then, we have a bipartisan, bicameral agreement on the need for an unfair trade alert. That is another major upgrade that responds to what we heard companies and labor folks say again and again. What they would say is that trade enforcement laws get there too late. They get there too late. The plant is closed, the jobs are gone, the hopes and dreams of working families are shattered. So what we said is we are going to start using some of the data and the information we have to have a real trade alert so we can spot what is coming up and get that information to our communities and our working families and our companies to protect our workers. So this unfair trade alert is another major upgrade in how we tackle enforcing our trade laws.

My view is that any bill that comes out of that enforcement conference, the Customs conference, needs to reflect important American priorities, and that should certainly include smart protection of our environmental treasures. When our trade agreements establish rules on environmental protection, they have to be enforced with the same vigor as the rules that knock down barriers for businesses overseas.

Our colleague from Colorado Senator BENNET offered, in my view, a very constructive proposal that is going to accomplish this important goal. It was overwhelmingly agreed to by the Committee on Finance and passed by the Senate, and I would like to note that much of the good work done by Senator BENNET mirrors what my colleague in the other body, Congressman BLUMENAUER, is doing on this issue as well.

It is my view—and why it was important to hear from Senator WHITEHOUSE—that climate change is one of the premier challenges of our time. It is critical to make sure this enforcement package sends the right message on environmental issues. Whether the issue at hand is climate change, fisheries or conservation, this package—the package we are going to be dealing with in the Customs conference—strikes the right balance for the environment.

I also want to take a moment to build on what I discussed yesterday with respect to the Democratic priorities that my colleagues and I are going to fight for in conference. This stems from an important point made by our colleague from North Dakota Senator HEITKAMP, who said we really need to go into this Customs conference with some markers—some strong markers that lay out a path for some of our priorities with respect to enforcing the Customs law.

So after the pro-trade Democrats met on Monday night, I talked with Chairman RYAN with respect to these issues. We intend to champion provisions by Senator SHAHEEN which will help our small businesses take full advantage of trade. A lot of people say, oh, trade bills are for the big guys; the big guys are the ones who are going to benefit. I have always thought big guys can take care of themselves. They have lots of people to stand up for them. But what Senator SHAHEEN is saying—and it is particularly important in my home State, where we have mostly small businesses. Senator SHAHEEN is saying she is going to make sure, as part of the enforcement efforts, we beef up the effort to help small businesses, particularly at the State level—not at the Federal level, at the State level—promote these efforts to have more markets for our small businesses in the export field.

In addition to Senator SHAHEEN's amendment, as far as those Customs markers are concerned, we are also going to make the environmental protection provisions I just described authored by Senator BENNET a priority and Senator CANTWELL's trade enforcement trust fund. I am very hopeful about the trade enforcement trust fund as well. Suffice it to say, there is interest on both sides of the aisle because there is an awareness that, again, we can have some trade laws, but we are going to need some resources in order to make sure they are implemented. So I think that trade enforcement trust fund is another very important priority, and it is one that the pro-trade Democrats have said would be part of our short list in terms of our Customs markers.

As I noted, when I have town meetings at home—I have had more than 730 of them and am going to have more of them this upcoming week—I do find people say that everybody in Washington talks about new laws, new proposals, trade ideas: Enforce the laws on the books first. It has been too hard—too hard in the past—for our businesses, particularly our small businesses, to get the enforcement that matters, enforcement with teeth, enforcement that serves as a real deterrent to cheating.

So this legislation is our chance to demonstrate that strengthening trade enforcement—enforcement of the trade laws—will now be an integral part of a new modern approach to trade, an approach that says we are not part of the 1990s on trade, where nobody had Web sites and iPhones and the like. We have a modern trade policy with the centerpiece enforcing our trade laws.

Our policies are going to give America's trade enforcers the tools they

need to fight on behalf of American jobs and American workers and stop the trade cheats who seek to undercut them. I strongly urge my colleagues to vote yes later today on the motion to send the enforcement bill to conference and work on a bipartisan basis, as we did in the Finance Committee, to put strong trade enforcement legislation on the President's desk.

Now, I would also like to briefly make some remarks on the trade adjustment assistance package. As we have said, later today, the Senate is going to take a series of votes that again speak to how we kick off a new progressive era in trade policy that closes the books on the trade ideas of the 1990s once and for all.

Once again, a key part of that effort is protecting our workers and ensuring that more trade means everybody has an opportunity to get ahead. That is why the package of legislation under debate expands and extends the support system for America's workers called trade adjustment assistance.

Now, this program dates back to the days of President Kennedy. President Kennedy, during his push for the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, called it ''a program to afford time for American initiative, American adaptability and American resiliency to assert themselves.'' Since then, this program has been extended by Republican and Democratic Presidents. The program is now a lifeline for more than 100,000 Americans, including 3,000 Oregonians who receive job training and financial support. The heart of it is to provide a springboard to new opportunities, and it guarantees that workers and their families don't get knocked off stride when times are tough. In my view, it is a core element of what I call trade done right.

As I noted yesterday, Tim Nesbitt, former past president of the Oregon AFL–CIO, essentially said our legislation was a blueprint for trade done right.

Now, for 1½ years, the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program has been running at reduced strength. But that is going to change once this legislation becomes law. The funding for trade adjustment assistance goes back up to a level that will cover everybody who qualifies. Once again, service workers will be eligible for the program because in today's economy they are facing competition from overseas as well. Trade adjustment assistance would take into account competition from anywhere in the world, not just from our trade agreement partners.

These are significant improvements that I will tell the Presiding Officer and colleagues I fought very hard for in what were negotiations that really lasted well over 6 months with Chairman HATCH and Chairman RYAN. I believe these changes are going to make a big difference for workers across our Nation who fall on tough times. If China manages to lure a manufacturer away from the United States, for example, now those workers will be covered. They will have a chance to learn new skills and find a job that pays good wages, and they will not have to worry about whether the bills will get paid or if they are going to have food on their table.

Along with trade adjustment assistance, this legislation will reinstate the health coverage tax credit that expired at the end of last year. The majority of workers in this country—tens of millions of middle-class people and their families—get health insurance through their employer. The health coverage tax credit guarantees that workers and families affected by trade are going to still be able to see their doctor. If they get sick or suffer an injury, they aren't going to face colossal medical bills or the threat of bankruptcy. They get protection, and they get it until they are back on their feet.

In the process of bringing this legislation together, my friend and colleague on the Finance Committee Senator BROWN offered a proposal that goes a long way, in my view, to strengthening our enforcement of key trade laws. It is called the Leveling the Playing Field Act. I urge the Senate majority leader to include this important legislation in the TAA bill, both because it is a good policy and it is a sign that both parties are working on issues that are logical bipartisan priorities. Leveling the playing field—and I can say this at this point in the debate. If we look at the Senate Finance Committee files, leveling the playing field was a top priority for those in the unions—the steel unions and others—and it was also a top priority for their companies. So having this policy in trade adjustment assistance is exactly the kind of bipartisan work the American people want done—business, labor, Democrats, Republicans—a strong record of evidence as to why it is needed. This legislation is going to be the difference between steelworkers and paper workers being on the job or being laid off because it ensures that the remedies of trade law—what is called countervailing duty law, anti-dumping law—is going to be available to workers and their companies earlier and in a more comprehensive way. It is going to protect jobs, which is a priority of both political parties.

I made mention how important this was to me. My first hearing—my first hearing when I became chairman of the Finance Committee's trade subcommittee—was on trade enforcement. So I could have chosen a lot of topics. We could have talked about exports, hugely important to my State. We could have talked about the fact that the trade laws haven't kept up with the digital age, hugely important to my State. I said my first hearing was going to be on trade enforcement.

My good friend from United Steelworkers, Leo Gerard, together with the U.S. Steel chairman, Mario Longhi, spoke at length about how American workers wanted to see the Senate and the Finance Committee stand up for them and finally fix the shortcomings in our trade remedy laws. That is what we have done now. Getting behind SHERROD BROWN's proposal to strengthen our trade laws, to stop unfair trade so foreign companies do not undercut American workers and manufacturers ought to be an American priority—a red, white, and blue priority, a priority for every Member of this body.

I am proud to have worked with Senator BROWN on this important issue. I thank him for the fact that he has brought this up again and again and again. I said quite some time ago that we weren't going to let this package become law without the Leveling the Playing Field Act authored by Senator BROWN at the outset. That is going to be the case, and I thank him for his work.

The three programs—the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program, the health coverage tax credit, Senator BROWN's Leveling the Playing Field Act—are now moving through the Senate alongside legislation that creates new economic opportunities for impoverished countries in Africa and other places around the world. This trade package will extend the biggest of these programs, the African Growth and Opportunity Act—what is called AGOA—for 10 years. I am a strong believer in AGOA. It works for our country, it works for Africa, and it builds a stronger economic future for so many around the world. We worked hard again on a bipartisan basis in the Finance Committee to find ways to strengthen AGOA. That was the point of our hearing, to find ways to strengthen it, extend it for another decade, and the committee came together on a bipartisan basis to make smart improvements.

Once again, we see the value of a progressive trade policy. Two of our very outstanding colleagues—my colleague Senator COONS on this side of the aisle and our friend Senator ISAKSON on the other side of the aisle—are always working in a bipartisan way, pointing out that this is what our country is all about, and certainly creating opportunities for impoverished parts of the world is a core American priority. Hearts and minds around the world are hoping we will have this kind of leadership.

I will close, and I think this will be my last comment before the vote. It is my view that for all who want to see trade done right, for all who want American workers to thrive in the 21st century, getting behind these key programs is an ideal way to do it. By supporting this legislation, the Congress reaffirms what President Kennedy really rhapsodized over half a century ago: You get behind these programs, and it reaffirms America's commitment to American initiative, to adaptability, and resiliency.

I encourage all of my colleagues to vote yes to support these important programs when we vote later today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk briefly about trade adjustment assistance, or TAA, and about trade enforcement. I will be supporting the TAA bill.

TRIBUTE TO CASEY ADEN-WANSBURY

But before I talk about that, I would like to recognize my chief of staff, Casey Aden-Wansbury, who has never been on the floor before. She asked to be on the floor today, since she is leaving. Of course, I said yes.

But I said that so that I could talk about you, Casey. You didn't know that. You have to sit through this.

Casey has served in my office since I joined the Senate in July of 2009. She is leaving Washington next week and is heading to San Francisco, where her husband will be starting an amazing new job. Jamo has a great job, and he has been so supportive of you, Casey, and also of Casey's parents. You will now be much closer to them.

I am very excited for Casey, but I wish she weren't leaving. Everyone in my office is going to miss you—no one more than me.

When my grandson was 30 minutes old, I held him in my arms, and I said to him: It is all staff.

It is true. It is all staff. Casey has been an amazing chief of staff. She is the most focused, determined person I know.

I am a member of the Writers Guild and the Screen Actors Guild. I get screeners. We got ''Zero Dark Thirty'' sent to me during the awards season. My wife and I were in our living room. We put ''Zero Dark Thirty'' on. At a certain point in the movie, I said to Franni: The lead character reminds me of someone. Finally, I said: It is Casey. If Casey had been in the CIA, I think we would have gotten bin Laden a little earlier.

Casey deserves an enormous amount of credit for all the work that I and our office have been able to get done in my first term—the day-to-day work that we do to improve the lives of people in Minnesota and across the country. Whether it was mental health in schools or improving workforce training or protecting net neutrality or defeating the Comcast-Time Warner Cable deal, I am so proud of the work we have done in the Senate. And it is all staff. Casey has led that staff brilliantly every step of the way. I will miss Casey more than anyone, including myself, really knows.

Whoever gets Casey next will be very, very lucky indeed.

Casey, I cannot express how deeply thankful I am for all you have done for me, for our office, and for the State of Minnesota. Thank you.

Now, Mr. President, I would like to turn briefly to the trade adjustment assistance package. I believe that when trade is done right, it can benefit our workers, our communities, and our businesses. But I was concerned that the fast-track procedures set up by the trade promotion authority bill will not do enough to make sure that we do trade right. So I voted against that bill, and I will vote against it again later.

Once we are done with that bill, we will consider the trade adjustment assistance bill that was originally packaged together with the fast-track bill. I will support TAA. It is far from perfect. For one thing, it simply does not provide enough assistance. But it will go a long way toward providing help for workers who are displaced by trade, as we know some will be.

I also strongly support the Leveling the Playing Field Act, which is included in this package along with TAA. Senator BROWN's bill, of which I am proud to be a cosponsor, would help strengthen our trade remedy laws—the laws that enforce our trade policies and protect our domestic industries from dumped and subsidized imports from other countries.

In Minnesota, I have seen firsthand the damage that happens when we don't have—and just as importantly, can't enforce—strong trade protections. In the last few months alone, we have seen what happens when countries unfairly dump their goods here. Nearly 1,000 Minnesotans in the Iron Range are losing their jobs after a flood of dumped steel imports.

The Leveling the Playing Field Act would help improve our anti-dumping laws, including restoring Congress's original intent in setting the standard for when a domestic industry is materially injured by unfairly traded foreign imports. We need to be able to respond effectively when dumped imports are harming our domestic iron and steel industry and the workers in that industry or when those imports are harming other industries, as is happening now. This bill will be an important step in enabling that more effective response. With these provisions, we are standing up for American manufacturers by putting in place and enforcing fair trade practices.

For these reasons, I will be voting for the trade adjustment assistance bill, and I look forward to its being enacted into law.

Thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to say a few words about Casey and about TAA.

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. BROWN. 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. BROWN. Mr. President, I have come to this floor a number of times arguing against trade promotion authority. I have done that for months. This body should not give up its authority to amend trade agreements, and it should not pave the way for a trade deal that looks like it is going to be more of the same—corporate and worker sellouts.

We have seen it with NAFTA, and we saw a similar kind of move on PNTR with China, where our bilateral trade deficit almost literally exploded since 2000, when this body and the other body moved forward on PNTR. We saw it with the Central American Free Trade Agreement, when President Bush had to wake in the middle of the night and get on the phone with Republican Member after Republican Member to get them to change their vote on fast-track so he could get the Central American Free Trade Agreement, which he sold in the name of counter-terrorism. We saw it in the South Korean trade agreement, when this President made promises of more job creation and higher wages, neither of which has borne out.

We have seen big promises and bad results on trade issue after trade issue after trade issue after trade issue. We have seen it through the Presidencies of George Bush 1, Bill Clinton, George Bush 2, and now Barack Obama.

As I said, this body should not give up its authority to make better trade agreements. In essence, what we are saying in this body with this vote, which will take place within the hour or so, is that we are willing to give up these powers to the executive branch to give us more of the same, trade agreements that don't work for our communities, don't work for our workers, don't work for our families, and don't work for our small businesses.

While this Chamber will vote on trade promotion authority today, so-called fast-track, it doesn't mean we throw in the towel on the congressional oversight of our Nation's trade policy. Moving forward with fast-track means it is more critical than ever that we protect Congress's prerogative to have a say on a deal that could offset 40 percent of the world's economy. Members on both sides of the aisle, Members on both sides of this debate, supporters and opponents, Republicans and Democrats, a good mix of each, have had conversations with me and many others about how this deal, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, is too secretive.

We have had conversations about how the U.S. Trade Representative is not answering the concerns of Members, even supporters of TPA and TPP, on issues such as currency, workers' protections, workers' rights, tobacco, and public health. Starting today, we need to make sure any Trans-Pacific Partnership deal—and that is the deal we will vote on later. I am assuming TPA will pass today. I hope not. I assume it will pass, go to the President, and I assume he will sign it.

The next question is, What happens with the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which is 12 countries coming together. It includes a handful of countries in the Western Hemisphere, including the three NAFTA countries—Canada, the

United States, and Mexico—a couple of South American countries and Asia and the Australian subcontinent countries will be part of this trade agreement. If China is added to it, we hope there is a vote in the Congress, although there is no promise of that from the administration—but we need to make sure any deal on the Trans-Pacific Partnership includes strong labor protections. There are always big promises about labor protections, but a President has yet to deliver on these labor protections.

I am particularly concerned about Vietnam, a large country of tens of millions—approaching 100 million people. Vietnam is a country that has one labor union controlled by the Communist Party. It is a country that doesn't have collective bargaining rights. Yet we are assuming somehow that wages will come up high enough in Vietnam that they don't undercut U.S. wages, even though they don't have free trade unions, they don't have collective bargaining, and there is no mechanism so far in these trade agreements, whether it is TPA or Trans-Pacific Partnership, that Vietnam reach these wage levels and begins to move toward collective bargaining and free trade unionism prior to its admission to TPP.

We need to figure out all of those questions. We need to make sure that any TPP deal has strong environmental protections. Again, there were big promises on other agreements, but there is never much on the delivery side of these promises.

We want to see strong currency provisions. Again, there have been big promises on TPP but with little results in the past, and so far we have an administration that is not willing to carry it out.

We need to make sure we protect Medicare and Medicaid from investor-state dispute resolution, and we need to preserve access to medicines. We know citizens in the developing world simply can't afford the high cost of Western medicines. Much of the time Americans can't afford the high cost of medicines, and we are an affluent country.

When we look at some of these TPP countries in South America and Asia, they can afford them even less. We need to make sure there are strong preserve-access-to-medicine provisions. We need to include protections that prevent this deal from being a tool for tobacco, which is perhaps the simplest to understand and one of the most troubling because of its moral bankruptcy.

This body is about to vote for fast-track legislation. If we don't stop this train from going down the track on which it seems to be heading, we are handing Big Tobacco even more power to addict children to tobacco in the developing world and countries that don't have nearly the public health system we do and don't have the affluence to be able to fight back against Big Tobacco. We have been pretty successful in doing that and protecting our children.

About 15 years ago when I was a member of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health, I remember seven tobacco executives came to our committee. There was a picture on just about every front page of newspapers in the country, where the seven CEOs of the biggest tobacco companies in the country, some of the biggest in the world, raised their right hands and pledged to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and out and out lied to that committee about nicotine and cigarettes and the addictive qualities of nicotine.

These same tobacco companies, over time, pledged that they would no longer put billboards near schoolyards, pledged that they would no longer hand out sample packages of cigarettes near schools, pledged that they would stop their Joe Camel promotions.

I remember the ranking member of the Finance Committee, Senator WYDEN, was as outraged as I was with Big Tobacco.

I asked them a question at this hearing. I said: You are willing to do that in this country? You are willing to say that you will no longer have billboards near high schools, and you will no longer hand out samples of cigarette packs near schools, and you will stop your Joe Camel ads? I then said: Are you willing to do that in other countries around the world?

The answer was: No, no, no, no, no, no, no.

When these tobacco companies go to the developing world and peddle their poisons, they know public health in the developing world is about fighting cholera, fighting AIDS, fighting malaria, and fighting tuberculosis. They simply don't have the public health resources that we do in our country to fight Big Tobacco. That is my concern about what could happen.

I will talk for a moment about how Big Tobacco uses trade agreements generally to undermine public health. We know tobacco use is the world's leading cause of preventable death. It is why countries around the world are passing stricter laws to protect their citizens from the massive health risks tobacco poses. Big Tobacco has turned trade deals into a tool for defeating commonsense international public health efforts.

How could that happen? Why would a trade deal be a vehicle to weaken anti-tobacco laws, the laws that especially protect children against addictive tobacco? Here is how it happens: It uses a trade agreement provision known as investor-state dispute settlement to attack a nation's public health law. Under this process, corporations use trade agreements to dispute domestic laws that they say undermine their investments.

I will use the best example, but there are several. Not many years ago, Australia passed the Tobacco Plain Packaging Act. Big Tobacco challenged this law. First of all, they opposed it in the Australian Legislature. They lobbied against it, but they were unsuccessful. The Australian Legislature passed the plain packaging consumer protection anti-addicting children tobacco law in 2011. Then, they sued, and it went to the Australian supreme court. Big Tobacco lost that case too.

So you know what they did? I give them credit for being pretty clever. They paid their lawyers a lot of money. Big Tobacco challenged this new law under the Australia-Hong Kong Bilateral Investment Treaty in a World Trade Organization dispute settlement proceeding. That means although Australian courts had ruled in favor of this law—their legislature passed it and the supreme court said it is constitutional—Big Tobacco, from the platform of Hong Kong, sued the Australian Government, saying, fundamentally, that was takings, that would undermine their profits.

I believe a three-person tribunal will hear this case. These are not Australian lawyers. Australia has nothing to do with this case except that they are going to be victimized.

I know the Presiding Officer cares about sovereignty for our country. I know this cuts across party lines. Conservatives, as much as progressives, care about sovereignty and public health. What we are doing is turning over the sovereignty of our Nation to these tribunals that can undercut our sovereignty.

Tobacco companies have launched similar cases against Uruguay and Togo over proposed laws. Cases like these can bankrupt small countries. Togo is one of the 10 poorest countries on Earth. It was forced to give up its tobacco labeling laws, bowing under pressure from Philip Morris, a company whose sales, I believe, are larger than the GDP of Togo—bowing under pressure from Philip Morris, which threatened an ''incalculable amount of trade litigation.''

So here are some U.S. trade lawyers who threatened to sue a poor African government or, in some cases, Latin American government which, once it exercised its sovereignty to protect its children against potential addictive tobacco marketing—marketing that will lead to children being addicted to tobacco—but they back off because they can't afford to go to court against the deep pockets of Philip Morris. This is Big Tobacco's strategy: Litigate and bankrupt countries into submission.

What we are facing is huge corporations using trade laws to blackmail countries—call it another word if you want; I think ''blackmail'' is about as close as it gets—into overturning laws that were passed by their legislature and usually ratified by their court system. People from another country—a

very rich country—and one of the richest industries in that country, represented by some of the most privileged Harvard- and Yale-trained lawyers, are saying: We are going to overturn your democratically elected law because our profits are more important than protecting your children in Togo or your children in Uruguay, than protecting your children's health. That is fundamentally what they are saying.

So a vote today—since we haven't fixed tobacco—on fast-track is essentially saying—unless the people voting for it are going to go to bat, for a change, against Big Tobacco—fundamentally, we are saying it is OK for Big Tobacco and it is the privilege of the Big Tobacco lawyers to go to court and choose large tobacco profits over 15- and 16—or may I say 12- and 13-year-old children's health in poor countries in the developing world. That is a rather uneven match. Yet we ratify that with a ''yes'' vote today.

(Mr. TOOMEY assumed the Chair.)

We also have a responsibility to look out for the American worker who we know will be hurt by this deal. We know that—while I may disagree with the Presiding Officer from Pennsylvania over whether these trade agreements produce net jobs or what he, I think, believes—I believe these trade agreements produce a net loss of jobs.

That aside, people on both sides of this debate understand and have acknowledged that because of our actions, because of what we do here in this body and in the House and in the White House—what we do here with this trade agreement will throw some people out of jobs. We know there will be dislocation. People will lose their jobs because of our decisions. So how in the world could we possibly pass this without first taking care of those workers who lose their jobs? We make a decision; you get thrown out of work. My colleague makes a decision; you get thrown out of work. We are just going to turn our backs because we don't really care about helping you even though you lost your job because of our decision.

So TAA is particularly important. It is not that we should pass the trade adjustment assistance; it is what we should do with it. I am disappointed that the TAA bill being considered today is significantly less generous to those workers than it should be. There will be many workers who lose their jobs. Even if we pass TAA, there will be many workers who lose their jobs who will not be taken care of under TAA. It does not make the program available to all workers.

I am disappointed that the bipartisan funding levels—which almost every Democrat in this body cosponsored—in my legislation that included a more generous level for TAA—we agreed to it in 2011 in this body, but for no reason at all, those numbers were cut. I want to expand eligibility. I want to increase its funding.

We are making it easier to pass TPP, but we are cutting the TAA Program by 20 percent. So how does that figure? We are saying we are going to pass this trade agreement—40 percent of the world's economy—yet we are cutting the protection for workers, the aid for those workers who lose their jobs because of our decisions in this body. We are cutting those workers 20 percent.

Last, we have an opportunity in this bill today to once again support the Leveling the Playing Field Act and ensure it gets to the President's desk. This will be the vote after the TPA vote. This bill is essential to protect our manufacturers from illegal foreign competition. We can't have trade promotion without trade enforcement. This is not controversial. It shouldn't be partisan. Regardless of how one votes on TPA, we need to make sure our deals are enforced.

Leveling the playing field will increase U.S. companies' ability to fight back against unfair trade practices. It is critical for our businesses, and it is critical for our workers who are drowning under a flood of illegally subsidized imports. It has the support of businesses and workers, Republicans and Democrats.

I want to particularly thank Senators PORTMAN and GRAHAM and CASEY for their work in support of this issue. No matter where we stand on TPA, we should all be able to come together to demand enforcement of our trade laws. We cannot have trade promotion without trade enforcement and without protecting those workers who we know will be left behind.

We know these agreements cause wages to stagnate. We know these agreements cause factories to close. They cause imports to increase. They devastate families and communities. This is a terrible mistake we will make—which we have made over and over and over and over—if we pass this today. If we pass TPA, it is the same mistake we made with NAFTA—big promises of job increases, wages going up. Bad results. We did it when we passed PNTR. We did it when we passed CAFTA, the Central America Free Trade Agreement. And we are about to do it again. Shame on us. At least take care of workers if we are going to pass this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

KING V. BURWELL DECISION

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, there is a lot of talk about the imminent decision of the Supreme Court ruling in King v. Burwell. I will get to that a little bit later in my speech, but I wish to start by talking about how we got here.

I would like to review what Americans were told were the reasons for ObamaCare. It was supposed to help the 15 million people who are currently uninsured to get covered with quality, affordable insurance. Everyone else, we were promised, would be left alone. Remember that promise: If you like your doctor, you can keep him. If you like your health care, you can keep it. That is the first of several broken promises ObamaCare has ultimately produced. I will go through a few this afternoon.

Let's take a look at what has happened since ObamaCare was implemented and where we stand. Most of the uninsured nationwide are—and they were prior to ObamaCare—working families; 71 percent in 2013. They either couldn't afford the cost-sharing of their employer plan or their employer didn't offer a plan. Of those who got insurance under ObamaCare, too many were working families who actually didn't get private insurance under ObamaCare; they were ultimately forced into Medicaid, which is supposed to be a safety net, not a permanent solution for working families.

Is Medicaid the quality, affordable insurance that we all want for Americans and that people thought they were getting with ObamaCare? I don't think so. The provider payment rates in Medicaid are so low that many doctors refuse to see patients and participate in the plans. I don't really begrudge the doctors and the health care providers for this because the cost of care oftentimes exceeds the Medicaid reimbursement rates, and the redtape that comes with it absolutely is destroying the administrative side of health care. That is why doctors don't participate in the plan. That is why the doctors are not available for the people who actually need good, quality health care.

It is not for lack of investment though. States are drowning in unaffordable Medicaid Programs that eat more and more of their budgets at the expense of other essential services. States are throwing everything they can and then some at Medicaid, but it is still unacceptable in terms of cost, quality, and access. That is exactly why North Carolina refused to participate in ObamaCare's Medicaid expansion. I was speaker of the house in North Carolina at the time.

We know that if we are going to solve the health care problem, it has to be a real solution. We have to bring back a vibrant, robust, patient-centered, private insurance system, customized for our State rather than dictated by bureaucrats in Washington.

My constituents deserve a plan that pays doctors fairly so that provider networks are big enough to ensure that people don't get turned away at the door. Herding more of our hard-working, proud neighbors into a substandard welfare plan designed to be a temporary safety net is no solution at all, but that is exactly what ObamaCare has done. The President even brags about it.

In North Carolina, prior to the implementation of ObamaCare, there were some 1.9 million of our citizens who were uninsured. Who are these people? Ten percent were already Medicaid eligible before ObamaCare. Most of them are children. We could have enrolled them without ever passing ObamaCare and disrupting and destroying health care for everyone else. About a third

were people who were eligible for subsidies on the exchange—almost half a million.

So did all of those folks get help? It might look as though they did. After all, 459,000 have signed up through the Federal exchange in North Carolina. But wait. Are those the same people, the same ones who were insured before ObamaCare? It turns out that even more than that—473,000 people—had their plans canceled by ObamaCare. Again, 473,000 North Carolinians received a letter saying: The Affordable Care Act has determined you can't keep your plan. They didn't like it, even though those who were insured were satisfied with their plans.

This was a nationwide trend. The Associated Press reported that 4.7 million people had their plans canceled because of ObamaCare. There was such an outcry that the President, by Executive fiat, actually instructed the insurers to continue to allow the plans for a period of time. So how many people lost their plan this time is still not clear. But what is clear is that the individual mandate is going to cause problems down the road because those who lost their plan or who will lose their plan, are going to be required by law to buy a Washington-approved insurance plan no matter how unaffordable ObamaCare has made insurance.

Again, in North Carolina, more people received cancellation notices for plans they liked than have actually signed up for ObamaCare. Between the half million whose plans were initially canceled by ObamaCare and the 1.9 million people who were already uninsured prior to ObamaCare, we should end up with a wash—with no change in the uninsured figures for my State of North Carolina, but, actually, we don't. The uninsured rate has gone down 2.7 percent—from 19.9 percent in 2013 to 17.2 percent in 2014—after the first full year of the ObamaCare implementation, so roughly equivalent to about 200,000 people in North Carolina. But were all of those people getting quality, affordable plans on the exchange as promised by ObamaCare? Hardly. The reason is Medicaid enrollment. The majority of the people who the administration claims ObamaCare covered have been those who went to the exchange to get insurance but were then forced to enroll in Medicaid. And when I say forced, I mean forced. The law requires them to have insurance, but the exchange doesn't allow them to buy a private plan if they are eligible for Medicaid. It shows them one option: Medicaid.

Well, wait. You said North Carolina didn't expand Medicaid, so how did this happen? It is true. Medicaid enrollment for my State has increased by 300,000 people—the biggest enrollment increase of any of the States that didn't expand Medicaid. What that means is much if not all of the drop in the uninsured rate is due to North Carolinians enrolling in Medicaid through the exchange. These are the same people who were eligible before ObamaCare was ever passed.

Nationally, last year, nearly 90 percent of ObamaCare's net coverage gain was through Medicaid. A study from MIT released in April found that Medicaid enrollees receive much less value from the program than the cost of paying for services.

So far, I have been talking about people who were targeted by ObamaCare, including the population of previously uninsured, as well as those who became uninsured because ObamaCare forced them into the exchange. Again, ObamaCare didn't really make a dent in our uninsured numbers—not to this point in North Carolina—and it actually harmed many who were forced onto the exchange. It turns out that ObamaCare is an equal opportunity wrecking ball. It hurt the people it was supposed to help. It forced working families who needed quality, affordable, permanent care into a program that provides the lowest quality access there is—Medicaid.

ObamaCare took over and removed the insurance options, the individual market for people who didn't have employer coverage, leaving those Washington-approved ObamaCare plans with increased premiums, increased deductibles, and increased copays. You see, increased coverage doesn't necessarily mean better health care. If you can't afford your plan or you can't find the doctor, then your health care suffers.

But that is not all. ObamaCare broke health care for everyone else. Those of us who were supposedly happy with our doctors and happy with our health plans have been affected and will continue to be negatively affected.

What about the majority of Americans who actually have insurance through their employer? They haven't necessarily lost coverage yet, but they have been harmed. Despite the President's promise to lower insurance premiums, the average family premium for employer-sponsored coverage has risen $3,500 a year between 2009 and 2014.

In North Carolina, during the first full year of the exchange rollout, premium price increases outpaced increases in wages and inflation, losing ground to the working family. Even worse, premium prices in individual insurance markets—a market my daughter was a part of—went up 147 percent as a result of a plan that promised to reduce our health care insurance costs.

I know I am not the only one who remembers what President Obama said about ObamaCare. He said the average premiums would go down $2,500. The reality is they have gone up an average of $3,500 a year. All of this leads to the problem of people having insurance they can't afford, and they are not able to use it because their deductibles and copays are simply too high.

Between this group and the people who are now on Medicaid who can't get appointments with the small number of doctors who accept Medicaid, what one gets is a dramatic increase in the use of emergency rooms. That is exactly the opposite of what supporters of ObamaCare predicted. They predicted that emergency room visits would go down. We were told that once everyone was insured under ObamaCare, people could go to their doctors in outpatient settings and not show up at the ER. Instead, people can't afford the copays and deductibles or they can't get an outpatient appointment, so they wait until their problem is critical and end up in the ER.

In fact, Kaiser Family Foundation reports that emergency room utilization is up significantly among ObamaCare participants. In a survey of more than 2,000 emergency room doctors, three-quarters of them said emergency room visits have risen since January 1, 2014. Medicaid recipients covered under ObamaCare are struggling to find doctors who will accept their coverage, so they have no choice but to end up at an emergency room, where the costs skyrocket.

A spokesman for the Emergency Room Doctors Association, Dr. Howard Mell, noted:

> There was a grand theory the law would reduce emergency room visits. Well, guess what, it hasn't happened. Visits are going up despite the ACA, and in a lot of cases because of it.

One of the most troubling elements of ObamaCare to me is the intergenerational wealth transfer from the young and the poor to the older and the wealthier. When I say ''older,'' I don't mean elderly and frail or the population who may be on Medicare; I am talking about a wealth transfer from young people in their twenties to people like me in their fifties. I would never ask my daughter, who is about to start a career in nursing, to pay for her mother's insurance or for my insurance, neither would any of you or any other American. That is not how parents are wired. But an impersonal law that empowers an impersonal bureaucracy does not have the same moral compass as a parent.

For example, ObamaCare's mandates have jacked up premiums for young people to keep premiums down for older people like me. I am not sure ''let's fleece our children and grandchildren'' is a winning talking point, so the supporters of the bill try to hide the truth in Washington-speak. They call this ''age rating bands.''

Another talking point that tends to not fly too well with folks is ''Let's kick seniors off of their Medicare Advantage plans.'' That is exactly what happened in North Carolina late last year. Many who know about Medicare Advantage plans know they are very important and popular among seniors. In my State last year, 57,000 seniors—more than any other State in the Nation—were sent cancellation letters from the Medicare Advantage plans they liked. Many of these seniors were offered a minimum benefit plan with

higher copayments and higher premiums instead, all because ObamaCare cut reimbursement for Medicare Advantage plans out of some bizarre but longstanding aversion to the program on the part of some of our friends on the other side of the aisle. I have never understood it. Does Medicare Advantage somehow give seniors too much control, stability, and convenience in their Medicare benefits? I suspect my mom is watching me right now in Nashville, TN. I bet if she was asked that question, she would say no.

Just when you think it is really bad, realize that some of the toughest ObamaCare hits haven't even been taken yet.

First, the individual mandate penalty. The penalty for not having insurance increases next year to almost $700 per adult or 2.5 percent of one's annual income, whichever is greater. This is a penalty which many people will be surprised to see when they get their tax return and they are expecting this amount and it is $700 or $1,000 less to pay for the mandated care. If an individual's income is $50,000, they will pay a penalty of $1,000. A family with two adults with an income of $50,000 will pay $1,400. When adding a college kid to the mix, the penalty is $2,100. A lot of people are in for a shock when they open up that tax refund and they see the additional hidden costs of ObamaCare on working families. That penalty, however, is still dramatically lower than the out-of-pocket costs of an ObamaCare plan. So we are forcing Americans to pick between bad and worse.

Second, the employer mandate and penalty. President Obama knows the devastation the employer mandate will cause not only for businesses but, more importantly, for workers. Employers will be forced to cut workers. They will be forced to reduce wages and drop employer-sponsored health plans altogether and pay the penalty because the penalty will cost less than the mandates will to provide the care, and many employers simply can't afford it.

So far, people with employer-sponsored coverage have been harmed only by rising costs and shrinking provider networks, but they haven't for the most part lost their plans yet. The day is coming when the President can no longer delay the employer mandate, and that is when the plans they were promising you can keep will be canceled. We will see a massive disruption in the group market where most North Carolinians get their health insurance.

Premiums are going up every year because fewer younger, healthier people are enrolling than projected. This was completely predictable. Young people are no dummies. They know this is a terrible deal for them. As a result, insurance companies recalculate premiums based on the cost of the pool actually enrolled. The largest insurer in my State announced premium hikes for next year in the individual market of at least 26 percent. You know it is a bad thing when I felt better about the fact that our premium increases in North Carolina were only 26 percent because in some States they were upwards of 50 percent, and there is more to come.

ObamaCare relies on people paying into the pool to subsidize the sicker and poorer members of the pool. That is how insurance works. But virtually no one is signing up who isn't eligible for the subsidies.

CMS released data yesterday showing that 2015 exchange enrollment is 30 percent below projections made just 3 years ago. And of those who do enroll, they are doing it because of the lure of the subsidy. Ninety-three percent of the North Carolinians who are on the exchange have received those subsidies. That means the plans are unaffordable without massive subsidies. Those ineligible for the subsidy don't bother to sign up. That is why we have seen almost no movement in our State for uninsureds.

ObamaCare is forcing employers to cut jobs and move full-time workers into part-time positions. New data show a decline in the average hours worked per week by lower wage employees, and many workers are just below that 30-hour threshold, 30 hours per week.

I was at a restaurant in North Carolina a couple months back, and I was talking with a manager, who said it was heartbreaking for her to go and talk to a single mom who was able to make ends meet between the tips and her salary at 40 hours a week and tell her that she can now only work 30 hours a week because the restaurant simply cannot afford to be exposed to the mandates.

Now you have people who may have been able to make it on 40 hours a week or 45 hours a week having to get two jobs to make ends meet. I hear employers talking about how they are having to call each other to try to work out the schedules for these hardworking folks.

The CBO projects that ObamaCare will reduce employment as a result of all this by 2 million full-time equivalent jobs in 2017.

President Obama campaigned saying he wouldn't raise taxes on families making less than $250,000 a year. Let's talk a little bit more about that. ObamaCare broke that promise as well by creating or raising 20 different taxes amounting to more than $1 trillion in the first decade. Several taxes directly punished families making less than $250,000 a year.

University of Chicago economist Casey Mulligan modeled the macroeconomic effects of ObamaCare and estimated that the damage would be twice as large. He expects Obamacare to cause a 3-percent drop in employment and work hours and a 2-percent drop in our gross domestic product and worker income. If he is right, the total loss of worker compensation caused by the President's health care law will exceed $2 trillion between 2017 and 2024.

Now let's talk about the King v. Burwell case that has everyone's attention, with the Supreme Court imminently in a position to issue a ruling, probably sometime next week. The question for the Supreme Court is this: Did the President break the law by going around the will of the people in the States that wanted to opt out of establishing a State exchange, like we did in North Carolina?

Mr. President, what I just finished was a very long list of broken promises and the fiscal disaster we call ObamaCare. But now I want to talk about the King v. Burwell decision.

The question is this: Did the President break the law by going around the will of the people in the States that wanted to opt out of establishing a State exchange, such as North Carolina?

I am not interested in litigating this. I am not an attorney; I am a businessman. I will leave the lawyering to others. When I look at King v. Burwell, I don't see a legal battle; I see an opportunity. It may sound trite, but I see hope. The Court may give us the chance of a generation—the chance to fix health care once and for all. We can't fix ObamaCare, but we can fix health care.

But here is the thing. We don't come up with the solution ourselves. The press is counting on us to come up with a solution. Others are pressuring us on the other side of the aisle. But here is what I think we need to do. I think we need to look beyond the traditional way of trying to solve health care to a new way, and it starts with something fairly simple—humility.

I won't read the definition, but I think it is something that is sometimes missed in Washington. The solution is that we take the power out of Washington and we let the States do it. We give States, which are closer to the people, the chance—the privilege, really—to offer health care solutions that are local, accountable, and affordable.

Every State is different. Let's respect those differences. I believe the solution is one that will give States the flexibility, the funding, and the control to decide how best to serve the people of their particular State.

I just went through the long list of problems with ObamaCare. It has been problematic from the start, with higher costs, lower quality, less freedom, and people losing their coverage. It is a badly written law, and it hurts almost everyone.

Washington had its chance. Now it is time to let the States decide what is best for their people, and let the people decide what is best for their health care. To do that, we are going to have to do something we don't always do up here. We are going to have to jump on this opportunity and work together—Republicans and Democrats, the Federal Government and the States—to find commonsense solutions that are truly patient-centered.

That is the type of patient-first approach that will give patients more

freedom, more choice, and control over their health care. That is what will expand coverage—not bureaucratic power. That will promote genuine quality and innovation. It is also what is going to bring costs down. I do not think my responsibility is to my party. I do not think our responsibility is to the institution of the Senate or the prerogatives of the Federal legislative branch.

I think our responsibility is to the patients who deserve the highest quality care; to the patients who want the best treatments for their children; to the nurses and doctors who deserve freedom to heal according to their wisdom, their experience, and their conscience; and to the businesses that deserve the freedom to design affordable coverage that fits their workforce.

Finally, I think we are responsible to the seniors who have paved America's road to prosperity before us and who deserve a strong, secure Medicare program. The Court may just give us the opportunity to firmly and finally reject ObamaCare so that we can deliver what everyone in America deserves—a health care solution.

The law has not worked. It cannot work. It is time we return the power of medicine to the people. It is time to stop fighting and to start cooperating and to find a permanent solution.

Patients deserve portability in their health insurance, and they deserve affordability. They deserve their peace of mind when their parent or their child or they themselves are in their hour of crisis and when they can count on getting the best health care America has to offer.

Sometimes politicians in Washington forget that health care is not about systems or rules and structure or even markets. It is about real people and real families and real lives. So my commitment is simple. Our commitment should be simple. No one who has ObamaCare-subsidized care today will lose that coverage tomorrow. We are equally committed to providing long-term, State-designed, patient-empowering solutions that deliver better long-term results, and safe, secure, and affordable health care and an improved economy.

We commit that every patient with a preexisting condition will be able to find affordable coverage. No one will hit a cap on benefits. Anyone can renew their health plan. That is our commitment. Health care is about patients, not politics. It is about doctors and nurses, not politicians. For the millions who have been affected, from the cancelled plans to the higher costs, we are committed to real solutions to protect patients and make health care genuinely personal and genuinely affordable.

Hard-working taxpayers deserve certainty, stability, and peace of mind when it comes to health care. A temporary extension of subsidies alone would not be enough. It would just be another Washington gimmick. It would not address the very real problems with the President's health care law. Let's commit to each other—Republicans and Democrats—that we will show a little modesty. We won't assume we know what is best for every American, and we will let the States come up with solutions. We will work together to return power to the States, to the people, and really to the kitchen table, where most health care decisions are made.

I know what you are thinking: I am new and have been here for 6 months. Maybe I am a little bit naive. But I have herded a lot of cats in the North Carolina legislature. I have stepped up to very serious challenges, and we produced a lot of good results for my friends and colleagues and citizens in North Carolina. I know it can be done at the State level when policies are on the line that have a real impact on our neighbors—neighbors we have to face in the checkout line and in the church pews.

I am looking forward to providing a solution to the health care problems in the United States. I am looking forward to seeing bipartisan cooperation, to delivering on the promises that we make here, and to fulfilling the promise of fixing health care for our great country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 4 p.m. today, June 24, all postcloture time on the motion to concur with respect to H.R. 2146 be considered expired, the pending motion to concur with amendment be withdrawn, and the Senate vote on the motion to concur; that if cloture on H.R. 1295 is invoked, all postcloture time be considered expired, all motions and amendments be withdrawn except the motion to concur with amendment, and the Senate immediately vote on the motion to concur with amendment; further, that following the disposition of H.R. 1295, all time on the compound motion to go to conference under rule XXVIII on H.R. 644 be yielded back and the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture with the mandatory quorum waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, we are now one vote away from final passage of our bill to renew trade promotion authority. One more vote and we can finally, and at long last, send this important bill to the President's desk. That vote is expected to take place within the next 25 minutes.

This is a critical day for our country. In fact, I would call it a historic day. It has taken us a while to get there, longer than many of us would have liked. But we all know that anything worth doing takes effort. Believe me, this bill has been worth the effort. This is, I believe, the most important bill we will pass in the Senate this year. It will help reassert Congress's role over the U.S. trade negotiations and reestablish the United States as a strong player in international trade.

Renewing TPA has been a top priority for me for many years, and as chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I am pleased that with the help of Ranking Member WYDEN, we have been able to deliver a robust and bipartisan bill. It has also been a high priority for the Senate majority leader. Thanks to his strong support and leadership, we are one step away from completing this important task.

This bill will help farmers, ranchers, manufacturers, and our entrepreneurs throughout our country get better access to foreign markets and allow them to compete on a level playing field. This bill will help give these job creators and the workers they employ greater opportunities to grow their businesses, which will help create a healthier American economy. The business and agricultural communities understand the importance of strong trade agreements. That is why they came together in strong support of this important legislation. We have heard from all of them throughout this debate. I appreciate their enthusiasm and support.

This has, from the outset, been a bipartisan effort, and I am glad that it has remained that way. Throughout this entire debate—here in the Senate and over in the House and here in the Senate again—we have been able to maintain a bipartisan coalition in support of TPA, fair trade, and expanded market access to U.S. exporters. This is no small feat. I am appreciative of everyone who has worked so hard to make this possible.

With this final vote, we can complete the work we began so many years ago. But let's be clear. Passing TPA is not the end of the story; it is just the beginning. As chairman of the Finance Committee, I intend to remain vigilant in our oversight as the administration pursues the negotiating objectives that Congress has set with this legislation. If they fall short, I will be among the first to hold them accountable. But that is for another day.

Today, I urge my colleagues to help us finalize this historic achievement and join me in voting in favor of this bipartisan TPA bill. If the vote moves the way I think it will, today will be remembered as a good day for the Senate, the President, and the American people.

Once we vote to pass TPA, we will then be voting to invoke cloture on the Trade Preferences Extension Act of 2015. This bill will reauthorize and improve three of our trade preference programs: the Generalized System of Preferences, or GSP; the African Growth and Opportunity Act, or AGOA; and tariff preferences for Haiti. I want to take some time to reiterate why each of these programs is important.

First, the GSP promotes trade with developing nations by providing duty-free tariff treatment of certain products originating in those countries. The program helps beneficiary countries advance their economic development and move toward more open economies. It also helps manufacturers and importers in the United States to receive inputs and raw materials at lower costs.

Approximately three-quarters of U.S. imports under the GSP are raw materials, parts and components, or machinery and equipment used by U.S. companies to manufacture goods here at home.

The program expired in 2013. As a result, businesses that would typically benefit from this program have had to deal with high tariffs on these imports for the last 2 years. Last year alone, American companies paid over $600 million in tariffs that would otherwise have been eliminated with the GSP in place. Once we finally pass this bill, we will take a long overdue step toward solving these problems.

The preferences bill also includes a long-term renewal of the AGOA Program, which lowers U.S. tariffs on the exports of qualified sub-Saharan African countries, encouraging them to further develop their economy. Since AGOA was enacted in 2000, trade with beneficiary countries has more than tripled, with U.S. direct investment in beneficiary countries growing more than sixfold during that time.

The program has also helped to create more than 1 million jobs in those countries. The AGOA authorization in this preferences bill will improve on this past success.

Some of our colleagues here in the Congress have voiced concerns about the AGOA Program and the failure of some beneficiary countries to live up to their commitments. I share many of these concerns. We tried to address them with this bill. Most notably, the bill creates a mechanism under the AGOA Program to allow for benefits to be scaled back if a country is found not to be making good faith progress on eligibility criteria. We expect the administration to use this new tool aggressively.

Finally, the preferences bill will also extend preferential access to the U.S. market for Haiti. As we all know, Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. The Haiti preference programs support the creation of jobs and stability in a country dealing with debilitating poverty and unemployment. I hope this extension will encourage continued economic development and democracy in Haiti.

It is easy to see why these programs have all received bipartisan support. I expect that support to continue. In addition to those preferences programs, the bill we will be voting on includes legislation introduced by Senators PORTMAN and BROWN to strengthen the enforcement and administration of our antidumping and countervailing duty laws. As I have noted in the past, antidumping and countervailing duty laws are among the most important trade tools we have to protect U.S. companies from unfair foreign trade practices.

A number of Utah companies do benefit from these laws, which allow them to compete against imports that unfairly benefit from the support of foreign governments. I am pleased we were able to include this legislation in the preferences bill.

Finally, also included in this bill is an extension of the trade adjustment assistance, or TAA, Program. I think I have said enough about my opposition to this program here on the floor over the past several weeks. I will not delve too deeply into that issue here. However, I do understand that for many of my colleagues who want to support TPA and free trade, passage of TAA is a prerequisite.

From the outset of this debate over trade promotion authority, I have committed to my colleagues to working to ensure that both TAA and TPA move on parallel tracks. I plan to make good on this commitment, and today will show that. That is why, despite my misgivings about TAA, and with the entire picture in view, I plan to vote for this latest version of the trade preferences bill.

Back in April, the Senate Finance Committee reported four separate trade bills. All of these bills have enjoyed bipartisan support and are priorities for many Members of Congress. I committed to doing all that I could to get all of these bills through Congress and onto the President's desk. While the path has taken some unexpected turns, I think the light at the end of the tunnel at this point is very visible. Once again, we will shortly be voting to pass our TPA bill and send it to the President. Shortly thereafter, I expect that we will pass our trade preferences bill, which includes TAA, and send it to the House, where I think it will pass, hopefully, without much difficulty.

Then we expect to appoint conferees on the Customs bill, which will get us closer to the finish line on that important legislation. Needless to say, I am pleased with these developments. I think they speak well of what Congress is able to do when Members work together to address important issues and solve real problems.

Once again, I thank my colleagues for working with us on the bipartisan effort to update and improve U.S. trade policy. Most notably, I once again thank Senator WYDEN for his assistance and support throughout this effort and on all of these trade bills. He has been a great partner and deserves much of the credit for getting us this far. I also thank our distinguished majority leader for his unwavering support, even in the most difficult times. I also need to thank Chairman RYAN of the House Ways and Means Committee, who has been a coauthor and a key partner in this endeavor. Of course, I thank Speaker BOEHNER and the House Republican leadership for their efforts in getting us through all the twists and turns we have had to take to get to this point.

We also need to give credit to President Obama and Ambassador Froman for their work in building and maintaining a coalition of support for this entire undertaking.

Ultimately, I need to thank everyone who supported our work on these bills in the Senate, in the House, in the administration, and elsewhere, but that list is too long for me to go through on the floor. I just hope everyone who had a hand in today's success knows I am grateful for the work they have put in. I hope we can build on this success and that we can find more ways to work together to help the American people solve our Nation's problems.

I also praise my chief trade counsel on this matter, Everett Eissenstat, who with his vast foreign policy experience and trade experience has been nothing but a tremendous help to me.

Chris Campbell, who is our chief of staff on the Finance Committee, has played another role; Jay Khosla, who is one of my chief policy advisers; and the rest of my staff: Mark Prater, Jeff Wrase, Bryan Hickman, Shane Warren, Rebecca Eubank, Kevin Rosenbaum.

I compliment Senator WYDEN's staff as well: Joshua Sheinkman, Jayme White, Elissa Alben, Greta Peisch, Anderson Heiman, and Michael Evans. They have worked long and hard and, really, we have had a lot of good days together and a lot of tough days together, but hopefully it will come out all right.

I can say without reservation that I look forward to tackling the bipartisan challenges that lie ahead.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

OBAMACARE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, it has been said that there is nothing certain in life but death and taxes.

I would suggest there is a third item that can be included in that saying, and that is bad news about ObamaCare, because if there is one thing that can be counted on, it is the regular revelation of new ObamaCare failures.

This past week, we learned that the Obama administration cannot verify whether almost $3 billion in subsidies that it paid to insurance companies during the first 4 months of 2014 was properly paid. Thanks to the government's failure to ensure that a reporting system was in place by the time exchange plans went into effect in 2014, the government made payments to insurance companies without any way of verifying if the payments were correct or if the people it made payments for were still enrolled in their plans.

Unfortunately, missing systems are just par for the course when it comes to the President's health care law.

I don't need to remind anyone of the massive breakdowns that occurred

when the partially finished healthcare.gov kicked off 2 years ago. The President himself referred to healthcare.gov last week as a ''well-documented disaster.''

But as bad as these problems have been for a health care law that the President once claimed would make purchasing health care as easy as shopping on Amazon, they are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to ObamaCare.

Two weeks ago, I came to the floor to talk about the massive rate hikes customers on exchanges are facing for 2016. Let me just read a couple headlines from the first week in June. CNN: ''Obamacare sticker shock: Big rate hikes proposed for 2016.'' From the New York Times: ''Many Health Insurers Go Big With Initial 2016 Rate Requests.'' From the Wall Street Journal: ''More Health-Care Insurers Seek Big Premium Increases.'' From the Associated Press: ''8 Minnesota Health Plans Propose Big Premium Hikes for 2016.'' From the Newark Star-Ledger: ''Premiums to jump more than 10 percent on many Obamacare policies.''

I could go on. Nationwide, insurers have requested double-digit premium increases on hundreds of individual and small group plans for 2016. More than 6 million people are enrolled in plans facing average rate increases of 10 percent or more. Around the country, rate increases of 20, 30, and even 40 percent are common.

Yet the President promised that his health care plan ''would bring down the cost of healthcare for millions.'' Well, in fact, the President's health care law has been driving up the cost of health care for millions since its inception. The average family health care premium has increased by almost $3,500 since 2009, despite the President's promise that health insurance costs for families would decrease by $2,500 if his law were passed.

I could go on about ObamaCare's many failures. I could talk about the State exchanges that are failing or those that have already failed. I could talk about the individuals who lost their health insurance plans—plans, I might add, that they liked—as a result of this law. I could talk about the people who no longer can see doctors they saw for years because their new ObamaCare plans have severely limited the network of doctors they can see. I could talk about the small businesses that are struggling with the costs imposed by ObamaCare or the fact that the Congressional Budget Office has stated that the law will reduce work hours equivalent to 2 million full-time workers by the year 2017.

I think every American gets the point. ObamaCare is broken. It has been broken from the beginning. It has failed to deliver on the promise—the President's promise—of more affordable, accessible health care, and it has made things worse for American families.

In the next few days, the Supreme Court will release its decision in the King v. Burwell case. If the Supreme Court abolishes or phases out the ObamaCare subsidies, Republicans will take action to provide effective assistance to Americans to repeal the mandates that forced these Americans to buy government-approved insurance in the first place. Our plan will protect families while we move away from costly, top-down, government-mandated health care and toward a system that will actually drive down costs and increase choices for American families.

President Obama promised that his health care law would be a solution to the problems plaguing our health care system. The last 5 years have proved that ObamaCare is anything but. Not only did ObamaCare fail to solve the existing problems in our health care system, it has created entirely new ones, and American families are those who are suffering as a result.

It is time for Democrats to stop defending this broken law and start working with Republicans to replace it with real health care reform that will lower costs, put patients back in charge, and provide greater access to quality care. That is what we should be working on. That is what the American people expect, and it is long overdue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be able to speak for up to 4 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the greatest domestic policy train wreck we have seen in our lifetime, a fundamentally flawed law that is holding back our economy and limiting people's freedom when it comes to choices in health care. Of course, I am talking about the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare.

ObamaCare was the creation of a Democratic supermajority that crammed ObamaCare through Congress without open debate by the American people. In the last 5 years since ObamaCare became law, the American people have not yielded in their strong opposition to ObamaCare. In fact, today, more than a majority of Americans continue to disapprove of this law, and there is no wonder why.

When I am back home in Georgia, one of the most frequent and sobering concerns I hear about is the insidious, negative economic impact of this law. The consequences of ObamaCare are hurting Georgians in many ways and millions of Americans.

First, the individual mandate is forcing people onto ObamaCare, whether they can afford it or not. Like my wife Bonnie and I, many people have had their insurance plans actually canceled, lost access to their preferred doctors or were forced onto insurance plans that cost more, not less. In Georgia alone, dozens of ObamaCare plans are expected to have double-digit rate hikes next year, with some people's plans skyrocketing over 60 percent. That is just unacceptable.

Second, ObamaCare's employer mandate is causing small businesses to cut back workers' hours and, in some cases, businesses have actually stopped hiring completely. Due to the 30-hour workweek rule inside ObamaCare, many people are being forced to move from full-time to part-time work. This is devastating the families already struggling to get from payday to payday. Without a full workweek, many moms and dads are juggling multiple part-time jobs to provide for their families and try to save for the future. Next year, for example, 2.6 million people are in danger of having their hours cut because of ObamaCare. Sixty percent of those individuals are female and over 60 percent are the young, first-time workers between 18 and 35 years of age.

Third, given the growing, aging population, ObamaCare is contributing to a dangerous doctor shortage. The Association of American Medical Colleges is predicting a shortage of as many as 90,000 doctors by 2025.

Another survey by the Physicians Foundation found that 81 percent of doctors describe themselves as either overextended or at full capacity, and 44 percent said they planned to cut back on the number of patients they see, retire, work part time or actually close their practice to new patients.

Ultimately, ObamaCare is raising costs, not lowering them; cutting workers' wages, not growing them; decreasing access, not expanding it; and making it harder on the middle class, not easier.

While the sentiment of the Supreme Court on ObamaCare is still to be determined, one thing is crystal clear: ObamaCare is hurting people and our economy. It must be fully repealed and replaced.

We have to stop allowing Washington to dictate what is best for individuals and their families. Putting bureaucrats between patients and their doctors, between patients and their insurance provider, and between doctors and the insurance providers is what created this catastrophe in the first place.

ObamaCare was wrong from the start. We have seen the growing unintended consequences of this flawed law in its implementation over the last 5 years. We now have the power to change course and create a better health care system for all Americans. I remain committed to using every tool at our disposal to repeal ObamaCare.

Achieving consensus on repealing ObamaCare with a patient-based alternative will require diligence and robust debate, but I am hopeful we can achieve that goal. I urge my colleagues to continue to work not just to fight against ObamaCare but to fight to protect the millions of people who are hurt by it every day.

We can create a health care system that offers the American people affordability, transportability, and yes, insurability. We can create commonsense health care policy that lowers costs and doesn't harm the economy like ObamaCare. And yes, we can create a bipartisan solution that helps people by putting patients first and getting Washington out of the way.

It won't be easy, but is achievable. It must be achievable. For the sake of our kids and grandkids we must do this. We must get rid of ObamaCare once and for all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired.

Under the previous order, the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2146, with an amendment, is withdrawn.

VOTE ON MOTION TO CONCUR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2146.

Mr. HATCH. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

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

The result was announced—yeas 60, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 219 Leg.]

YEAS—60

Alexander	Ernst	Moran
Ayotte	Feinstein	Murkowski
Barrasso	Fischer	Murray
Bennet	Flake	Nelson
Blunt	Gardner	Perdue
Boozman	Graham	Portman
Burr	Grassley	Risch
Cantwell	Hatch	Roberts
Capito	Heitkamp	Rounds
Carper	Heller	Sasse
Cassidy	Hoeven	Scott
Coats	Inhofe	Shaheen
Cochran	Isakson	Sullivan
Coons	Johnson	Thune
Corker	Kaine	Tillis
Cornyn	Kirk	Toomey
Cotton	Lankford	Vitter
Crapo	McCain	Warner
Daines	McCaskill	Wicker
Enzi	McConnell	Wyden

NAYS—38

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Booker	King	Sanders
Boxer	Klobuchar	Schatz
Brown	Leahy	Schumer
Cardin	Manchin	Sessions
Casey	Markey	Shelby
Collins	Menendez	Stabenow
Cruz	Merkley	Tester
Donnelly	Mikulski	Udall
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Franken	Paul	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	

NOT VOTING—2

Lee	Rubio

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator GRAHAM and I be allowed to speak for about 5 minutes, equally divided.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONDEMNING THE ATTACK ON EMANUEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 212, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 212) condemning the attack on Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, and expressing encouragement and prayers for all affected by this evil assault.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, 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 with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 212) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I stand before you today and before the Nation not as a Senator, not as an elected official but as a humble South Carolinian. The past week has been one of terrible tragedy and amazing unity.

Last Wednesday night, we experienced an unimaginable tragedy. Nine men and women—nine mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, sons, daughters—were lost forever. The hateful and racist actions of one deranged man have changed nine families forever. It has changed South Carolina forever and Charleston forever. But what we saw from the nine families at last Friday's bond hearing was simple. It was powerful and absolutely the best of who we are as Americans.

A few minutes ago I was in the cloakroom, and I had the opportunity to talk to one of the victim's sons, Daniel Simmons, Jr. I was talking to him back there.

I said: Is there anything you want me to share when I go on the floor of the Senate?

He said: Please share that God cares for his people. God still lives.

I was amazed.

Then he said with great enthusiasm and energy and a sense of excitement: This evil attack will lead to reconciliation, restoration, and unity in our Nation.

Those are powerful words.

It is with great sadness and amazing hope that our future as a nation has been changed. It has been changed because one person decided to murder nine. It has been changed because the response of those nine families has been so courageous and so inspiring.

If you permit me, I will read the names of those nine individuals.

We honor the Reverend Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, beloved teacher and coach at Goose Greek High School. Her son Chris has shown us all what an amazing mother she was through his strength over the past 6 days.

We honor Cynthia Hurd, whose love for education has been shared for over 31 years as a librarian in the public library system.

We honor Susie Jackson, who at 87 years young still offered her beautiful voice to the choir and had recently returned from visiting her family in Ohio.

We honor Ethel Lee Lance, who served her church with pride and whose daughter calls her the strong woman who just tried to keep her family together.

We honor Depayne Middleton-Doctor, who dedicated her life to serving the poor and helping her students as an enrollment counselor at Southern Wesleyan University.

We honor my good friend, the Reverend Clementa Pinckney, an amazing man of faith, a great dad, and a wonderful father.

We honor Tywanza Sanders, beloved son of Tyrone and Felicia, whose warmth and heartfelt spirit has kept us moving.

We honor the Reverend Daniel Simmons, Sr., whose granddaughter said: My granddaddy was an amazing man. It seemed like every time he spoke, it was pure wisdom.

And we honor Pastor Myra Thompson, who served the Lord with grace and dignity. She loved her children, her grandchildren, and her great grandchildren.

If you would pause for 9 seconds, I would appreciate it.

(Moment of Silence.)

Thank you.

In closing, I want to thank all of my colleagues in the Senate and the House for their kind words over the past week and for the prayers that continue to come into our city from across the Nation.

We are Charleston, we are South Carolina, and we are absolutely united. We are committed to replacing hate with love, pain with kindness, and ill will and hostility with goodwill and comfort.

I yield to Senator GRAHAM.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I want to recognize Senator SCOTT. We all know Senator SCOTT is a man of quiet

faith. He does it when no one is looking, by the way. I remember being in the cloakroom watching a basketball game, which is consistent with me, and the Senator was over in the corner with headphones on. I said: What are you listening to or what are you doing?

He said very sheepishly: I am doing my Bible study.

Senator SCOTT has been a great comfort to our State because he is truly a man of God.

To the rest of you, I want to tell people in South Carolina that in the Senate we have a lot of differences and we display them a lot. I wish you could have heard what was said to me and Senator SCOTT. Everybody in this body has come up to us in one way or another and said the most kind things. In the Senate we have our problems, but we are still a family. Thank you all, from all over this country, for the kindness you have shown during these difficult times.

Very quickly, I don't know how you can sit with somebody for an hour in a church and pray with them and get up and shoot them. That is Mideast hate. I didn't think it was something we had here, but apparently we do.

I just can't imagine what it takes of an individual to be welcomed in a church—here is what happened. He went to Charleston with a plan. The people in the church had no idea who he was or what he had in mind. He came into the church, and he was sitting in the pews by himself and they invited him up for the Bible study and spent an hour with him.

And he said: They were so nice, I almost backed out.

That says a lot about them. It says a lot about him. But Senator SCOTT mentioned something that I cannot get over. Within 48 hours of having your family member murdered, to appear in a public setting, looking at the guy in the eye and to say: You ruined my life but I love you and I forgive you—that is a level of love and understanding that can only come from some higher authority. I don't have that within me.

When it comes to representing South Carolina, Senator SCOTT and I will do our best. But on our best day, we are nowhere close to these people. There is no politician in America who can represent their State better than the people of Mother Emanuel AME Church when they went to a public place, looked the killer in the eye and said: I forgive you; I am praying for you.

I wish we could muster that kind of love for each other, just for a little bit. What would America be like?

Thank you all for your kindness.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the votes following the first vote in the series be 10 minutes in length.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The 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 motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1295, an act to extend the African Growth and Opportunity Act, the Generalized System of Preferences, the preferential duty treatment program for Haiti, and for other purposes, with an amendment.

Mitch McConnell, Johnny Isakson, David Perdue, Chuck Grassley, Thom Tillis, Marco Rubio, Daniel Coats, John Cornyn, Michael B. Enzi, Kelly Ayotte, Orrin G. Hatch, Roger F. Wicker, Deb Fischer, Rob Portman, Cory Gardner, Richard Burr, Roy Blunt.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1295, with an amendment, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 76, nays 22, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 220 Leg.]

YEAS—76

Alexander	Flake	Murphy
Ayotte	Franken	Murray
Baldwin	Gillibrand	Nelson
Bennet	Graham	Peters
Blumenthal	Grassley	Portman
Blunt	Hatch	Reed
Booker	Heinrich	Reid
Boozman	Heitkamp	Rounds
Boxer	Heller	Sanders
Brown	Hirono	Schatz
Burr	Isakson	Schumer
Cantwell	Johnson	Shaheen
Capito	Kaine	Stabenow
Cardin	King	Sullivan
Carper	Kirk	Tester
Casey	Klobuchar	Thune
Coats	Leahy	Tillis
Cochran	Manchin	Toomey
Collins	Markey	Udall
Coons	McCain	Warner
Corker	McCaskill	Warren
Cornyn	McConnell	Whitehouse
Donnelly	Menendez	Wicker
Durbin	Merkley	Wyden
Ernst	Mikulski	
Feinstein	Murkowski	

NAYS—22

Barrasso	Gardner	Roberts
Cassidy	Hoeven	Sasse
Cotton	Inhofe	Scott
Crapo	Lankford	Sessions
Cruz	Moran	Shelby
Daines	Paul	Vitter
Enzi	Perdue	
Fischer	Risch	

NOT VOTING—2

Lee	Rubio

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). On this vote, the yeas are 76, the nays are 22.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture motion with respect to the compound motion to go to conference with respect to H.R. 644 be withdrawn and that following the disposition of H.R. 1295, the Senate vote on the compound motion to go to conference with respect to H.R. 644.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, let me just tell everybody what that means. For the information of all Senators, this means that we will be able to process all of the other votes on trade by voice vote, and so there will be no further rollcall votes this week. Having said that, the Senate will be in session tomorrow. There are multiple committee meetings that are going to occur, but no votes will be expected tomorrow.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following the vote on the compound motion, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 129, 130, 149, 150, 151, 152, and 154; that the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate; the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRADE PREFERENCES EXTENSION ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 1295, an act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve the process for making determinations with respect to whether organizations are exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(4) of such Code.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the

Senate to the bill, with McConnell/Hatch amendment No. 2065 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill), in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell amendment No. 2066 (to amendment No. 2065), to change the enactment date.

McConnell motion to refer the bill to the Committee on Finance, with instructions, McConnell amendment No. 2067, to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2068 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 2067), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2069 (to amendment No. 2068), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired.

Under the previous order, all motions and amendments with the exception of the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1295, with an amendment, are withdrawn.

VOTE ON MOTION TO CONCUR

Under the previous order, the question occurs on the motion to concur, with the amendment.

Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

TRADE FACILITATION AND TRADE ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 644, an act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend and expand the charitable deduction for contributions of food inventory.

Pending:

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

VOTE ON COMPOUND MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question occurs on the compound motion to go to conference on H.R. 644.

Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF CHARLES C. ADAMS, JR., TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND

NOMINATION OF MARY CATHERINE PHEE TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

NOMINATION OF NANCY BIKOFF PETTIT TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA

NOMINATION OF GREGORY T. DELAWIE TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO

NOMINATION OF IAN C. KELLY TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO GEORGIA

NOMINATION OF JULIETA VALLS NOYES TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

NOMINATION OF ANNE ELIZABETH WALL TO BE A DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Charles C. Adams, Jr., of Maryland, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Finland; Mary Catherine Phee, of Illinois, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of South Sudan; Nancy Bikoff Pettit, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Latvia; Gregory T. Delawie, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Kosovo; Ian C. Kelly, of Illinois, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Georgia; Julieta Valls Noyes, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Croatia; and Anne Elizabeth Wall, of Illinois, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of the Treasury.

VOTE ON ADAMS NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Charles C. Adams, Jr., of Maryland, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Finland?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON PHEE NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Mary Catherine Phee, of Illinois, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of South Sudan?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON PETTIT NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Nancy Bikoff Pettit, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Latvia?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON DELAWIE NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Gregory T. Delawie, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Kosovo?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON KELLY NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Ian C. Kelly, of Illinois, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Georgia?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON NOYES NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Julieta Valls Noyes, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service,

Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Croatia?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON WALL NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Anne Elizabeth Wall, of Illinois, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of the Treasury?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume legislative session.

The majority whip.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to 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 Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 20 minutes in morning business.

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

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I understand that Senators have some business to wrap up and are expecting an early out here today, and this Senator is letting some of them finish their conversations. I do want to speak, and I appreciate the unanimous consent request to go forward.

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, the nuclear negotiations with Iran are now approaching a self-imposed deadline of June 30, just a few days from now. The negotiators chose that deadline when they concluded the interim accord 6 months ago and have reportedly been determined to stick to it to focus their efforts.

At the same time, it may be the case that a brief extension deadline rather than a rush to a conclusion that would bring us to a bad deal is something we ought to consider. Senator CORKER has told Secretary Kerry exactly that, cautioning him that there is no need so desperate that requires either accepting a bad deal or yielding to unacceptable Iranian demands. I don't necessarily oppose a short-term extension to reach a better conclusion or a better deal, but I have deep concerns about whether that will be the case, even if we extend for a small amount of time.

I fear the Obama administration is not hearing the message that a potential bad deal could be in the making, and it raises great concern. I fear that yielding to one Iranian demand after another in order to secure a deal is exactly what the Obama administration has been doing in its negotiations. I fear that we will return from our Independence Day celebrations to take up a pending Iran nuclear deal that neither permanently foils Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions nor makes us or the world more secure. I fear this administration, so seemingly desperately eager for a legacy, will choose to define any Iranian deal at all as a great success for diplomacy, no matter how much it concedes to Iranian positions.

In May, I and many of my colleagues worked hard to impose a requirement for the administration to present any Iran deal to Congress. Despite strong opposition from the Obama administration, 99 of the 100 Senators were convinced that Congress must have the ability to evaluate in detail every aspect of a negotiated settlement and how it is to be imposed, how it is to be monitored, and verified. That is our core task once a deal is presented to us. It is an immensely important duty of historic dimensions.

I hope and pray that each of us will evaluate the proposed deal on its merits alone and what it would mean for our Nation's security, both now and in the future when the terms have expired. Unfortunately, to take up that duty and perform that task, we will have to immerse ourselves in some of the arcane technical details that lie near the heart of such negotiations. I say ''near'' the heart rather than ''at'' the heart because the very central issue for me—and hopefully for my colleagues—is the nature of the Iranian regime, their proven, demonstrated ill will revealed by decades of murderous aggression and lying deceit. That is the proven record of our negotiating partner, and all their claimed commitments will have to be evaluated in that light.

However, evaluating the technical details will present its own challenges and we need to prepare ourselves for those challenges. We need to take stock now of some of those details as they appear at the moment any deal is finalized. To do that, we will have to look through a fog of claims and counterclaims to see the outlines of something that is still evolving, even as it remains in the shadows. But with just those partial images, I have some deep concerns.

First, it now appears from public comments that our negotiators—and especially Secretary Kerry himself—are no longer insisting that Iran come clean on its past nuclear weapons development activities. This has long been a central demand by our side, as often confirmed by our negotiators themselves. To cave on this demand would be a fatal flaw and should all by itself lead to rejection of the deal.

Let me state that again. To cave on this demand that Iran come clean on its past nuclear weapons development activities all by itself should lead to rejection of the deal, if we do not achieve that goal.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, has been pressing for information from Iran about the past nuclear weapons programs for years. Recently, the IAEA Director General explained the importance of the issue this way:

> What we don't know [is] whether they have undeclared activities or something else. We don't know what they did in the past. So, we know a part of their activities, but we cannot tell we know all of their activities. And that is why we cannot say that all the activities in Iran is in peaceful purposes . . . the Agency is not in a position to provide credible assurance about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran, and therefore to conclude that all nuclear material in Iran is in peaceful activities.

The Obama administration has long agreed with the IAEA that Iran needs to come clean on its past activities to create a baseline for understanding future activities under any agreement—an absolutely essential standard that has to be met.

The U.S. head negotiator, Wendy Sherman—who, incidentally, negotiated the utterly failed deal with North Korea as well—told a Senate committee in 2013 that ''Iran must agree to address past and present practices, which is the IAEA terminology for possible military dimensions . . . we intend to support the IAEA in its efforts to deal with possible military dimensions.'' Later, she told the SFRC that ''in the Joint Plan of Action we have required that Iran come clean.''

These are the statements of our negotiators. These are the commitments they made to the Senate and to the American people that these were the standards that could not be breached and that if it was not a part of the arrangement, then we would not accept this deal.

So we are quoting here from the record of what policy and what conditions the United States has laid out before the Iranians that, if not achieved, are a nonstarter of a deal.

Secretary Kerry has repeatedly said that the possible military dimensions of the Iranian nuclear program ''will have to be addressed'' and ''that Iranians will have to do it.''

''It will be done,'' he said.

However, I was shocked to read last week that Secretary Kerry told this to the Department of State press corps:

> We are not fixated on Iran specifically accounting for what they did at one point in time or another. We know what they did. We have no doubt. We have absolute knowledge with respect to the certain military activities they were engaged in. What we are concerned about is going forward.

First of all, this is completely misleading. It is a complete 180-degree turn from what had been committed to earlier. As a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, I can state emphatically that we do not have absolute knowledge of anything. That is not how intelligence works.

Secretary Kerry's statement suggests that he may be misusing one of our most useful tools of statecraft—perhaps a more concerning issue than the statement itself.

If we did have absolute knowledge of what the Iranians had done and have done to this date, we would not have spent the past years joining with the IAEA and the responsible international community to demand that Iran come clean. For the life of me, I cannot understand what the Secretary is thinking about when making such a claim. It is in total contradiction of a key facet—maybe the key facet of this deal.

Now, suddenly we are backing away, saying ''We know everything'' when we have for years been pursuing with the IAEA to get the knowledge of what we do know and the IAEA basically saying to us: No, we don't know everything. There is a lot we do not know.

In any case, I regard this new position as a blatant reversal of a key part of our negotiating objectives and a capitulation to the Iranians—a capitulation that reveals, perhaps, how desperate the administration is to secure a deal—any deal.

The next point of concern is the type and pace of sanctions relief we seem to be dangling as an incentive for the Iranians to accept any deal. This issue is very complex technically, legally, and legislatively. One key point is that throughout these negotiations, the administration has consistently argued that any deal would lead only to sanctions relief regarding nuclear issues. But the fact sheet that the White House put out following the interim deal framework stated that U.S. sanctions on Iran for terrorism, human rights abuses, and ballistic missiles will remain in place under the deal.

Let me say that again. The administration put out this fact sheet following the interim deal stating that U.S. sanctions on Iran for terrorism, human rights abuses, and ballistic missiles will remain in place under the deal.

Now it seems this limitation was not good enough for the Iranians, and we have caved again.

Yesterday, the so-called Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, included this matter in his expanded list of redlines. He said that all economic, financial, and banking sanctions implemented either by the United Nations Security Council, the United States Congress, or the administration must be lifted immediately when the deal is signed.

According to media reports, which have not been refuted by the administration since they began appearing last month, the Supreme Leader has won again.

The emerging deal may roll back sanctions that had been imposed for these other nonnuclear reasons. According to these reports, based on leaks from the negotiating teams, 23 out of the 24 currently sanctioned Iranian banks will be delisted as sanctions targets, including the Central Bank of Iran. This is the Revolutionary Guard Corps-dominated institution that was sanctioned because of its role in money laundering, financing terrorism, ballistic weapons research, and campaign claims of bolstering the Assad regime in Syria. Removing sanctions applied to these banks will give Iran hundreds of billions of dollars that could be used for their terrorism activities in regional proxy wars.

These reports, if true, constitute yet another reversal of clearly stated policy and yet another capitulation to the Iranians.

No. 3, it appears that negotiators may be aiming at an arrangement to set aside the dispute about open, free access to Iranian facilities. We have long maintained that any agreement would have to give the IAEA such access—stated over and over to us through our briefings, by the Secretary, and by others negotiating this. What this means is open, free access anytime, anywhere. It appears this is not now the case. We have long maintained that the IAEA have access anytime, anyplace, as their spokesmen have often emphasized. President Obama himself reassured the region's nervous Arab leaders on this very point in an effort to gain their acceptance of the deal.

In the meantime, once again Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader, has stated emphatically that no such access would be granted, and other Iranian authorities repeated this redline that the Iranians have drawn in the deal and that we are capitulating to, one after another. Their Parliament even recently passed a law to this effect. It looked like an unbridgeable gap. Khamenei repeated this firm position again just yesterday.

Some argue that Khamenei's declarations are part of the negotiating strategy. Well, if so, it seems to have worked. Anyplace access for intrusive inspection has been taken out. We have dropped ''anytime, anyplace.''

The buzzword phrase that now is being giving to us is ''managed access.'' When I first heard that, I said, what in the world does that mean, ''managed access''? With this concept, it appears there would now be a mechanism that would evaluate requests for access to determine if there is a genuine need. Instead of anytime, anyplace, anywhere, for any reason, in order to verify that the Iranians are not cheating, that has turned into now a request for a search or for access at their time and their decision as to what the place will be or what the place will not be. This makes a mockery of the state of the original required demand for access at anytime, anyplace. ''Access where needed, when needed'' seems to be the new mantra—where needed, when needed, giving them plenty of time to make a decision as to yea or nay or to remove from those sites damning evidence of their pursuit of nuclear capabilities.

Because this issue of access is crucial to the issue of credibility, verification, and compliance, it arguably is the most important requirement of all for an acceptable deal. Those advocating for the emerging deal are actually boasting that this artful dodging is a negotiating victory.

Is there anything more we need to say about the weak and compromising negotiating strategy of those who are currently at the table representing the United States? I have just named and spelled out three major concerns regarding these negotiations, but there are many other aspects of the apparently emerging deal that separately and together show a pattern—a very disturbing pattern of constant retreat and capitulation by this administration in the negotiations with the Iranians. I won't go into the details of each of these, but let me just run off several other issues of major concern.

One, the clearly inadequate timeframe for any agreement, the sunset clause—it is no longer a part of the negotiations; two, outrageously generous details of sanctions relief, both scale and timing; the almost laughable, specious claims of sanctions snapback provisions—whatever that means—once the sanctions regime has been dismantled; the number of and types of enrichment equipment to be retained by the Iranians; the types of enrichment activities that will be permitted in the thousands of modern centrifuges in the most fortified, bunkered facilities; fatal limitations on our ability to monitor and verify compliance; and the Joint Plan of Action provisions that Iran has already blatantly violated without any White House comment.

My colleagues, once a deal is announced, it will be critical that we exercise the wisdom and courage to evaluate it honestly. My doubts about our ability to do so are aggravated by the public relations campaign we can foresee. Indeed, we have seen it before when the Clinton administration told us the nuclear deal with North Korea was ''good for America.'' I was a Member of the Senate at that time. I raised a number of issues and concerns about whether this deal with North Korea was good for America. I did not vote to support that effort. Nevertheless, the treaty was agreed to.

The framework agreement with North Korea, President Clinton said in 1994, ''is a good deal for the United States. North Korea will freeze and dismantle its nuclear programs.'' North Korea will freeze and dismantle its nuclear programs. ''South Korea and our other allies will be better protected. The entire world will be safer as we slow the spread of nuclear weapons. . . . The United States and international inspectors will carefully monitor North Korea to make sure it keeps its commitments. Only as it does so will North Korea fully join the community of nations.''

That is what was promised in 1994. That is what was stated to Senators on

this floor in 1994—that we can count on the fact that we are going to know if the North Koreans cheat and we are not going to allow them to do that. How significantly this resonates now, all these years later, as we are assured by the administration and by Secretary Kerry: Don't worry. Everything is covered. Inspections will take place. They won't be able to cheat. We will know it if they do. The sanctions will come back on. We will snap back those sanctions, et cetera, et cetera.

Some Members took a bite of that apple and regret that. I did not. I am sure not going to take another bite of that apple, and no one else should view this current negotiation with Iran without putting it in the context of what was done before. We have been here before. We need to learn the lessons from that. We now know that North Korea possesses dozens of nuclear weapons and the ballistic missile capacity to deliver those weapons. We now know they cheated blatantly and we did not know it. The so-called guarantee of verification was not accomplished and not achieved.

So before making a final decision on the Iran so-called deal, we need to learn the lessons from the Clinton administration and the agreement with North Korea. The similarities between the secret negotiations then and the secret ones now are remarkable.

In 1994, a key sticking point was complete access to nuclear sites, and then, too, we caved in order to get the deal.

In 1994, the White House and major media outlets trumpeted a deal that would make the world safer—a victory for diplomacy over force and hostility. Those who did not see this as something that was going to be enforced were called warmongers.

Here is the choice, war or peace. Some choice. North Korea promised to forgo their nuclear weapons ambitions, and although I could not vote to support President Clinton's request, enough of the Senate did to approve the agreement with North Korea.

Now we know they have between 20 to 40 nuclear weapons, possibly miniaturized, ICBMs—intercontinental ballistic missiles—to put them on and recently tested submarine launch missiles.

Another lesson is the time gap between the heralded diplomatic breakthrough and the revelation that we had been taken to the cleaners. It took years to learn what we had really done in North Korea and not done in North Korea.

The failure of a bad deal with Iran will not be evident to most of us for years perhaps—perhaps even 10, 11 or 12 years, even when President Obama concedes that Iran's nuclear breakout time will be zero.

In fact, such a delay—in the unlikely event Iran actually complies with a deal—is the stated objective of the P5+1 negotiators—to impose a delay of a decade or so on Iran's nuclear weapons program. That is what they will define as success.

But we must remember this: Today's brutal, unhinged, nuclear-armed North Korea is actually a product of misguided and naive American diplomacy, sold to the Senate as something other than what it was. We now know the agreement with North Korea was not a diplomatic victory but a diplomatic and policy failure, an absolute failure. My deep concern is that this time many will, once again, see the emerging deal as a great victory for diplomacy, no matter what it contains.

The utterly false claim that it presents a choice between peaceful resolution of a dispute and war, as a consequence of not arranging and agreeing to a deal, will be a central part of the discourse and salesmanship that will confront us as Senators. Those opposed will potentially be labeled as war mongers.

It is good of us to remember something that was said by Winston Churchill leading up to World War II: Peace at any price does not lead to peace. It only lengthens the path for war with far greater consequences in terms of cost or blood.

So, for us, we are going to have to stand up to those who posit the false choice between peace and between war. We have a more difficult obligation of historic consequences, looking to the following decade. Such a duty must not be guided by party. It must not be guided by politics. It must not be guided by deference either to the White House, our own leadership or even our constituents.

We must look at each and every detail of any agreement presented to us to reach a judgment on whether this so-called deal with Iran will prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons capability. Then, and only then, we must decide on that basis whether to approve or reject the deal that will be presented to us by the President and his Secretary of State. To do anything less than fulfilling this obligation and this duty that each one of us has, will be a failure of our duty as a U.S. Senator, with historic consequences if we get it wrong.

My hope, prayer, wish, desire, and admonition is that each one of us sees this as something with historic consequences that will affect not only the future of our Nation and our people but will affect the future of the world. Therefore, we must give full attention and every ounce of our best wisdom and judgment in determining, not for political or party or any other reason—other than finding out and determining whether this deal is acceptable or not acceptable and make our yes be yes and our no be no and well reasoned, well judged, and well decided.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AWARENESS DAY

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this Saturday, June 27, marks Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder—or PTSD—Awareness Day.

This marks a critical opportunity to remind people about the prevalence of mental illnesses such as PTSD among our Active-Duty troops and our veterans. By generating more awareness, we can help remove the stigma about PTSD and encourage people to seek treatment and, in turn, save lives. PTSD is a serious problem affecting too many of our country's bravest individuals, and we must do more to help our heroes.

According to a study by the RAND Corporation, 20 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans report symptoms of PTSD and, of those, only about half actually seek treatment.

Our Nation made a promise to our men and women in uniform: When they come home from war and their time in service to our country, we will be there for them. We need to have the same concern for our servicemembers' mental health as we do for their physical health. For far too long, we have been focused on the physical wounds of war, but as many of our veterans know too well, the mental wounds also inflict great damage.

I am proud to serve as a Senator from a State with a rich legacy of service. I am proud to be the son of a U.S. marine. One in ten Montanans have proudly served in our Armed Forces, making the Treasure State home to more veterans per capita than almost any other State in our Nation. According to the VA, Montana is home to nearly 100,000 veterans, 75,000 of whom served our Nation during wartime.

As the son of a marine, I strongly believe we have a duty to ensure that the promises we have made to these men and these women are kept. There is no greater honor or responsibility than fighting for our veterans. We owe them our freedom. We owe them nothing but our best. Anything less is unacceptable.

I have had many conversations with the brave men and women who have gone overseas in the name of freedom, and one of the many concerns they have expressed is the negative stigma surrounding post-traumatic stress in our military. For too long, our service men and women have attempted to hide mental health issues from their superiors out of fear of being discharged. That is why I am committed to raising PTSD awareness to overcome the misinformation and the stigma surrounding these mental health challenges.

I am proud to be working on S. 1567 with GARY PETERS and THOM TILLIS to ensure due process for veterans who suffer from mental health illnesses and may have been erroneously given an administrative discharge rather than an honorable discharge. It helps ensure that Active-Duty servicemembers who

suffer from invisible wounds, like PTSD and traumatic brain injuries, also called TBIs, are not incorrectly administratively discharged, putting their hard-earned benefits at risk. This bill is just a small step that Congress can take toward ensuring that the stigma facing PTSD is lifted and hopefully allowing more veterans to seek out treatment for PTSD.

In the last few years, I am pleased to see that our country has taken steps to ensure that our troops and veterans get the mental health services they need upon their return home. More than ever, troops and veterans are seeking treatment. They are receiving timely diagnosis, they are getting needed care.

We have a long way to go. Too many veterans are taking their own lines and, unfortunately, Montana consistently ranks at the top for suicides in our country. One story from Montana particularly resonated with me. In fact, it occurred in my hometown of Bozeman. I went from kindergarten through college in Bozeman. On May 29, 2013, U.S. Army PFC Wade Christiansen took his own life. He was 23 years old. Private First Class Christiansen served his country as a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division and was deployed to Afghanistan with his unit in 2009. During an ambush, he sustained severe injuries to his face and to his arms.

After his return to Montana, Wade struggled with both the physical and the mental healing process. Wade's brother Matt talked about how Wade's mood would change when he wouldn't be able to take his medication when the VA failed to get him his medications on time.

I wish I could stand here and tell you that Wade Christiansen's story is unique. Unfortunately, he is just one of the many veterans who committed suicide in my State that year. In fact, between 2004 and 2013, there were 566 suicides by Montana veterans. In Montana and across the Nation, too many of our veterans struggle with PTSD, they struggle with depression. Veteran depression not only affects the individual but also the loved ones closest to the veteran as well. The emotional toll on the family is immense. To have a loved one serve overseas, only to come back as a shell of what they once were is difficult.

PTSD Awareness Day invites us to face the larger issues of veterans who are suffering from post-traumatic stress. We do everything in our power to protect our servicemembers while they are overseas. We must do the same to address their needs once they return home. That includes reducing the stigma attached to PTSD and doing more to help our brave veterans find good-paying jobs and transition back into civilian life.

Now is the time to act to work toward real solutions that protect our veterans here at home. They are an embodiment of the ideals this Nation holds dear, and I believe it is our job to do everything in our power to protect them.

Before I end my remarks, I want to encourage everyone, if they or a loved one is struggling with mental illness or PTSD, there is help available.

You can visit www.ptsd.va.gov—www.ptsd.va.gov—where they will find resources that are available for our veterans.

Mental illness is not something anyone should have to go through alone. Seeking help is not a sign of weakness, but instead it is a testament to individual character.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I wish to begin by talking about two subjects. The first of those is the nuclear agreement that our Nation and five other nations are seeking to negotiate with Iran, and the second is I wish to do something we don't do often enough and thank some people, people who serve all of us, some folks in the Coast Guard.

But I wish to start with the agreement that we and part of the five permanent members of the Security Council, plus one—Germany—are attempting to negotiate with the country of Iran. We are closing in, I hope, on a historic nuclear agreement with Iran.

Today, the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, China, France, and Germany are hard at work trying to hammer out a final nuclear deal with Iran that will hopefully put an end to that country's pursuit of nuclear weapons. We have a key role to play in the fate of this potential nuclear deal.

If the P5+1 and Iran can forge a final deal, then Congress will have its chance to support or reject it by voting on a resolution that would prohibit lifting the sanctions against Iran. So it is my great hope that when Congress comes back from our Fourth of July recess—holiday recess—we will be returning to the news that the negotiators have succeeded in striking what they believe to be a fair deal.

We will then begin our job of considering whether that deal represents the best path forward for our Nation's security and the security of other nations, including our allies.

Should this agreement come together, I will assess the final nuclear deal on how it implements three key requirements that were articulated in last April's nuclear framework. Let me just take a moment and explain these three requirements.

First, any final agreement must block all of Iran's pathways to developing a nuclear weapon. The Iranians will have to agree to measures that prohibit them from acquiring weapons-grade plutonium, enriching enough uranium to build a bomb and developing a covert nuclear program.

Fortunately, as part of April's nuclear framework, the P5+1 agreed in principle to close off Iran's four pathways to a nuclear weapon, and here is how.

Iran would no longer have a source of weapons-grade plutonium, as the framework requires Iran's heavy water reactor to be redesigned so that it no longer generates a plutonium byproduct needed for a bomb.

Iran would lose one path to acquiring enough enriched uranium to build a bomb by being forced to reduce its current centrifuge inventory of almost 20,000 down to 5,000 units. Moreover, the remaining 5,000 centrifuges would be Iran's oldest and least capable variants, making it almost impossible for Iran to restart weapons-grade enrichment activities.

Under the framework, Iran would lose its other path to acquiring enough enriched uranium for a nuclear weapon. Iran will be required to dramatically reduce its stockpile of enriched uranium from 10 tons to just 300 kilograms and will not be able to enrich above 3.7 percent.

Lastly, the framework eliminates the ability of Iran to covertly develop a nuclear weapon by monitoring not just the declared facilities but also subjecting the country's entire nuclear supply chain to inspections and continuous surveillance.

If a final agreement makes good on these promises in a verifiable way—in a verifiable way—then it will earn my support.

Some have argued that a final agreement must require Iran to dismantle its entire nuclear infrastructure so that it cannot enrich uranium even for peaceful nuclear energy. This is an unnecessary requirement on Iran in my view. If that country agrees to these four roadblocks to a nuclear weapon, then Iran should be able to maintain an enrichment program that is verifiably limited to producing only peaceful nuclear energy.

That brings me to my second requirement. In any final agreement, Iran must submit to uncomfortable and intrusive inspections.

If weapons inspectors for the International Atomic Energy Agency identify a facility they suspect of housing illicit nuclear activity, then these inspectors should be granted access to these undeclared sites. If Iran fails to grant access to the inspectors, then Iran should be in violation of the agreement, and that should trigger expedited and appropriate consequences for Iran.

In the weeks since the announcement of the April framework agreement, we have heard some contradictory claims coming from Iran's Supreme Leader, the Ayatollah Khamenei. He has said that Iran will not allow inspections of military sites.

Well, perhaps the Supreme Leader is only playing to a hard-line domestic audience in Iran. Perhaps he is attempting to return and to rhetorically

walk back on the concessions his negotiating team promised to the P5+1 nations or perhaps he is just not being honest.

Whatever the case may be, I certainly do not trust the Iranian Supreme Leader nor do I want my acceptance of a deal to be based solely on his rhetoric. To borrow a phrase from President Reagan—a phrase we have heard in this Chamber hundreds of times since I came here 14 years ago—final deals should not be predicated on the mantra ''trust but verify.'' Rather they should embody the principle of ''distrust and verify.''

To that end, the final deal must have a system of consequences and incentives in place to ensure that Iran complies with its promises to submit to inspections.

Third, any lifting of sanctions against Iran must be conditional on the Iranians meeting and implementing core requirements of the nuclear deal. Iran must prove to us they are serious about following through on their commitments. If they live up to their promises, only then should they be rewarded with phased sanctions relief.

Fortunately, the administration has made this a sticking point in the negotiations. As the President said upon the announcement of the nuclear framework on April 2, ''[Sanctions] relief will be phased in as Iran takes steps to adhere to the deal. If Iran violates the deal, sanctions can be snapped back into place.''

Additionally, after announcing the nuclear framework, Secretary Kerry made clear that the Iranians will not get sanctions relief until they have implemented their obligation to the satisfaction of the international inspectors and the United States. These are the words of Secretary Kerry:

> Iran has a responsibility to get the breakout time to the one year . . . . When that is done and certified by the IAEA that [Iran] has lived up to that nuclear responsibility, and we make that judgment with them, at that point we would begin the phasing of sanctions relief.

Now, Secretary Kerry and President Obama are right to insist on this point. They are right to insist on this point. I imagine this is one of the details still being worked out in talks. But if Iran is serious about abandoning its nuclear weapons ambitions—I hope they are—they must agree to take action before being rewarded with sanctions relief.

For 2½ years—2½ years—our negotiating team has been working tirelessly to strike a deal with Iran that strengthens our Nation's security, our allies' security, and the security of the broader Middle East. Whatever the outcome next week, we owe these negotiators a debt of gratitude for their service and their dedication.

At the end of the day, however, I feel confident that we will reach a deal that blocks Iran's pathways to a bomb, subjects Iran to intrusive inspections, and only provides sanctions relief after Iran takes action.

If the final deal includes these three key provisions, then it will certainly have my support. Moreover, I think if each Senator and Representative evaluates this deal on its merits, forgets about the rhetoric, forgets about the preconceived notions and considers the alternatives, then this deal will enjoy broad support in this Congress.

Mr. President, I want to set these remarks aside now. Before our current Presiding Officer took the Chair, I mentioned to our colleague before him that I had a two-part address. This is like a day-night doubleheader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The Senator has used his 10 minutes.

Mr. CARPER. I ask unanimous consent to proceed for an extra 6 minutes.

May I prevail on the Senator from Ohio?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. PORTMAN. I have no objection.

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

Mr. CARPER. I thank the Senator from Ohio for his kindness.

TRIBUTE TO FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, over the past few months I have been coming to the floor to recognize the work of a few of the outstanding employees of the Department of Homeland Security.

There are over 200,000 men and women who work at the Department's 22 components. They secure our borders and secure our skies. They respond to natural disasters. They protect us in cyber space. Few other Federal agencies touch the lives of Americans on a daily basis more than the Department of Homeland Security.

Although the jobs they do every day may be diverse, all DHS employees go to work with one critical mission, and that is to ensure our country is a safe, secure, and resilient place where the American way of life can thrive.

Today I recognize the outstanding service of several officers from the U.S. Coast Guard. As a law enforcement agency and one of our Nation's five armed services, the Coast Guard has safeguarded our interests on the high seas for over two centuries.

The thousands of brave men and women who honorably serve our Nation at the Coast Guard dedicate their lives to its important missions. These missions range from maritime law enforcement and military operations to search and rescue and environmental protection.

MAX KACZMAREK, CHRIS LEON, AND MATTHEW WORDEN

Last month, Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson recognized three individuals from the Coast Guard for their valor: Petty Officer Max Kaczmarek, Petty Officer Chris Leon, and Petty Officer Matthew Worden. In pictures right here next to me are Petty Officer Matt Worden, Petty Officer Max Kaczmarek, and Petty Officer Chris Leon.

These three brave individuals have each demonstrated outstanding courage in the face of perilous circumstances, acting selflessly and without hesitation to render lifesaving aid to their fellow Americans. Simply put, they were, in the words of the Coast Guard motto, ''Semper Paratus''—''Always Ready.''

I want to extend my congratulations to these three officers, Petty Officers Kaczmarek, Leon, and Worden, and to all of the recipients of this year's DHS Valor awards. These devoted public servants are an inspiration for me, and I think for all of us, and I encourage my colleagues to learn more about their heroic stories.

JOSCELYN GREENWELL

For the 42,000 Active-Duty Coast Guard men and women, their mission may take them to ports and waterways across our country and around the globe. For Petty Officer Joscelyn Greenwell, her service with the Coast Guard has taken her from California to Hawaii to my home State of Delaware.

Originally from Cape Canaveral, FL, Petty Officer Greenwell, pictured here to my left, has served our country for over 7 years at three different Coast Guard units and stations. She first spent 3 years on the high endurance cutter Hamilton and home ported in San Diego, CA.

While aboard the Coast Guard cutter Hamilton, Petty Officer Greenwell was one of our many brave servicemembers assigned to provide disaster relief following the catastrophic 2010 Haiti earthquake, which we all remember. In Haiti, Petty Officer Greenwell and her fellow crew members transported clean drinking water and other resources to the island to save lives. She received a Unit Commendation award for her outstanding efforts in that mission.

After her time in San Diego, Petty Officer Greenwell spent 2 years aboard the patrol boat Galveston Island, home ported in Honolulu, HI.

Today Petty Officer Greenwell calls Lewes, DE, her home and now serves at the U.S. Coast Guard Station Indian River Inlet in Rehoboth Beach, DE. With summer in full swing, Delawareans and people from across the country—actually, from around the world—are flocking to our Nation's pristine five-star beaches. Thankfully, day and night, Petty Officer Greenwell and her crew stand diligent watch over parts of Delaware Bay, Rehoboth Bay, Indian River Bay, and the Atlantic Ocean. We Delawareans can rest assured that Petty Officer Greenwell and her unit stand ready to answer our call, if ever we need their assistance.

According to her superiors, Petty Officer Greenwell takes ownership of her responsibilities and is committed to the safety of the public. Her colleagues say that she always goes above and beyond what is expected of her.

For example, in addition to her usual responsibilities, Petty Officer

Greenwell received her certification as a boat operator, or coxswain, in just 1 year—a process that normally takes about a year and a half. Her colleagues say that she demonstrated an outstanding level of skill and professionalism throughout the rigorous certification process.

She has also served as a mentor to junior personnel and assisted multiple shipmates in receiving their qualifications as watch standers, boat crew members, boarding team members, and as coxswains. Petty Officer Greenwell's commitment to her team and the public she serves every day exemplifies—truly exemplifies—the Coast Guard's core values of honor, respect, and devotion to duty.

Petty Officer Greenwell, I just want you to know tonight that your service to our Nation has taken you around the world, and I know you will continue to go far—both literally and figuratively—in all your endeavors. Every day, you help to ensure the safety of your fellow Americans and the security of our Nation. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you for your tireless dedication, your invaluable service to the State and the Nation that we call home, and as we say in the Navy, ''Bravo Zulu.''

Finally, to the thousands of brave men and women across the Department of Homeland Security who dedicate their lives to serving and protecting America and Americans, please know that what you do every day is important. I hope it fills your work with meaning and your life with happiness. On behalf of the people we all serve together, thank you for your service.

Sometimes we ask people—whether the Coast Guard or Department of Homeland Security, any part of the Federal Government—what they would like. Sometimes people say they would like more money, they would like more of this, or they would like more of that. What more than half the people say, though, is, I would just like to be thanked.

So to all the people I mentioned tonight and those with whom they serve at the Department of Homeland Security, thank you, and God bless you.

I especially thank my colleague from Ohio for his generosity and kindness tonight.

To the leader, good work. ''Bravo Zulu'' on the good work done here this week.

I yield the floor.

TRADE PREFERENCES EXTENSION ACT OF 2015

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today I rise to commend my colleagues on passage of the Trade Preferences Extension Act of 2015. This legislation provides timely extension of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, or AGOA, Program, and preferential treatment for products from Haiti. And, this legislation finally reauthorizes the Generalized System of Preferences, or GSP, Program which has languished since July of 2013. I am very pleased we have been successful in this effort.

Trade preference programs are vitally important to the economies of the beneficiary countries, supporting economic and social development. And, these programs support production here in the U.S. as many of the goods eligible under preference programs are raw materials and inputs that fuel American manufacturing. These programs build a trading relationship that is the first stepping stone towards developing a full, bilateral trading relationship that will further grow and support the U.S. economy. Particularly for some of our trading partners benefiting under the AGOA Program, we look forward to our trading relationship developing to the next phase, full bilateral trade agreements, during this authorization of the program.

But none of this would have been possible without the dedicated work of many people. I would like to recognize the staff of the Senate Finance Committee. I would like to recognize Senator WYDEN and his staff, especially Joshua Sheinkman, Jayme White, Elissa Alben, Greta Peisch, and Anderson Heiman. Our work was supported by the outstanding efforts of the International Trade Commission and the Office of the United States Trade Representative. I would like to particularly thank Florie Liser, Constance Hamilton, Behnaz Kibria, Bill Jackson, and Ben Kostrzewa from the Office of the USTR.

I would like to especially thank my staff for all their dedicated work on this legislation. Our international trade staff has worked tirelessly on this legislation and I thank them for their efforts: Everett Eissenstat, Shane Warren, and Rebecca Eubank. We have had the excellent support of detailees from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, Kevin Rosenbaum, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Andrew Rollo, as well as Sahra Park Su and Kenneth Schmidt. I would like to thank my senior staff: Chris Campbell, Mark Prater, Jay Khosla, Jeff Wrase, and Bryan Hickman.

We can all be proud of the broad support this bill has received in both Houses of Congress. This legislation demonstrates that trade is a bipartisan issue. I look forward to President Obama signing this legislation into law as soon as possible.

CONGRATULATING RAMSEY LEWIS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I wish to take a moment to congratulate a native son of Chicago who has earned worldwide acclaim as a jazz pianist and who will soon achieve a lifelong dream of conducting and soloing with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Ramsey Lewis is a true American original—a virtuoso pianist and musical innovator who helped pioneer the sound many refer to as ''smooth jazz.'' Fifty-one years ago he and his band, the Ramsey Lewis Trio, recorded a song that became an instant sensation and which remains a definitive classic of the cool jazz genre. It's called ''The In Crowd.'' You know the refrain: ''I'm in with the in crowd. I go where the in crowd goes.''

That song was recorded live at Bohemian Caverns in Washington, DC, with almost no rehearsal. It sounds like a fable but it is true. That afternoon Ramsey and his bandmates—drummer Isaac ''Redd'' Holt and bassist Eldee Young—were sitting in a Washington, DC, coffee shop, debating what they could add to their set that night to make the recording stand out. Their waitress, a woman by the name of Nettie Gray, asked what was wrong. They explained their predicament.

Miss Nettie Gray walked over to the jukebox, dropped a coin in the slot and said: ''Listen to this.'' It was ''The In Crowd,'' sung by Dobie Gray—a popular hit at the time. The trio quickly worked out a jazz arrangement and used the song to end their set that evening. The crowd loved it. Audiences everywhere loved it. ''The In Crowd'' became the first of seven gold records by the Ramsey Lewis Trio.

What makes that story even more amazing is that ''The In Crowd'' was just one of four albums the Ramsey Lewis Trio recorded that year, 1964. Talk about prolific.

All told, this jazz legend has recorded 80 albums in an illustrious career that has spanned more than half a century. He has earned 3 Grammy Awards, 7 gold records, and hosted a nationally syndicated radio show and a 13-episode ''Legends of Jazz'' TV series on PBS.

In addition, he has served as artistic director of Jazz at Ravinia since 1992. He also helped organize Ravinia's Jazz Mentor Program. He serves on the board of trustees for the Merit School of Music in Chicago and The Chicago High School for the Arts. And a decade ago he created the Ramsey Lewis Foundation to help connect at-risk children to the world of music.

Many artists might decide that such a resume was long and impressive enough—but not Ramsey Lewis. At the age of 80, Ramsey Lewis is preparing to fulfill the dream of a lifetime. On August 8, he will serve as conductor and soloist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at the Ravinia Festival in Highland Park, IL, just outside of Chicago.

Ravinia is the oldest music festival in North America. Over the years it has hosted such musical giants as Louis Armstrong, Pablo Casals, Aaron Copland, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, George Gershwin, Luciano Pavarotti, and Yoyo Ma. It is also the summer home of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Ramsey Lewis' debut as conductor and soloist with the CSO is a testament to his musical genius and dexterity. It is also a testament to his ability to see beyond narrow expectations about what is possible for musicians of color.

Ramsey Lewis has been playing the piano since he was 4 years old. He knew at a young age that he wanted to play classical piano. But a music teacher told him when he was still a boy to give up that dream because the world of classical music was not open to musicians with skin the color of Ramsey's.

Fortunately for all of us, Ramsey Lewis had the good sense to know that was nonsense. He has played and recorded countless forms of music—and helped to invent new forms. In doing so, he has helped to create a world where every child is freer to pursue his or her own dreams.

Mr. Lewis' August 8 performance with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at Ravinia is a continuation of what the Chicago Tribune has called a ''Ramsey Renaissance'' as a composer. His collaborator in this new chapter of his career is Ravinia president and CEO Welz Kauffman, who commissioned Mr. Lewis to write a piano concerto for his CSO debut. In recent years, Mr. Kauffman has commissioned Mr. Lewis to write other pieces, including a jazz ballet for the Joffrey Ballet Company, and ''Proclamation of Hope,'' a celebration of Abraham Lincoln on the bicentennial of his birth. Both works made their world premieres at Ravinia.

In 2002 Ramsey Lewis was chosen to carry the Olympic torch as it passed through Chicago on its run to Salt Lake City. With his debut with the CSO at Ravinia, Ramsey Lewis will light up the night sky again with his own special brilliance. What a joyous celebration it will be.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, earlier this month, the Senate Judiciary Committee approved the PATENT Act with a strong bipartisan vote. As the Senate continues to consider this important, balanced legislation aimed at curbing abusive patent litigation practices, it is critical that the court of appeals that considers patent claims be at full strength. Legislation alone cannot solve the problems facing Main Street businesses from abuses of the patent system; we also need dedicated judges, such as Kara Farnandez Stoll, on the bench to faithfully apply the law.

Ms. Farnandez Stoll was first nominated to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal circuit more than 7 months ago. Her hearing was held more than 3 months ago and 2 months ago she was unanimously reported by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The American Bar Association's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary unanimously rated her ''well qualified'' to serve on the Federal circuit—its highest possible rating. The Hispanic National Bar Association, the Federal Circuit Bar Association, and the American Intellectual Property Law Association strongly support her confirmation. Once confirmed, Ms. Farnandez Stoll will be the first woman of color to serve on the Federal circuit. Yet her nomination has been languishing on the Senate Executive Calendar.

Nearly 6 months into this new Congress, the Republican leadership has scheduled votes to confirm only 4 district court judges. We have not confirmed a single judge this work period. Not one. This is simply unacceptable. In addition to Ms. Farnandez Stoll, there are 11 other consensus judicial nominations pending on the Senate Executive Calendar.

The other nominees pending on the calendar include five U.S. Court of Federal Claims, CFC, nominees. We are well past the 1 year anniversary of when each were first nominated and are closing in on the anniversary of all five having had hearings before they were first reported unanimously out of committee. The five CFC nominees were again reported out of committee unanimously at the beginning of this year. We have heard no opposition to any of these nominees, yet they have been in limbo for months and months because the Republican leader has refused to schedule a vote. The U.S. Court of Federal Claims is where our citizens go to seek redress against the Federal Government for monetary claims. The cases this court hears include claims of unlawful takings of private land by the U.S. Government without proper compensation under the fifth Amendment, claims of veterans seeking disability benefits for combat-related injuries, and vaccine compensation claims.

We are debating trade policy in the Senate, yet the nomination to fill one of four current vacancies on the U.S. Court of International Trade—CIT—has sat idle on the Senate Executive Calendar for months. Like the CFC nominees, the CIT nominee had a hearing last year, was favorably reported out of the Judiciary Committee unanimously by voice vote last Congress, and again earlier this year.

Also pending on the calendar are nominees to fill vacancies on the Western District of Missouri, the Western District of New York, and three nominees to fill judicial emergency vacancies—two on the Eastern District of New York and one on the Eastern District of California, all but one of whom were first nominated last year.

There is nothing keeping the Senate from confirming all 12 nominees—nothing, except for the mindset of delay for delay's sake, which is unfortunately the hallmark of the majority's leadership on judicial nominations.

The Senate has a duty to consider judicial vacancies no matter which party holds the majority. In the 17 months I chaired the Senate Judiciary Committee during President Bush's first 2 years in office, the Senate confirmed 100 Federal circuit and district court judges. I also served as chairman during the last 2 years of the Bush administration and we confirmed another 68 district and circuit court judges.

In contrast to the 4 district judges we have confirmed this year, when the Democrats were in an equivalent position in the 7th year of the Bush administration, we had confirmed 18 judges—including 15 district and 3 circuit court judges—by June 24, 2007.

That's 18 judges under a Democratic majority compared to 4 under the Republican majority. That is nearly five times as many judges confirmed under a Democratic majority with a President of the opposite party than today's Senate Republican majority.

Nevertheless, the Republican majority continues to make excuses for their continued obstruction and delay on confirming President Obama's judicial nominees. Their excuse is that the Democratic majority was able to confirm those 18 judges by this date in 2007 only because those nominees were held over from the previous year. What the Republicans fail to note is that 6 of the 18 judges confirmed by June 24, 2007 first had their hearing in 2007, were reported out of committee without needless delay, and were confirmed promptly.

We began this Congress with 38 district and circuit court vacancies, including 12 vacancies deemed ''judicial emergencies'' by the nonpartisan Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. While 38 is the lowest number of vacancies during the entire Obama administration, it is still higher than the low of 28 district and circuit court vacancies during the Bush administration, which was achieved due to Democratic cooperation.

There are now 55 district and circuit court vacancies, including 27 that have been deemed ''judicial emergency'' vacancies. Of the 55 vacancies, 41 are in States with at least one Republican home State Senator. Of great concern to the timely administration of justice are four circuit court vacancies that are ''judicial emergencies''—two in Texas, one in Alabama, and one in Kentucky—that have each been vacant and without nominees for well over a year, including one Texas circuit court vacancy that has been vacant for nearly 3 years. These 3 States alone also account for 12 district court vacancies without a currently pending nominee, half of which are ''judicial emergency'' vacancies.

While I know that the senior Senator from Texas, who is also the assistant republican leader, likes to say that it is the President who ''has to nominate the judges,'' we are all well aware of the central role home State Senators have in making recommendations to the President to fill vacancies in our States. I urge all Senators to work meaningfully with President Obama to get these vacancies filled.

As we head into July 4 recess, the Senate Republican leadership should be allowing us to clear the calendar of the 12 noncontroversial consensus judicial nominees to let them get to work for the American people.

I would remind the current majority leader of his floor remarks from June

2008, the last year of the Bush administration when Democrats held the majority in the Senate:

On the issue of judicial confirmations, my good friend the majority leader and I discussed this matter publicly at the beginning of this Congress, and we agreed that President Bush, in the last 2 years of his term, should be treated as well as President Reagan, Bush 41, and President Clinton were treated in the last 2 years of their tenures in office because there was one common thread, and that was that the Senate was controlled by the opposition party.

I hope he stays true to the words he spoke when the shoe was on the other foot. I urge the majority leader to immediately schedule a vote for Kara Farnandez Stoll and the CFC and CIT nominees so they can get to work serving the American people.

BUDGETARY REVISIONS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, section 4311 of S. Con. Res. 11, the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2016, allows the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee to revise the allocations, aggregates, and levels in the budget resolution for legislation that would promote jobs in the United States through international trade. The authority to adjust is contingent on the legislation not increasing the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 to 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 to 2025.

I find that Senate amendment 2065 fulfills the conditions of deficit neutrality found in section 4311 of S. Con. Res. 11. Accordingly, I am revising the allocation to the Committee on Finance and the budgetary aggregates to account for the budget effects of the amendment.

I ask unanimous consent that this notice and the accompanying tables, which provide details about the adjustment, be printed in the RECORD.

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

REVISION TO THE ALLOCATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

(Pursuant to Section 302 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and Section 4311 of S. Con. Res. 11, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2016)

$ Millions	2016	2016–2020	2016–2025
Current Allocation:			
Budget Authority	2,179,304	12,340,566	29,433,590
Outlays	2,169,584	12,321,005	29,408,581
Adjustments:			
Budget Authority	445	1,985	−5,414
Outlays	175	1,700	−5,382
Revised Allocation:			
Budget Authority	2,179,749	12,342,551	29,428,176
Outlays	2,169,759	12,322,705	29,403,199

BUDGET AGGREGATES BUDGET AUTHORITY AND OUTLAYS

(Pursuant to Section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and Section 4311 of S. Con. Res. 11, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2016)

$ Millions	2016
Current Aggregates:	
Budget Authority	3,032,343
Outlays	3,091,098
Adjustments:	
Budget Authority	445
Outlays	175

BUDGET AGGREGATES BUDGET AUTHORITY AND OUTLAYS—Continued

(Pursuant to Section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and Section 4311 of S. Con. Res. 11, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2016)

$ Millions	2016
Revised Aggregates:	
Budget Authority	3,032,788
Outlays	3,091,273

BUDGET AGGREGATE REVENUES

(Pursuant to Section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and Section 4311 of S. Con. Res. 11, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2016)

$ Millions	2016	2016–2020	2016–2025
Current Revenue Aggregate	2,676,733	14,412,516	32,237,371
Adjustment	−766	3,398	−4,272
Revised Revenue Aggregate	2,675,967	14,415,914	32,233,099

SHULKIN CONFIRMATION

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on the nomination of Dr. David J. Shulkin to be the next Under Secretary for Health for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

I was pleased that Dr. Shulkin's nomination was confirmed by the Senate last night. The Veterans Health Administration, which he will oversee, has not had a permanent leader for more than 1 year. In my view, it is important to have permanent leadership in place to address a number of ongoing issues at the Veterans Health Administration, including properly implementing the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014, to give veterans the option of accessing care in their communities and ensure managers are held accountable for any lapses in customer service; improving care and support for victims of military sexual trauma; helping to eradicate homelessness among veterans; ensuring that veterans have access to timely and adequate mental health care; reducing the systemic problems with over-prescription of opioids; and providing appropriate gender-specific services for the growing population of women veterans.

Dr. Shulkin has roughly 20 years of experience serving in leadership roles at hospitals and health care systems. I hope he can use that experience to provide the stability and leadership needed to start overcoming the serious challenges that the Veterans Health Administration continues to face. Providing a permanent leader is a significant step in ensuring that the Veterans Health Administration is providing our Nation's veterans with the level of care and service they have earned and they deserve.

I thank my colleagues for their assistance in filling this important role at VA.

SHULKIN AND COUNCIL CONFIRMATIONS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, last night, the Senate confirmed David Shulkin to be the Under Secretary for Health and LaVerne Council to be the Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology at the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA.

Let me begin by thanking Chairman ISAKSON for making the confirmation of Dr. Shulkin and Ms. Council a priority for this Congress.

Dr. Shulkin comes to the Veterans Health Administration, VHA, with significant experience managing complex health care organizations. Prior to being confirmed as Undersecretary of Health Dr. Shulkin was the president of Morristown Medical Center where he oversaw a 658-bed facility that has received countless awards for its excellence in care. During his confirmation hearing before the committee, Dr. Shulkin stated, ''We all agree that the status quo is simply not acceptable. I want to assure you that, if confirmed, it would be my sole mission each and every day to transform the VA health system into one that provides our veterans with the highest level of quality care.'' Given the challenges that face VA, I look forward to working with Dr. Shulkin to ensure the status quo does not persist. I am committed to ensuring VA provides high-quality care options to veterans.

Ms. Council has significant private sector experience in managing global information and technology programs, including service as the first global chief information officer at Johnson & Johnson and leading the consolidation of 250 operating companies across 57 countries in the world. I trust that her experience will allow her to navigate ongoing issues around health data interoperability between VA and DOD, and I look forward to collaborating with her to make this a practical reality for VA and DOD clinicians and veteran patients. At a time when data security is being tested by dramatic increases in malware and intrusion attempts, it is more critical than ever to have a permanent leader in place to remediate known security deficiencies and ensure that health and personal data remains secure in VA systems. I am committed to doing right by veterans on this critical issue.

VA continues to lurch from crisis to crisis, facing health care funding shortfalls, construction cost overruns, growing patient wait times, insufficient collaboration between VA and DOD, and a backlog of disability compensation claims and appeals. In the face of these crises, these nominees will assume two of the toughest jobs in government given all of the attention VA has received of late. VA's culture has been described as corrosive and nonresponsive, and there continues to be a need for a significant change in the culture at VA. I expect both Dr. Shulkin and Ms. Council to use their expertise and experience to make these changes and improve VA services for veterans.

Finally, I would like to highlight one additional area of concern. There are far too many key leadership positions at VA that remain unfilled. There are

still five positions requiring Senate confirmation that are occupied by officials serving in an interim or acting capacity. A permanent, Senate-confirmed leadership team is vital to make the significant and necessary changes to the culture of an organization of the size and scope of VA. The bottom line is VA needs permanent, Senate-confirmed leadership in place in order to meet the significant challenges that continue to face the Department. The Senate needs the names of qualified nominees to fill VA's many vacancies.

As the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I congratulate Mr. Shulkin and Ms. Council, and thank them for their willingness to serve the veterans of this great Nation.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE IN CABO VERDE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, the 40th anniversary of Cabo Verde's independence, on July 5th, comes just one day after our country's own Independence Day. As we near Cabo Verde's 40th anniversary, this small country of 500,000 merits our recognition for its longstanding ties to the United States and for serving as a beacon for democracy in Africa.

While the existence of Cabo Verde's islands was first acknowledged by the Romans, it was not until 1456 that the uninhabited islands were rediscovered and settled by Portuguese explorers. Over the next several hundred years, as a colony of the Portuguese Empire, Cabo Verde was a lucrative trading post between Europe, Africa, and the Americas. Towards the end of the 18th century, many Cabo Verdeans came to New England, particularly Rhode Island and Massachusetts, where some found success working in the whaling industry. This immigration strengthened the ties between the United States and Cabo Verde and, in 1818, Cabo Verde became the site of the first U.S. consulate in sub-Saharan Africa. As a result of the 1974 Carnation Revolution in Portugal, and after centuries of colonial rule, Cabo Verde was able to formally gain independence on July 5, 1975, and soon established diplomatic ties with the United States.

Since that time, Cabo Verde has worked for a democratic government. It has made great strides in this regard and, today, Cabo Verde is a leader in good governance, receiving top marks from the Freedom House for political rights and civil liberties. Cabo Verde has also made significant economic and social progress in the past several years. Additionally, given Cabo Verde's strong ties to the United States and our shared commitment to democracy and economic freedom, Cabo Verde was awarded and successfully undertook a Millennium Challenge Corporation, MCC, compact for private sector, agricultural, and transportation reforms, and is currently implementing a second MCC compact in the areas of water, sanitation, and land management. Moving forward, Cabo Verde can build on these successes to continue to grow its economy as well as strengthen ties to the United States and other allies.

Rhode Island is fortunate to have one of the two largest Cabo Verdean-American populations in the country, and continues to be enriched by the heritage and contributions of Cabo Verde. I am very pleased that earlier this month, T.F. Green Airport in Rhode Island began welcoming direct flights from Cabo Verde, which will lead to greater exchange and new opportunities between Rhode Island and Cabo Verde.

As we near July 5th, I send my best wishes to all those of Cabo Verdean descent in Rhode Island and throughout the country on the 40th anniversary of Cabo Verde's independence.

COMBATTING ANTI-SEMITISM, RACISM AND INTOLERANCE

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, as our Nation continues to mourn the tragic loss of life at the Mother Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston, I wish to discuss international efforts that can assist in addressing the prejudice and discrimination that fuels violence and acts of extremism in our country and abroad.

Following the horrific attacks in Paris and Copenhagen earlier this year, the president of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Ilkka Kanerva, appointed me to serve as the assembly's first special representative on anti-Semitism, racism, and intolerance. As a Member of Congress, the U.S. Helsinki Commission, and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, I have long fought to counter prejudice and discrimination and to advance more effective measures against hate crimes. I was therefore extremely honored that President Kanerva entrusted me with this responsibility.

Given the breadth of my mandate, I am focusing my work this year on three areas: first, the urgent issue of anti-Semitism and community security; second, discrimination against Muslims and anti-Muslim backlash; finally, in light of events in our own country and the salience of these struggles for minorities in Europe, discriminatory policing.

As my first initiative, I visited the sites of the Paris and Copenhagen tragedies in April, where I met with people directly affected by the violence as well as government officials and civil society representatives. In my consultations with Jewish, Muslim, African-descent, and other community leaders, we discussed Jewish community security and civil society coalition efforts to combat all forms of prejudice and discrimination. The horrific attacks in those two capitals—simultaneously targeting Jewish communities and expressions of free speech—underscored the urgent need to address security threats to Jewish individuals and communities. The pervasiveness of anti-Semitism is one of the main reasons I last year called on the OSCE to hold a High Level Conference to mark the 10th anniversary of the seminal OSCE Berlin Conference on Anti-Semitism and adopt a ministerial decision calling on all 57 participating states of the OSCE to implement commitments to combat anti-Semitism. In this vein, I recently led efforts to provide funding for U.S. and European civil society to work with youth to combat anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance.

Of course, we must be vigilant to ensure that such efforts do not degenerate into anti-Muslim backlash. Measures that are framed in ways that fuel anti-Muslim prejudice will ultimately be counterproductive. Moreover, we need diverse coalitions working together to address the threats we face today. This month, fringe extremist parties from seven different countries formed a block in the EU Parliament. They are now eligible to receive EU money to disseminate toxic views that combine anti-Semitism with anti-Muslim bigotry.

I have also introduced legislation to end racial profiling in the United States. The End Racial Profiling Act, S. 1056, prohibits racial profiling by law enforcement, mandates law enforcement bias training, requires data collection on all police stops, and creates procedures for receiving, investigating, and resolving profiling complaints. Tragic events in Baltimore and New York, North Charleston and Ferguson, and elsewhere around the country have shown us that Federal legislation finally ending racial profiling is essential.

It is also essential that we restore confidence between communities and the police, and the criminal justice system at large. To that end, I have also introduced the ''Baltimore Act,'' S. 1610 named after my home city, to provide strategies and resources to strengthen police-community relations and restore justice.

Discriminatory policing is undoubtedly a challenge that many governments face. In some European countries, minorities are 10 times more likely to be stopped by the police than members of the majority. In France—the country with some of Europe's largest Muslim and Black populations—police officers were recently acquitted in connection with the death of two teenagers. That incident 10 years ago sparked riots across France; the acquittal this year has prompted protests and comparisons with Ferguson. In Germany, a human rights group is petitioning the government to end profiling after a Black student was arrested solely because his skin color led them to presume he was in the country illegally. In Slovakia, 10 police officers were acquitted in February of forcing Romani boys to strip and fight each other, even though this notorious incident was captured on cell phone

video. As we know from our own experience, racial bigotry, if unaddressed, only metastasizes.

The United States and our European partners have a lot to learn from one another. We have learned—and continue to learn—from the civil rights struggle and, as a country founded and built by people seeking freedom and opportunity, about immigration and integration. Many European countries are working hard to address discrimination and advance civil rights through the creation of national human rights institutions and targeted strategies. Additionally, there are many lessons learned from hate-based violence reduction and gun laws.

The United States and Europe have worked on both sides of the Atlantic to address issues of prejudice and discrimination and foster diversity, but on a largely ad hoc basis. I recently introduced provisions in the Senate for a Joint Action Plan between the United States and European Union to formalize and coordinate such consultations and ensure that the necessary experts and stakeholders from the public and private sectors are involved. It would also improve transparency and access to information generated by these exchanges. I have also urged the OSCE chair-in-office to convene a high-level conference on racism and xenophobia to elevate understanding of these issues and advance additional concrete steps by the OSCE participating states. The recent events in Charleston, Paris, and Copenhagen underscore the urgent need for shared efforts to combat hate and foster inclusion on both sides of the Atlantic.

In 1991, just days after the failed Moscow coup, the United States met in Russia with other OSCE participating states. Our countries agreed that ''issues relating to human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law are of international concern, as respect for these rights and freedoms constitutes one of the foundations of the international order.'' Such matters are ''of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the state concerned.'' That is as true today as it was 20 some years ago. It is in that spirit that I will continue to work with other parliamentarians to combat anti-Semitism, racism, and other forms of intolerance—in the United States and elsewhere in the OSCE region.

REMEMBERING MARGUERITE McKAY

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to a great Rhode Islander, Marguerite K. McKay, who passed away last month at the age of 96.

Marguerite Katherine McCrudden was born in Providence on September 15, 1918, and grew up in the Smith Hill neighborhood of the city. One of six children, she attended St. Patrick's High School in Providence and graduated from Bryant College in 1938.

Marguerite spent much of her professional life dedicated to the city of Providence. She began her career in the Building Inspector's Office, and later moved to the Providence School Department, where she worked until she retired.

Marguerite married Franklin Richard McKay in 1950, and together they had one child, Bernard. Franklin served as a city councilman and city solicitor in Attleboro, MA, and both he and Marguerite were active in the Attleboro community and their church parish, St. John the Evangelist.

After Franklin's passing in 1968, Marguerite spent her time living in Barrington, RI, and on Prudence Island in Narragansett Bay. She enjoyed cooking, gardening, swimming, and following politics. In her retirement, she traveled extensively and remained active in her church, St. Luke's in Barrington. In 2005, she moved to Reston, VA to be closer to her family.

Marguerite passed away in Reston in May. Her funeral was held on June 20 at her childhood church, St. Patrick's, in the Smith Hill neighborhood of Providence. She was predeceased by her beloved grandson Brendan, who passed away last year.

I would like to offer my heartfelt condolences to Marguerite's son Bernard and his wife Mary; her grandchildren Patrick, Conor, and Rosemary; her three great-grandchildren; and her two surviving siblings, Cornelius Bernard McCrudden and Mary McCrudden Broome. Marguerite led a life of service to her community, and our State is better for it. I know her example of good will and selflessness will continue to sustain and inspire her family.

ALZHEIMER'S & BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President. I wish to commemorate Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness month. The impact of Alzheimer's is felt in families and communities across Virginia and the Nation, and this month provides an opportunity to stand with those suffering from Alzheimer's and other brain diseases to raise awareness. I am also proud to cosponsor S. 857, the Health Outcomes, Planning, and Education, HOPE, for Alzheimer's Act today.

The challenges Alzheimer's poses for families are real. Financially and emotionally, Alzheimer's disease has a devastating impact as patients need to navigate medical information, access community services and prepare for living with this disease. In Virginia there are over 130,000 people living with Alzheimer's and that number is expected to grow to as many as 190,000 by 2025. Alzheimer's does not only impact the individual patient, but also changes the lives of family caregivers. In 2014, an estimated 452,000 family caregivers provided 514 million hours of care for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and dementia in Virginia.

The cost is also significant for the Federal Government. Nearly one in every five Medicare dollars is spent on someone with Alzheimer's or dementia, and by 2050, it will be nearly $1 of every $3. In the years between 2015 and 2050, caring for people with Alzheimer's will cost our country $20.8 trillion. Research funding is critical, and action is needed to provide to support for newly diagnosed patients and families.

The HOPE for Alzheimer's Act would ensure patients and their families have access to a care planning session with their doctor to help them understand the diagnosis, treatment options, and what medical and community services are available. Studies have shown that providing patients and families with a full range of information and support results in better outcomes for those living with Alzheimer's, including higher quality of care, increased use of needed community services, reduced patient behavioral and psychiatric symptoms, and reduced caregiver stress and depression. According to the Alzheimer's Association, only 45 percent of people with Alzheimer's disease or their caregivers report being told of their diagnosis.

This legislation provides for Medicare coverage for comprehensive Alzheimer's disease care planning services. While Medicare covers Alzheimer's disease diagnostic services, it currently does not provide coverage for comprehensive care planning following a diagnosis. These critical services will allow patients and families to understand the diagnosis, receive information about medical and non-medical options for ongoing treatment, services and supports and how to access care.

As a member of the Committee on Aging, I am committed to working with my colleagues to raise awareness about this devastating disease, and thank the Alzheimer's Association and other advocates for their strong voices during June and throughout the year.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO WALLACE ''WALLY'' RENEY

• Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, today I wish to honor one of New Hampshire's most respected, accomplished, and beloved citizens, Wallace ''Wally'' Reney, as he enters into retirement. I am proud to recognize his illustrious professional career and continued service to many communities across the Granite State and our country.

Originally from Bellows Falls, VT, Wally has been a resident of Surry, NH for the past five decades. During his 50-year career as a community banker, Wally has helped thousands of Granite Staters become homeowners, serviced their financial needs, and helped strengthen and develop the Monadnock Region. Before becoming a business leader in the community, Wally spent 8 years in the U.S. Marine Corps. Serving

overseas in Japan for 2 of those years as a court stenographer, he took the time to learn the language, culture, and customs—demonstrating an appreciation for serving people and a knack for communication that would lend itself to Wally's own work and character years later.

Wally tells everyone he meets that he has what money cannot buy. He is revered as one of the most generous and selfless individuals who has devoted his life to giving back, not just to the community, but to others who gave him the opportunity to be successful in life. Wally lent his time and energy to over 50 nonprofits and has been a member of the Lions Club for over 40 years. He sent dozens of children to summer camp, often paying for their experience himself. Since 1969, Wally has helped expand the local Toys for Tots program, where he has donated gifts and toys to ensure a joyful holiday season for all children.

Wally Reney embodies the true spirit of the American dream, and, in turn, has encouraged countless others to achieve their own dreams. Wally has improved the quality of life in the Granite State and epitomizes the great New Hampshire tradition of being a good neighbor. I am extraordinarily proud to recognize and celebrate Wally. I wish him the best for a happy and healthy retirement.●

TRIBUTE TO RALPH SHOWER

● Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I wish to honor Ralph Shower of St. Louis, MO, on his upcoming 100th birthday on July 6, 2015. As a dedicated family man, heroic World War II veteran, and successful business professional, he has made his family, community, and the entire State of Missouri proud to call him one of our own.

Born and raised in St. Louis, Mr. Shower attended Soldan High School, where he participated in varsity track and field. His dad ran a hotel and restaurant supply business, and in his younger years, he worked with his father at the family business.

As mentioned before, Mr. Shower honorably served in the U.S. Army's 517 Signal Company, 17th Airborne Division, during World War II. While serving, he suffered from serious injuries in a paratrooper glider accident from which he fully recovered, and he has continued to live a full and healthy life. To this day, he has remained actively involved in his community through the local veterans service organizations.

After leaving the Army, Mr. Shower began a career in public relations management, serving various charity organizations, including the Leukemia Guild of Missouri and the City of Hope Hospital in Durate, CA.

Even with his military and professional successes, Shower has always prioritized his family above all else. He and Ethel, his late wife of 70 years, had three children. Michael Shower, his son, held an esteemed position as the executive secretary and counselor to the executive director of UNICEF up until his passing in 1994. Mr. Shower has two beloved daughters, Suzanne Shower and Michelle Proctor, along with two granddaughters and five great-granddaughters.

Forty-seven of Mr. Shower's relatives will be traveling to the St. Louis area to celebrate his long and accomplished life. It sounds like it will be a truly special celebration.

Ralph Shower has touched the lives of so many people over the past century, and his service to his country and community deserves our recognition and appreciation. I congratulate Ralph Shower for his service to his family, community, and this great country. Happy Birthday!●

TRIBUTE TO DR. WILLIAM E. ''BRIT'' KIRWAN

● Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, as you know, when Senators converse in the cloakroom between votes, we often claim bragging rights—who represents the State with the best crab cake, which State has the best hiking trails, and which baseball team will win the American League East division for example. Everyone likes to chime in and claim his or her State as the best in some regard. But if anyone mentions leaders in higher education, the conversation just stops. Every Senator knows what the senior Senator from Maryland and I are going to say—Dr. William E. ''Brit'' Kirwan. That ends the competition right there. Today I wish to honor this man who can rightfully be called one of the Nation's most respected leaders in higher education.

After 51 years in the field of education—spending 25 years as a faculty member and administrator at the University of Maryland, College Park, president of both the University of Maryland, College Park and The Ohio State University, and now as the chancellor of the University System of Maryland for the past 12 years—Dr. Kirwan will be retiring on June 30, 2015.

Under Dr. Kirwan's extraordinary leadership, the University System of Maryland has thrived. Our State's universities are among the best in the Nation, with cutting-edge research programs which support the work of private businesses and Federal agencies located nearby, internationally renowned academic programs, and diverse student bodies. Dr. Kirwan also paved the way for innovative solutions to cut the university system's costs while improving quality, expanding educational access for minorities, and initiating other successful strategies, such as the University System of Maryland's ''Closing the Achievement Gap'' program.

Outside of Maryland, Dr. Kirwan's expertise has been sought by Presidents of both parties and the U.S. Congress to offer his input on national higher education efforts. Even after he announced his retirement, Dr. Kirwan cochaired the Task Force on Federal Regulation of Higher Education, and currently serves as the cochair of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics; chair of the College Board's Commission on Access, Admissions, and Success in Education; a member of the Business Higher Education Forum and as chair of the National Research Council Board of Higher Education and the Workforce.

His work is not without recognition by the citizens of our State. Among his many accolades but not an exhaustive list after his numerous years of service, Dr. Kirwan is the recipient of the TIAA-CREF Theodore M. Hesburgh Award for Leadership, the Carnegie Corporation Leadership Award, the 16th recipient of the Maryland House of Delegates Speaker's Medallion in recognition of his contributions to the State of Maryland, the Maryland Senate First Citizen Award in recognition of his ongoing commitment and service to our State, the Lifetime Achievement Award in Education from the Tech Council of Maryland, the Champion of Children Award from the Maryland State Department of Education, the Regional Visionary Award of the Greater Baltimore Committee, and the Public Service Award from the Maryland Chamber of Commerce.

As impressive as Dr. Kirwan's resume may be, it does not define who he is as an individual. Dr. Kirwan is a man of integrity and loyalty who maintains a passion for ensuring access to a quality education for all. He has been visionary in all things academic and believer in the well-being of young men and women. I would also like to thank Dr. Kirwan's family for the support they have given to him throughout his academic career and for allowing him to so greatly share his talents with the people of Maryland.

Dr. Kirwan's efforts have left the University System of Maryland and the State of Maryland both stronger academically and better prepared to educate students for the challenges of tomorrow. He has made social justice a genuine priority, which has elevated the university system even further. Through his vision and actions to establish the then Center for Academic Innovation at the University of Maryland, College Park, and the legacy of the newly commissioned William E. Kirwan Center for Academic Innovation will advance the priorities of Dr. Kirwan to address barriers to a college education for decades to come.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Dr. Kirwan on his well-deserved retirement and thanking Dr. Kirwan for his service and commitment to higher education.●

NATIONAL ROOFING WEEK

● Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, today I would like to recognize the National Roofing Contractors Association, NRCA, headquartered in Rosemont, IL,

and support its efforts to designate the week of July 5–11, 2015 as National Roofing Week.

As the first line of defense against natural elements, such as rain, snow or wind, the roof is one of the most critical features of any home or business. Yet, despite its importance, it is often taken for granted until it falls into disrepair. National Roofing Week is a valuable reminder of the significance that quality roofing has on our communities and honors the thousands of contractors in the roofing industry across the United States.

NRCA's 3,800 members, located across all 50 States, play a significant role in the installation and maintenance of roofing systems. With a vast network of roofing contractors and industry-related members, NRCA handles a majority of new construction and replacement roof systems on commercial and residential structures in America. However, the organization's activities extend beyond its construction duties.

National Roofing Week provides an opportunity to recognize the thousands of NRCA members and their commitment to supporting their local communities. As part of its outreach efforts last year, NRCA members worked together to raise funds and repair the roof for a local nonprofit organization that provides health services and housing options for mistreated and abused children in Chicago. I commend the NRCA and the vital role the organization and its members play in every community and I ask my colleagues to join me in acknowledging their contributions during National Roofing Week.●

REMEMBERING TROOPER JAMES A. MOEN AND RECOGNIZING MEGAN PETERS

● Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, on Thursday, the Alaska State Troopers will pause to recognize the 14th anniversary of the loss of Trooper James A. Moen. Trooper Moen, assigned to fish and wildlife protection duties, was killed in an aircraft accident while on law enforcement patrol near Lake Iliamna, AK. Trooper Moen was piloting the single-engine Piper Cub float plane when it crashed for unknown reasons. His remains were recovered by troopers who hiked in to the scene. Trooper Moen had served with the Alaska State Troopers—fish and wildlife protection for over 18 years and had over 4,000 hours of flight time as both a military and civilian pilot. He was survived by his wife and four children.

One of Trooper Moen's children is Megan Peters, a spokesperson for the Alaska State Troopers. Megan's name is perhaps better known among Alaskans than her father's was. But one thing that Alaskans may not know is that Megan plays a leading role in organizing the Alaska police memorial ceremony each May. While all Alaska's law enforcement officers who gave their lives in the line of duty are recognized in this ceremony, the emphasis is on honoring those who passed in the preceding year.

There is a certain irony to Megan's involvement in all this. During Police Week, Megan devotes her energy to comforting the families of other fallen officers. But who is there to recognize and comfort Megan, herself a survivor of a law enforcement tragedy? That irony was not lost on Mallory Peebles, a reporter from KTUU Television in Anchorage. During the 2013 ceremony, Mallory devoted a segment of Channel 2 News to telling Megan's story—then and now.

So this year, through this message in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, it is my intention to honor both father and daughter. The legacy of Trooper James A. Moen very much lives on in the work of his daughter Megan. I didn't know Trooper Moen, but I have to believe that he would be very proud of Megan's work.

My staff and I rely on Megan throughout the year for information on public safety issues in Alaska. She is the go-to person and gets us the answers we need on short deadline. We appreciate her knowledge and diligence, but rarely do we think to take a moment to say thank you.

I ask unanimous consent that Mallory Peebles report on the work of Megan Peters be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From Channel 2 News, May 20, 2013]

LOST IN THE LINE OF DUTY: A STATE TROOPER'S STORY 12 YEARS LATER

(By Mallory Peebles and Photojournalist Shawn Wilson)

ANCHORAGE, AK.—When a service member or civilian in uniform makes the ultimate sacrifice, they are officially considered lost in the line of duty. Channel Two is looking back at three Alaskans and their families who have paid the ultimate price. On May 10, The State of Alaska recognized Peace Officers Memorial Day. It's a somber yet iconic event to mark and mourn Alaska's law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty. This year the annual event was organized by State Trooper spokeswoman Megan Peters. For Peters it's more than just a work assignment, it's personal. ''My dad was a fish cop, fish and wildlife. So he was a brown shirt,'' Peters said. Peters said growing up she always knew her father did important work with the Alaska Troopers—sometimes even dangerous work—but as a child she didn't focus on the dangers of the job. ''He would go out on the boat all the time. He loved flying,'' Peters said. ''People say yeah, it's something that you know could happen but I was a little kid, and my dad was a trooper the whole time, so why would something happen?'' When Peters was just 18-years-old something did happen. Her father was flying on a routine sport fishing patrol near Iliamna when his plane crashed. It was May 25, 2001. Megan was studying abroad in Finland when her mother called with the news. ''I was just walking down the street, and I'll never forget the first thing she said was 'I'm so sorry Megan,' '' Peters said. ''I don't remember anything after that phone call. I don't remember packing. I didn't have to change my plane tickets because I was already leaving. I just came home, and it was a different life.'' It was a life without a father who had meant the world to her. ''When he wasn't working he was always taking us out. We had a boat and we had our own plane in high school,'' Peters said. ''My dad loved Alaska and that's why he came up here. He came up with the intent on wanting to be a State Trooper.'' James Arthur Moen was a productive Alaska State Trooper. For 18 years he served The State of Alaska. A member of the Special Emergency Response Team, SERT and dive unit, Moen assisted in numerous rescues and recovery missions. Today, he is still remembered for his contributions across the state. A trooper boat is named after Moen and still operates out of Petersburg. While serving Alaskans, Moen also served as a strong role model for his daughter. She decided to follow in her father's footsteps and is now working with the State Troopers. Peters joined the Troopers in 2007 where she is tasked with writing a press release each time a plane crashes in Alaska and troopers respond. Just like her father's hat that sits on her desk in the office, each press release serves as a constant and often painful reminder of the high cost of duty. ''I might not understand what it is that the troopers are doing every single day and what they're facing but I grew up around it enough to know what their jobs do entail,'' said Peters, ''and to know what it's like to be in that environment.'' Alaska Peace Officers Memorial Day serves as a stark reminder of the life and death situations law enforcement officers face every day while on duty. The harsh realities that come along with the responsibilities of duty in Alaska can mean it's possible they may not come home. Moen's name was added to this memorial more than a decade ago and joins many like it. This year 40-year-old State Trooper Tage Toll of Talkeetna had his name added. He died only two months ago when Helo-One crashed while executing the rescue of a stranded snowmachiner. Village Public Safety Officer Thomas Madole also had his named added to the memorial this year. He was shot and killed while responding to a 911 call in Manokotak. All the names added serve as a reminder of the lives sacrificed for a job, country and state they loved. ''My dad was a trooper and a pilot and he loved both, and you could see it every day when he came home,'' Peters said. ''He was happy, he loved his life.''

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Very touching story. This year, once again, we reflect on the service of Trooper James A. Moen to our State. At the same time we recognize the continuing contributions of his daughter, Megan, without whom we would not know as much about the triumphs, the risks and the sacrifices made by the troopers who keep Alaskans safe.●

RECOGNIZING CONVERSATIONS

● Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, small businesses have the unique ability to recognize emerging service gaps in their local economies. Often, these small businesses fill these unique service gaps in targeted, innovative ways. One such entity is this week's Small Business of the Week, Conversations of New Orleans, LA.

In 2010, Megan Hargroder noticed a lack in social media and online engagement consulting for startups, small businesses, and nonprofits in the greater New Orleans area. Eager to fill the

niche, Hargroder founded the media consulting company Conversations. Through Conversations, Hargroder's team provides targeted, easy-to-implement strategies for entities to connect with clients and future clients across a variety of online media platforms. Conversations has been an integral component in the online presence of hundreds of local organizations, businesses, and campaigns, such as the Junior League of New Orleans, the League of Women Voters, Tobacco Free Living, and former New Orleans Saints safety Steve Gleason. Additionally, the Conversations team maintains an online journal and steady calendar of speaking engagements in their quest to continually educate and engage folks in social media outreach techniques.

Like many startups, Hargroder initially struggled with transforming her innovative ideas into a profitable, effective business. She turned to the Greater New Orleans Region's Louisiana Small Business Development Center, LSBDC, which helped her navigate the nuances of starting and maintaining a healthy, thriving business. In the years since, Conversations' five-person team of bright and driven innovators in the realm of media consulting has transformed online media engagement in the State—creating economic opportunities for scores of businesses in Louisiana and beyond.

Congratulations again to Conversations for being selected as Small Business of the Week. Thank you for your commitment to help local small businesses connect with clients and customers and foster economic growth.●

TRIBUTE TO HERBERT COLLINS

● Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to one of my constituents. Mr. Herbert Collins, a native member of the Caroline County community, has dedicated his life to the protection and preservation of the unique history of the region and of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Mr. Collins is a historian who served as a curator for the Smithsonian Institution here in Washington, DC. During his time at the museum, he was the executive director of the National Museum of American History. He also helped found the National Postal Museum, established a security system for the National Philatelic Museum, and was integral to the establishment of the National Museum of the American Indian.

Mr. Collins has committed his life to serving the United States, both as a member of the U.S. Army in his youth and in his service as a historian. This is exemplified in the transformation of his historic home into a personal museum, furnished with dozens of historic artifacts and antiques open to the public. Mr. Collins has also developed relationships with Presidents dating back to President Harry Truman. He contributed his military uniform, complete with his laundry mark, for the funeral service of President Dwight Eisenhower, who had requested to be buried in full military dress, and toured the country raising funds for a museum honoring President John F. Kennedy after the President was assassinated. Mr. Collins has undoubtedly left his mark on the Commonwealth, and I am honored to celebrate his achievements. I know that many throughout Virginia will join me in congratulating him on his service to the Nation and this great State.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 1:33 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 615) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to take administrative action to achieve and maintain interoperable communications capabilities among the components of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

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

H.R. 805. An act to provide for certain requirements relating to the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority stewardship transition.

H.R. 893. An act to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of Boys Town, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1190. An act to repeal the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act providing for the Independent Payment Advisory Board.

H.R. 1626. An act to reduce duplication of information technology at the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1633. An act to provide for certain improvements relating to the tracking and reporting of employees of the Department of Homeland Security placed on administrative leave, or any other type of paid non-duty status without charge to leave, for personnel matters, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1637. An act to require annual reports on the activities and accomplishments of federally funded research and development centers within the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1640. An act to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to submit to Congress a report on the Department of Homeland Security headquarters consolidation project in the National Capital Region, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1646. An act to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to research how certain commercially available small and medium sized unmanned aircraft systems could be used in an attack, how to prevent or mitigate the risk of such an attack, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1698. An act to amend design and content requirements for certain gold and silver coins, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2390. An act to require a review of university-based centers for homeland security, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2576. An act to modernize the Toxic Substances Control Act, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2620. An act to amend the United States Cotton Futures Act to exclude certain cotton futures contracts from coverage under such Act.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 5:45 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

H.R. 615. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to take administrative action to achieve and maintain interoperable communications capabilities among the components of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2146. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal law enforcement officers, firefighters, and air traffic controllers to make penalty-free withdrawals from governmental plans after age 50, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 1190. An act to repeal the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act providing for the Independent Payment Advisory Board; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 1626. An act to reduce duplication of information technology at the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1633. An act to provide for certain improvements relating to the tracking and reporting of employees of the Department of Homeland Security placed on administrative leave, or any other type of paid non-duty status without charge to leave, for personnel matters, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1637. An act to require annual reports on the activities and accomplishments of federally funded research and development centers within the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1640. An act to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to submit to Congress a report on the Department of Homeland Security headquarters consolidation project in

the National Capital Region, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1646. An act to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to research how certain commercially available small and medium sized unmanned aerial systems could be used in an attack, how to prevent or mitigate the risk of such an attack, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1698. An act to amend design and content requirements for certain gold and silver coins, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 2390. An act to require a review of university-based centers for homeland security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

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–2028. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Thiram; Pesticide Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9928–82) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–2029. A communication from the Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Biorefinery, Renewable Chemical, and Biobased Product Manufacturing Assistance Program'' (RIN0570–AA73) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–2030. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting the report of three (3) officers authorized to wear the insignia of the grade of rear admiral or rear admiral (lower half), as indicated, in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–2031. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General John M. Bednarek, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–2032. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of a delay in submission of a report relative to the inventory of contracts for services for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–2033. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General William T. Grisoli, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–2034. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Ronnie D. Hawkins, United States Air Force, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–2035. A communication from the Deputy Secretary, Office of the General Counsel, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Commission Guidance Regarding the Definition of the Terms 'Spouse' and 'Marriage' Following the Supreme Court's Decision in United States v. Windsor'' (17 CFR Parts 231, 241, 271, and 276) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–2036. A communication from the Counsel, Legal Division, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendments to the 2013 Integrated Mortgage Disclosures Rule Under the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (Regulation X) and the Truth In Lending Act (Regulation Z) and the 2013 Loan Originator Rule Under the Truth in Lending Act (Regulation Z)'' (RIN3170–AA48) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–2037. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the continuation of the national emergency that was originally declared in Executive Order 13466 of June 26, 2008, with respect to North Korea; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–2038. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the continuation of the national emergency that was originally declared in Executive Order 13219 of June 26, 2001, with respect to the Western Balkans; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–2039. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the export to the People's Republic of China of items not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–2040. A communication from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the acceptance of gifted land in Tulare County, California; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–2041. A communication from the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Technical Edits'' (RIN1024–AE25) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–2042. A communication from the Acting Commissioner of the Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2014 through March 31, 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–2043. A communication from the Inspector General, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report on External Quality Control Review''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–2044. A communication from the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Housing and Urban Development Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2014, through March 31, 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–2045. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Child Care and Development Fund Report to Congress for Fiscal Years 2012 through 2013''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–2046. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Partnership Transactions Equity Interests of a Partner'' ((RIN1545–BM35) (TD 9722)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–2047. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Suspension of Benefits Under the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act of 2014'' ((RIN1545–BM73) (TD 9723)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–2048. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Applicable Federal Rates - July 2015'' (Rev. Rul. 2015–15) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Finance .

EC–2049. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Probability of a Deceased Spousal Unused Exclusion Amount'' ((RIN1545–BK74) (TD 9725)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–2050. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Credit for Carbon Dioxide Sequestration 2015 Section 45Q Inflation Adjustment Factor'' (Notice 2015–44) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–2051. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Rulings and Determination Letters'' (Rev. Proc. 2015–37) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–2052. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2013: Report to Congress''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–2053. 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 14–050); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2054. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2015–0067—2015–0072); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2055. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Food Additives Permitted for Direct Addition to Food for Human Consumption; TBHQ'' (Docket No. FDA–2014–F–

0364) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2056. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Food Additives Permitted in Feed and Drinking Water of Animals; Gamma-Linolenic Acid Safflower Meal'' (Docket No. FDA–2010–F–0537) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2057. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report to Congress on the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Parts A and B Supplemental Funds for Fiscal Years 2011 through 2014''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2058. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''2012–2013 Report to Congress on Organ Donation and the Recovery, Preservation, and Transportation of Organs''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2059. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Performance Report for fiscal year 2014 for the Generic Drug User Fee Amendments; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2060. A communication from the Director, Administrative Office of the United States Courts, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to compliance by the United States courts of appeals and district courts with the time limitations established for deciding habeas corpus death penalty petitions; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–2061. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants: Ferroalloys Production'' ((RIN2060–AQ11) (FRL No. 9928–66–OAR)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–2062. 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; Pennsylvania; Adoption of Control Technique Guidelines for Offset Lithographic Printing and Letterpress Printing; Flexible Package Printing; and Adhesives, Sealants, Primers, and Solvents'' (FRL No. 9929–39–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–2063. 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; State of New Mexico; Infrastructure Requirements for the 2008 Ozone and 2010 Nitrogen Dioxide National Ambient Air Quality Standards and Interstate Transport of Fine Particulate Matter Air Pollution Affecting Visibility'' (FRL No. 9929–38–Region 6) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–2064. 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; Connecticut; Ambient Air Quality Standards'' (FRL No. 9925–88–Region 1) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–2065. 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; Pennsylvania; Revision to Allegheny County Regulations for Esablishing Permit Fees'' (FRL No. 9929–40–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–2066. 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; Ohio; Ohio PM2.5 NSR'' (FRL No. 9928–57–Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–2067. 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; North Dakota; Alternative Monitoring Plan for Milton R. Young Station'' (FRL No. 9928–81–Region 8) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–2068. 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; West Virginia; Permits for Construction and Major Modification of Major Stationary Sources for the Prevention of Significant Deterioration'' (FRL No. 9929–34–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–2069. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''IFR Altitudes; Miscellaneous Amendments'' (RIN2120–AA63) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2070. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class D Airspace; Jupiter, FL'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0794)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2071. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revocation of Class E Airspace; Lexington, TN'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0969)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2072. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of VOR Federal Airways; Northeastern United States'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2015–1650)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2073. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revocation of Class E Airspace; Forrest City, AR'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0879)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2074. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace; Eufaula, AL'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0970)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2075. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of Class E Airspace; Clark, SD'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0724)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2076. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Modification of Restricted Areas R–4501A, R–4501B, R–4501C, R–4501D, R–4501F, and R–4501H; Fort Leonard Wood, MO'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0640)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2077. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class D and Class E Airspace; Clarksburg, WV'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2014–1003)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2078. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (23); Amdt. No. 3641'' (RIN2120–AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2079. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (47); Amdt. No. 3643'' (RIN2120–AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2080. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of

Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (110); Amdt. No. 3644'' (RIN2120–AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2081. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (169); Amdt. No. 3646'' (RIN2120–AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2082. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (3645)'' (RIN2120–AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2083. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (254); Amdt. No. 3642'' (RIN2120–AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2084. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Exclusion of Tethered Launches From Licensing Requirements'' (RIN2120–AJ90) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2085. A communication from the Director, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''International Services Surveys: BE–I80, Benchmark Survey of Financial Services Transactions Between U.S. Financial Services Providers and Foreign Persons'' (RIN0691–AA84) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2086. A communication from the Regulatory Ombudsman, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Lease and Interchange of Vehicles; Motor Carriers of Passengers'' (RIN2126–AB44) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2087. A communication from the Regulations Officer, Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Procurement, Management, and Administration of Engineering and Design Related Services'' (RIN2125–AF44) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2088. A communication from the Division Chief of Regulatory Development, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Medical Examiner's Certification Integration'' (RIN2126–AB40) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2089. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''International Fisheries; Western and Central Pacific Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species; Closure of Purse Seine Fishery in the ELAPS in 2015'' (RIN0648–XD972) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2090. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Fisheries Off West Coast States; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; 2015–2016 Biennial Specifications and Management Measures; Inseason Adjustments'' (RIN0648–BF08) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2091. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Snapper-Grouper Fishery Off the Southern Atlantic States; Amendment 29'' (RIN0648–BE55) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2092. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries Off West Coast States; the Highly Migratory Species Fishery; Closure'' (RIN0648–XD945) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2093. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pacific Island Fisheries; 2014–15 Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures; Main Hawaiian Islands Deep 7 Bottomfish'' (RIN0648–XD082) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2094. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Blueline Tilefish Fishery; Secretarial Emergency Action'' (RIN0648–BE97) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2095. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''International Fisheries; Western and Central Pacific Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species; Fishing Effort Limits in Purse Seine Fisheries for 2015'' (RIN0648–BF03) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2096. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0584)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2097. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters (Type Certificate Previously Held by Eurocopter France)'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0464)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2098. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters (Type Certificate Previously Held by Eurocopter France)'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–1570)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2099. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters (Type Certificate Previously Held by Eurocopter France)'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0646)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2100. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; ATR—GIE Avions de Transport Regional Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0568)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2101. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Agusta S.p.A. (Agusta) Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–1937)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2102. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Agusta S.p.A. (Agusta) Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–1936)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2103. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Bell Helicopter Textron Canada Limited'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0489)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to

the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2104. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0756)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2105. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0575)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2106. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0342)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2107. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc. Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0754)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2108. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Lockheed Martin Corporation/Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0227)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2109. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation (Sikorsky) Model Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0493)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2110. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation (Type Certificate Previously Held by Schweizer Aircraft Corporation) Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–1020)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2111. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Turbomeca S.A. Turboshaft Engines'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–1003)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2112. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Lycoming Engines Reciprocating Engines (Type Certificate Previously Held by Textron Lycoming Division, AVCO Corporation)'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0940)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2113. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Slingsby Aviation Limited Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–1737)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2114. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; International Aero Turbofan Engines'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0386)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2115. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Zodiac Seats France (formerly Sicma Aero Seat) Passenger Seat Assemblies'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–1282)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 282. A bill to provide taxpayers with an annual report disclosing the cost and performance of Government programs and areas of duplication among them, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–71).

By Mr. COCHRAN, from the Committee on Appropriations:

Special Report entitled ''Further Revised Allocation to Subcommittees of Budget Totals from the Concurrent Resolution for Fiscal Year 2016'' (Rept. No. 114–72).

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

H.R. 728. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 7050 Highway BB in Cedar Hill, Missouri, as the ''Sergeant First Class William B. Woods, Jr. Post Office''.

H.R. 891. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 141 Paloma Drive in Floresville, Texas, as the ''Floresville Veterans Post Office Building''.

H.R. 1326. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2000 Mulford Road in Mulberry, Florida, as the ''Sergeant First Class Daniel M. Ferguson Post Office''.

H.R. 1350. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 442 East 167th Street in Bronx, New York, as the ''Herman Badillo Post Office Building''.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON for the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

*Carol Fortine Ochoa, of Virginia, to be Inspector General, General Services Administration.

*Steven M. Wellner, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

*William Ward Nooter, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. PERDUE:

S. 1655. A bill to amend the United States Cotton Futures Act to exclude certain cotton futures contracts from coverage under that Act; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. BENNET, Mr. GARDNER, and Mr. KING):

S. 1656. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the publicly traded partnership ownership structure to energy power generation projects and transportation fuels, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BARRASSO:

S. 1657. A bill to amend the Reclamation Safety of Dams Act of 1978; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. MCCASKILL (for herself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. KIRK, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 1658. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to protect employees in the building and construction industry who are participants in multiemployer plans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COONS, Mr. REID, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. KAINE, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 1659. A bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and

for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ROBERTS (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BLUNT, and Mr. TOOMEY):

S. 1660. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify and make permanent bonus depreciation; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ISAKSON (for himself and Mr. COONS):

S. 1661. A bill to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to preserve consumer and employer access to licensed independent insurance producers; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. KIRK (for himself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 1662. A bill to include Livingston County, the city of Jonesboro in Union County, and the city of Freeport in Stephenson County, Illinois, to the Lincoln National Heritage Area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Ms. AYOTTE):

S. 1663. A bill to better protect, serve, and advance the rights of victims of elder abuse and financial exploitation by encouraging States and other qualified entities to hold offenders accountable, enhance the capacity of the justice system to investigate, pursue, and prosecute elder abuse cases, identify existing resources to leverage to the extent possible, and assure data collection, research, and evaluation to promote the efficacy and efficiency of the activities described in this Act; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CARPER (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BROWN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. REED, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. COONS, Mr. PETERS, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 1664. A bill to count revenues from military and veteran education programs toward the limit on Federal revenues that certain proprietary institutions of higher education are allowed to receive for purposes of section 487 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. HELLER, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 1665. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to authorize local educational agencies and schools to carry out child sexual abuse awareness and prevention programs or activities; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. BLUNT):

S. 1666. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the limitation on the election to accelerate the AMT credit in lieu of bonus depreciation for 2015 and 2016, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. CRAPO, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 1667. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify the special rules for accident and health plans of certain governmental entities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. LEE, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. COATS, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 1668. A bill to restore long-standing United States policy that the Wire Act prohibits all forms of Internet gambling, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FISCHER:

S. 1669. A bill to reform the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

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

S. 1670. A bill to amend the Torture Victims Relief Act of 1998 to authorize appropriations to provide assistance for domestic and foreign programs and centers for the treatment of victims of torture, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BENNET:

S. 1671. A bill to reauthorize the National Forest Foundation Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mrs. FISCHER:

S. 1672. A bill to authorize States to enter into interstate compacts regarding Class A commercial driver's licenses; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 1673. A bill to improve passenger vessel security and safety, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 1674. A bill to amend and reauthorize certain provisions relating to Long Island Sound restoration and stewardship; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. MURPHY, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 1675. A bill to amend certain appropriations Acts to repeal the requirement directing the Administrator of General Services to sell Federal property and assets that support the operations of the Plum Island Animal Disease Center in Plum Island, New York, to provide for a report on the potential transfer of Plum Island, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. 1676. A bill to increase the number of graduate medical education positions treating veterans, to improve the compensation of health care providers, medical directors, and directors of Veterans Integrated Service Networks of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. CARDIN:

S. Res. 211. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding Srebrenica; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SCOTT (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. COATS, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORKER, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DAINES, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. ERNST, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. GARDNER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HELLER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Mr. KIRK, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEE, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. PETERS, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. REED, Mr. REID, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SASSE, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SESSIONS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. SHELBY, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. UDALL, Mr. VITTER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. Res. 212. A resolution condemning the attack on Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, and expressing encouragement and prayers for all affected by this evil assault; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. CORKER, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. REID, Mr. UDALL, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. Res. 213. A resolution designating October 30, 2015, as a national day of remembrance for nuclear weapons program workers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MCCONNELL:

S. Con. Res. 19. A concurrent resolution providing for a conditional adjournment or recess of the Senate and an adjournment of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 310

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 310, a bill to prohibit the use of Federal funds for the costs of painting portraits of officers and employees of the Federal Government.

S. 311

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 311, a bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to address and take action to prevent bullying and harassment of students.

S. 314

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) 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. 512

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 512, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to safeguard data

stored abroad from improper government access, and for other purposes.

S. 574

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 574, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow employers a credit against income tax for employees who participate in qualified apprenticeship programs.

S. 578

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 578, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 667

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

S. 681

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) were added as cosponsors of S. 681, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes.

S. 711

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 711, a bill to amend section 520J of the Public Service Health Act to authorize grants for mental health first aid training programs.

S. 713

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 713, a bill to prevent international violence against women, and for other purposes.

S. 743

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 743, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to recognize the service in the reserve components of the Armed Forces of certain persons by honoring them with status as veterans under law, and for other purposes.

S. 746

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 746, a bill to provide for the establishment of a Commission to Accelerate the End of Breast Cancer.

S. 843

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 843, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to count a period of receipt of outpatient observation services in a hospital toward satisfying the 3-day inpatient hospital requirement for coverage of skilled nursing facility services under Medicare.

S. 861

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 861, a bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to curb waste, fraud, and abuse in the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

S. 885

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 885, a bill to direct the Architect of the Capitol to place in the United States Capitol a chair honoring American Prisoners of War/Missing in Action.

S. 891

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 891, a bill to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to facilitate the administration and enforcement of antidumping and countervailing duty orders, and for other purposes.

S. 928

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 928, a bill to reauthorize the World Trade Center Health Program and the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund of 2001, and for other purposes.

S. 991

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 991, a bill to establish the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, and for other purposes.

S. 1040

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1040, a bill to direct the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the National Academy of Sciences to study the vehicle handling requirements proposed by the Commission for recreational off-highway vehicles and to prohibit the adoption of any such requirements until the completion of the study, and for other purposes.

S. 1081

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1081, a bill to end the use of body-gripping traps in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

S. 1119

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1119, a bill to establish the National Criminal Justice Commission.

S. 1170

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) 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.

S. 1203

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1203, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the processing by the Department of Veterans Affairs of claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 1300

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1300, a bill to amend the section 221 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide relief for adoptive families from immigrant visa feeds in certain situations.

S. 1324

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1324, a bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to fulfill certain requirements before regulating standards of performance for new, modified, and reconstructed fossil fuel-fired electric utility generating units, and for other purposes.

S. 1387

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1387, a bill to amend title XVI of the Social Security Act to update eligibility for the supplemental security income program, and for other purposes.

S. 1445

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1445, a bill to improve the Microloan Program of the Small Business Administration.

S. 1455

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1455, a bill to provide access to medication-assisted therapy, and for other purposes.

S. 1458

At the request of Mr. COATS, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1458, a bill to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to ensure scientific transparency in the development of environmental regulations and for other purposes.

S. 1512

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from

Maine (Mr. KING) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1512, a bill to eliminate discrimination and promote women's health and economic security by ensuring reasonable workplace accommodations for workers whose ability to perform the functions of a job are limited by pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition.

S. 1524

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 1524, a bill to enable concrete masonry products manufacturers to establish, finance, and carry out a coordinated program of research, education, and promotion to improve, maintain, and develop markets for concrete masonry products.

S. 1576

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1576, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to prevent fraud by representative payees.

S. 1578

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1578, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to enhance taxpayer rights, and for other purposes.

S. 1598

At the request of Mr. LEE, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) were added as cosponsors of S. 1598, a bill to prevent discriminatory treatment of any person on the basis of views held with respect to marriage.

S. 1631

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1631, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify certain provisions relating to multiemployer pensions, and for other purposes.

S. 1634

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1634, a bill to amend the Federal antitrust laws to provide expanded coverage and to eliminate exemptions from such laws that are contrary to the public interest with respect to railroads.

S. 1651

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1651, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions.

S. 1652

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1652, a bill to designate an existing Federal officer to coordinate efforts to secure the release of United States persons who are hostages of hostile groups or state sponsors of terrorism, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 4

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 4, a concurrent resolution supporting the Local Radio Freedom Act.

S. RES. 200

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 200, a resolution wishing His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama a happy 80th birthday on July 6, 2015, and recognizing the outstanding contributions His Holiness has made to the promotion of nonviolence, human rights, interfaith dialogue, environmental awareness, and democracy.

S. RES. 204

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 204, a resolution recognizing June 20, 2015 as ''World Refugee Day'' .

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COONS, Mr. REID, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. KAINE, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 1659. A bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this year marks the 50th anniversaries of the March from Selma to Montgomery and the passage of the landmark Voting Rights Act. Passage of the Voting Rights Act was the result of the blood, sweat, and tears of so many brave Americans who marched for justice—and the decades-long work of countless other men and women committed to seeing our country live up to its promise of equality and justice for all. Their actions transformed our Nation. On this 50th anniversary year, we pay special tribute to their legacy, but there is still work to be done. Each generation must contribute to the fight for equality. Each of us must answer the call to move this Nation toward a more perfect union.

In the coming weeks there will be continued celebrations of the passage of the original Voting Rights Act. Unfortunately, two years ago, the Supreme Court voted to dismantle a core piece of that vital legislation. In Shelby County v. Holder, five Republican-appointed justices on the Supreme Court drove a stake through the heart of the Voting Rights Act. Under Section 5 of the Act, the Federal government has the authority to examine and prevent racially discriminatory voting changes from being enacted before those changes disenfranchise voters in covered jurisdictions. By striking down the coverage formula that determined which States and jurisdictions were subject to Federal review, the Court effectively gutted Section 5. And in holding that the formula was based on outdated information, the Roberts Court disregarded thousands of pages of testimony and evidence from nearly 20 congressional hearings held when the law was reauthorized in 2006.

Within weeks of the Supreme Court's devastating ruling, Republican governors and State legislatures exploited the Shelby County decision. Several States with a documented history of racial discrimination in voting implemented sweeping laws that disproportionately suppressed the voting rights of minorities, the elderly, and young people.

For example, Texas immediately implemented the most restrictive photo identification law in the country. Although, a Federal judge found the law to be an ''unconstitutional poll tax'' that could disenfranchise up to 600,000 voters and disproportionately impact African Americans and Latinos, the law was allowed to disenfranchise voters this past election.

In North Carolina, the Republican legislature and Republican governor passed a far-reaching bill that restricted its citizens' right to vote. The bill cut early voting down from 17 days to 10 days, eliminated teenagers' ability to preregister before their 18th birthday, and eliminated same day voter registration. It also enacted a strict photo identification requirement, which is currently being challenged in court.

These are just a few of the numerous discriminatory voting restrictions that have been enacted since Shelby County was decided. We cannot sit by as the fundamental right to vote is systematically undermined. We must not retreat from our commitment to civil rights and the great accomplishments we celebrate this year. As my friend Congressman JOHN LEWIS has stated, voting ''is the most powerful, nonviolent tool we have to create a more perfect union.''

Similarly, in 1962, Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered a speech at the Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston—the scene of the horrific tragedy last week—where he noted that voting rights was the key to achieving the American dream for all. Their statements are as true today as they were fifty years ago, and that is why we

must do all we can to protect that right for all Americans.

I challenge anyone to claim that racial discrimination no longer exists. Even Chief Justice Roberts acknowledged in the Shelby County decision that ''voting discrimination still exists; no one doubts that.'' The Court further said that Congress may respond with legislation based on current conditions. The bill we introduce today, the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2015, is that response. It reflects the very real, current conditions that Americans face when trying to participate in our democracy.

We have heard from Americans across the country whose voting rights have been diminished and suppressed since the Shelby County decision. We have also heard from numerous voting rights experts and civil rights leaders who have called for strong legislation that would fully restore the protections gutted by the Court's decision. The legislation we are introducing today responds to those calls from the grassroots and the community leaders on the ground who are today's foot soldiers for justice. This bill also represents the hard work and commitment of civil rights organizations like the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the NAACP, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the Brennan Center for Justice, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Native American Rights Fund, the Alaska Federation of Natives, the National Congress of American Indians, LatinoJustice, the Advancement Project, and many others. I thank all of these organizations and the tireless individuals who have helped us shape this legislation.

This bill is a voting rights bill for all Americans. It is a bill for the next generation, and helps protect the legacy of the previous generation who fought so hard five decades ago for these voting rights protections.

Under this bill, all States and local jurisdictions are eligible for Section 5 protections under a new coverage formula, which is based on a finding of repeated voting rights violations in the preceding 25 years. Significantly, the 25-year period ''rolls'' or continuously moves to keep up with ''current conditions,'' as the Supreme Court stated must be a basis for any new coverage provision. States that have repeated and persistent violations will be covered for a period of 10 years, but if a State establishes a clean record moving forward, it emerges from preclearance coverage. In addition, the existing bailout provision would still be available so that States or local jurisdictions that establish a clean record can also emerge from coverage.

The bill also establishes a nationwide, targeted preclearance process for a limited set of voting changes that have historically been found to discriminate against minority voters. For example, a racially diverse county that seeks to change a single-member district seat into an at-large seat will require preclearance because that kind of change has historically been used to marginalize minority voters. Racial gerrymandering, annexations that dilute minority voting strength, strict photo identification requirements, reduction of multilingual voting materials, and the elimination of polling locations in jurisdictions that are racially, ethnically, or linguistically diverse, will also receive greater scrutiny under this bill.

Our bill would also improve the Voting Rights Act to allow Federal courts to bail-in specific jurisdictions where the effect of a particular voting change is to deny citizens their right to vote. Under this provision, a Federal court could subject to preclearance any State or local jurisdiction that the court determines violated the Voting Rights Act or any other Federal law that prohibits discrimination in voting on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group.

The bill we introduce today will also ensure that voters are made aware of changes in laws affecting their right to vote. Justice Brandeis once observed that sunlight is the best disinfectant and I believe that applies here as well. Transparency is a strong deterrent to voting discrimination. Under our bill, the public must be notified of late-breaking changes to standards and voting procedures in Federal elections. Information on polling place resource allocation for Federal elections must also be made public, including information about accessibility for persons with disabilities. Finally, information on changes to electoral districts must be made available to the general public. This includes demographic information, to prevent racial gerrymandering, impermissible redistricting, and infringement on minority voters at the Federal, State and local levels.

The bill makes other commonsense improvements, such as amending current law to allow the Attorney General to request Federal observers in those jurisdictions where racial discrimination in voting remains a serious threat. It revises the preliminary injunction standard for voting rights actions to recognize the principle that oftentimes, obtaining relief after the election has already concluded is too late to vindicate the individuals' voting rights. Thus, such temporary relief may be obtained where the complainant raises a ''serious question'' that—on balance—the hardship the voting change imposes on the complainant outweighs the hardship imposed upon the state or jurisdiction.

In addition, this bill addresses the unique challenges that Native American and Alaska Native voting populations encounter by: allowing for more accessible polling locations and voter registration agencies; permitting absentee voting where polling locations are too remote; and ensuring ballots are translated into all written Native languages where current law already requires bilingual voting materials.

We are introducing this bill today because the persistent and evolving forms of voting discrimination require a strong response. I am proud to be joined by so many lawmakers from both sides of the Capitol and all parts of the country. I am joined by Senator DURBIN, who worked with me in 2006 to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act. We are also joined by Senator COONS, Leader REID, all Democratic Senators on the Judiciary Committee, and many others. In addition, the House of Representatives is today introducing a companion bill, led by my friend JOHN LEWIS and leaders of the House Tri-Caucus—Representative TERRI SEWELL of the Congressional Black Caucus, Representative LINDA SÁNCHEZ of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and Representative JUDY CHU of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus.

I hope that Senate Republicans will join us soon as well. The Voting Rights Act has always been bipartisan. In 2006, when we last reauthorized the Voting Rights Act, I worked closely with the Republican chairmen of the Senate and House Judiciary Committees—former Senator Arlen Specter and Representative JIM SENSENBRENNER. Past reauthorizations have been signed into law by Republican presidents. Yet over the past year, I have not found a Republican in the Senate willing to join me in proposing a meaningful reinstatement of voter protections.

In marking the 50th anniversary of the march in Selma this past March, President Obama issued a call to action on the Voting Rights Act. He observed that: ''One hundred members of Congress have come here today to honor people who were willing to die for the right to protect it. If we want to honor this day, let that hundred go back to Washington and gather four hundred more, and together, pledge to make it their mission to restore that law this year. That is how we honor those on this bridge.''

I agree with the President. The best way we can honor those individuals and the countless others who gave so much to make this a more perfect union is not with platitudes or long overdue symbolic gestures. No, we must act—just as they did. We must continue to agitate, to organize, to educate, and to build momentum so that this legislation becomes law. This bill, just as the Voting Rights Act before it, is necessary if we believe in a democracy that reflects our ideals of equality and justice. This legislation will protect the constitutional rights of all Americans and advance the principles of those who marched a generation ago.

Much attention is focused on the Supreme Court this week as it is poised to

hand down decisions that will affect millions of Americans. The decisions of those nine women and men will impact the security of our health care, the sanctity of our marriages and the quality of the air we breathe. What the Supreme Court does matters. Its decisions affect us all. Nowhere in recent years has that been more clear than in its Shelby County decision. That destructive ruling made the fundamental right to vote vulnerable. It is long past time for Congress to respond with meaningful action.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 211—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING SREBRENICA

Mr. CARDIN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 211

Whereas July 2015 will mark 20 years since the genocide at Srebrenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Whereas, beginning in April 1992, aggression and ethnic cleansing perpetrated by Bosnian Serb forces resulted in a massive influx of Bosniaks seeking protection in Srebrenica and its environs, which the United Nations Security Council designated a ''safe area'' within the Srebrenica enclave in Resolution 819 on April 16, 1993, under the protection of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR);

Whereas the UNPROFOR presence in Srebrenica consisted of a Dutch peacekeeping battalion, with representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the humanitarian medical aid agency Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) helping to provide humanitarian relief to the displaced population living in conditions of massive overcrowding, destitution, and disease;

Whereas, early in 1995, an intensified blockade of the enclave by Bosnian Serb forces deprived the entire population of humanitarian aid and outside communication and contact, and effectively reduced the ability of the Dutch peacekeeping battalion to deter aggression or otherwise respond effectively to a deteriorating situation;

Whereas, beginning on July 6, 1995, Bosnian Serb forces attacked UNPROFOR outposts, seized control of the isolated enclave, held captured Dutch soldiers hostage and, after skirmishes with local defenders, took control of the town of Srebrenica on July 11, 1995;

Whereas an estimated one-third of the population of Srebrenica at the time, including a relatively small number of soldiers, attempted to pass through the lines of Bosnian Serb forces to the relative safety of Bosnian-government controlled territory, but many were killed by patrols and ambushes;

Whereas the remaining population sought protection with the Dutch peacekeeping battalion at its headquarters in the village of Potocari north of Srebrenica, but many of these individuals were with seeming randomness seized by Bosnian Serb forces to be beaten, raped, or executed;

Whereas Bosnian Serb forces deported women, children, and the elderly in buses, but held over 8,000 primarily Bosniak men and boys at collection points and sites in northeastern Bosnia and Herzegovina under their control, and then summarily executed these captives and buried them in mass graves;

Whereas Bosnian Serb forces, hoping to conceal evidence of the massacre at Srebrenica, subsequently moved corpses from initial mass grave sites to many secondary sites scattered throughout parts of eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina under their control;

Whereas the International Commission for Missing Persons (ICMP) deserves recognition for its assistance to the relevant institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina in accounting for close to 90 percent of those individuals reported missing from Srebrenica, despite active attempts to conceal evidence of the massacre, through the careful excavation of mass graves sites and subsequent DNA analysis which confirmed the true extent of the massacre;

Whereas the massacre at Srebrenica was among the worst of many atrocities to occur in the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina from April 1992 to November 1995, during which the policies of aggression and ethnic cleansing pursued by Bosnian Serb forces with the direct support of the Serbian regime of Slobodan Milosevic and its followers ultimately led to the displacement of more than 2,000,000 people, more than 100,000 killed, tens of thousands raped or otherwise tortured and abused, including at concentration camps in the Prijedor area, with the innocent civilians of Sarajevo and other urban centers repeatedly subjected to traumatic shelling and sniper attacks;

Whereas, in addition to being the primary victims at Srebrenica, individuals with Bosniak heritage comprise the vast majority of the victims during the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole, especially among the civilian population;

Whereas Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide defines genocide as ''any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) killing members of the group; (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group'';

Whereas, on May 25, 1993, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 827 establishing the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), based in The Hague, the Netherlands, and charging the ICTY with responsibility for investigating and prosecuting individuals suspected of committing war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity and grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions on the territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1991;

Whereas the ICTY, along with courts in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as in Serbia, has indicted and in most cases convicted approximately three dozen individuals at various levels of responsibility for grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, violations of the laws or customs of war, crimes against humanity, genocide, and complicity in genocide associated with the massacre at Srebrenica, most notably Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, whose trials are ongoing;

Whereas both the ICTY and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) have ruled that the actions of Bosnian Serb forces in Srebrenica in July 1995 constitute genocide;

Whereas House Resolution 199 (109th Congress), passed on June 27, 2005, expressed the sense of the House of Representatives that the aggression and ethnic cleansing committed by Serb forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina meets the terms defining genocide according to the 1949 Genocide Convention;

Whereas the United Nations has largely acknowledged its failure to fulfill its responsibility to take actions and make decisions that could have deterred the assault on Srebrenica and prevented the subsequent genocide from occurring;

Whereas some prominent Serbian and Bosnian Serb officials, among others, have denied or at least refused to acknowledge that the massacre at Srebrenica constituted a genocide, or have sought otherwise to trivialize the extent and importance of the massacre; and

Whereas the international community, including the United States, has continued to provide personnel and resources, including through direct military intervention, to prevent further aggression and ethnic cleansing, to negotiate the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (initialed in Dayton, Ohio, on November 21, 1995, and signed in Paris on December 14, 1995), and to help ensure its fullest implementation, including cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia as well as reconciliation among all of Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) affirms that the policies of aggression and ethnic cleansing as implemented by Serb forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995 meet the terms defining the crime of genocide in Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide;

(2) condemns statements that deny or question that the massacre at Srebrenica constituted a genocide;

(3) urges the Atrocities Prevention Board, a United States interagency committee established by the President in 2012, to study the lessons of Srebrenica and issue informed guidance on how to prevent similar incidents from recurring in the future, paying particular regard to troubled countries, including Syria, the Central African Republic and Burundi;

(4) encourages the United States to maintain and reaffirm its policy of supporting the independence and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, peace and stability in southeastern Europe as a whole, and the right of all people living in the region, regardless of national, racial, ethnic or religious background, to return to their homes and enjoy the benefits of democratic institutions, the rule of law, and economic opportunity, as well as to know the fate of missing relatives and friends;

(5) recognizes the achievement of the International Commission for Missing Persons (ICMP) in accounting for those missing in conflicts or natural disasters around the world and believes that the ICMP deserves justified recognition for its assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina and its relevant institutions in accounting for approximately 90 percent of those reported missing after the Srebrenica massacre and 70 percent of those reported missing during the whole of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

(6) welcomes the arrest and transfer to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) of all persons indicted for war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, particularly those of Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, which has helped strengthen peace and encouraged reconciliation between the countries of the region and their citizens;

(7) asserts that it is in the national interest of the United States that those individuals who are responsible for these crimes and breaches should continue to be held accountable for their actions, and that the work of the ICTY therefore warrants continued support until all trials and appeals have been completed; and

(8) honors the thousands of innocent people killed or executed at Srebrenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina in July 1995, along with all individuals who were victimized during the conflict and genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995, as well as foreign nationals, including United States citizens, and those individuals in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and other countries of the region who risked and in some cases lost their lives during their brave defense of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and advocacy of respect for ethnic identity without discrimination.

SENATE RESOLUTION 212—CONDEMNING THE ATTACK ON EMANUEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND EXPRESSING ENCOURAGEMENT AND PRAYERS FOR ALL AFFECTED BY THIS EVIL ASSAULT

Mr. SCOTT (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. COATS, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORKER, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DAINES, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. ERNST, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. GARDNER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HELLER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Mr. KIRK, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEE, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. PETERS, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. REED of Rhode Island, Mr. REID of Nevada, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SASSE, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SESSIONS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. SHELBY, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. UDALL, Mr. VITTER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 212

Whereas on June 17, 2015, a horrific mass shooting took place during a Bible study class at ''Mother Emanuel'', the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, where 9 innocent lives were ended in bloodshed;

Whereas the people of the United States mourn the loss to the community and to our Nation of the individuals taken that night: State Senator Rev. Clementa Pinckney, Rev. DePayne Middleton-Doctor, Rev. Daniel Simmons Sr., Rev. Sharonda Singleton, Cynthia Hurd, Susie Jackson, Ethel Lance, Tywanza Sanders, and Myra Thompson; and

Whereas the church, community, and State have come together to offer support, faith, and prayers for those lost and for those who will work to soothe this terrible wound and overcome the hatred and racism that led to this attack: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the attack of June 17, 2015, on Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina and the hate and racist bigotry that motivated it;

(2) offers condolences to the families and loved ones of those killed and to the staff and congregation of Mother Emanuel; and

(3) supports community efforts towards healing from this terrible crime and nationwide efforts to overcome hatred, bigotry, and violence.

SENATE RESOLUTION 213—DESIGNATING OCTOBER 30, 2015, AS A NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM WORKERS

Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. CORKER, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. REID of Nevada, Mr. UDALL, and Ms. MURKOWSKI) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 213

Whereas, since World War II, hundreds of thousands of men and women, including uranium miners, millers, and haulers, have served the United States by building nuclear weapons for the defense of the United States;

Whereas dedicated workers paid a high price for developing a nuclear weapons program at the service, and for the benefit of, the United States, including by developing disabling or fatal illnesses;

Whereas the Senate recognized the contributions, services, and sacrifices that those patriotic men and women made for the defense of the United States in—

(1) Senate Resolution 151, 111th Congress, agreed to May 20, 2009;

(2) Senate Resolution 653, 111th Congress, agreed to September 28, 2010;

(3) Senate Resolution 275, 112th Congress, agreed to September 26, 2011;

(4) Senate Resolution 519, 112th Congress, agreed to August 1, 2012;

(5) Senate Resolution 164, 113th Congress, agreed to September 18, 2013; and

(6) Senate Resolution 417, 113th Congress, agreed to July 9, 2014;

Whereas a national day of remembrance time capsule has been crossing the United States, collecting stories and artifacts of nuclear weapons program workers relating to the nuclear defense era of the United States, and a remembrance quilt has been constructed to memorialize the contribution of those workers;

Whereas the stories and artifacts reflected in the time capsule and the remembrance quilt reinforce the importance of recognizing nuclear weapons program workers; and

Whereas those patriotic men and women deserve to be recognized for the contributions, services, and sacrifices they made for the defense of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates October 30, 2015, as a national day of remembrance for the nuclear weapons program and uranium enrichment workers of the United States, including the uranium miners, millers, and haulers; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to support and participate in appropriate ceremonies, programs, and other activities to commemorate October 30, 2015, as a national day of remembrance for past and present workers in the nuclear weapons program of the United States.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 19—PROVIDING FOR A CONDITIONAL ADJOURNMENT OR RECESS OF THE SENATE AND AN ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. MCCONNELL submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. CON. RES. 19

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That when the Senate recesses or adjourns on any day from Thursday, June 25, 2015, through Friday, July 3, 2015, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand recessed or adjourned until 12:00 noon on Tuesday, July 7, 2015, or such other time on that day as may be specified by its Majority Leader or his designee in the motion to recess or adjourn, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and that when the House adjourns on any legislative day from Thursday, June 25, 2015, through Friday, July 3, 2015, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 7, 2015, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 3 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

SEC. 2. (a) The Majority Leader of the Senate or his designee, after concurrence with the Minority Leader of the Senate, shall notify the Members of the Senate to reassemble at such place and time as he may designate if, in his opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

(b) After reassembling pursuant to subsection (a), when the Senate adjourns on a motion offered pursuant to this subsection by its Majority Leader or his designee, the Senate shall again stand adjourned pursuant to the first section of this concurrent resolution.

SEC. 3. (a) The Speaker or his designee, after consultation with the Minority Leader of the House, shall notify the Members of the House to reassemble at such place and time as he may designate if, in his opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

(b) After reassembling pursuant to subsection (a), when the House adjourns on a motion offered pursuant to this subsection by its Majority Leader or his designee, the House shall again stand adjourned pursuant to the first section of this concurrent resolution.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 24, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD–406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 24, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 24, 2015, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Lessons Learned from Past WMD Negotiations.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 24, 2015, at 10 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 24, 2015, in room SD–628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:15 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Demanding Results to End Native Youth Suicides.''

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 24, 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. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 24, 2015, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Special Committee on Aging be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 24, 2015, at 2 p.m., in room SD–562 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Work in Retirement: Career Reinventions and the New Retirement Workscape.''

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

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES—H.R. 644

The Presiding Officer appointed Mr. HATCH, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. SCHUMER, and Ms. STABENOW conferees on the part of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 1177

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following leader remarks on Tuesday, July 7, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 63, S. 1177, the Every Child Achieves Act of 2015.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Tuesday, July 7, at 5:30 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Executive Calendar No. 81; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; and that following disposition of the nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

REVOKING THE CHARTER OF INCORPORATION OF THE MIAMI TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 533 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 533) to revoke the charter of incorporation of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma at the request of that tribe, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 533) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

PROVIDING FOR A CONDITIONAL ADJOURNMENT OR RECESS OF THE SENATE AND AN ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Con. Res. 19.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 19) providing for a conditional adjournment or recess of the Senate and an adjournment of the House of Representatives.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion 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 concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 19) was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about what just happened on the floor, which was passing in the Senate the trade promotion authority for the President of the United States and for our good country to be able to get out there and expand markets for our exporters and for our farmers, our workers, and our service providers.

This is a significant change because for the last 8 years the United States of America has not been engaged in opening up these markets. While other countries have completed these trade agreements, we have not been able to. So this gives us as a country the ability to be able to open up markets. That is a good thing, and it is significant and will have an impact on our economy that is positive because exports mean not only more jobs but better jobs. So we will see more jobs that are, on average, 15 to 18 percent higher pay and have better benefits, and we will be able to compete more globally. This is important to get America off the sidelines.

There is also a benefit of getting us back involved in trade because it enables America to be able to set some of the rules of trade rather than other countries. And while we have not had this ability to be able to open up new markets, what has happened? Other countries have been completing agreements, shutting us out—our farmers, our workers, our service providers—but they also have been setting the rules of

trade. We want to be able to set them because we are a country that believes we ought to have a rules-based system, that it ought to be fair, that there ought to be the rule of law, and that the standards we have—which are high standards in terms of getting tariffs down but also not being able to unfairly send imports to another country—that those are upheld. So this is a positive step.

What I am also really happy about is that after we passed the trade promotion authority for the first time in 8 years, sending it for signature to the President, which he has indicated he will sign, we then passed legislation with regard to trade adjustment assistance, which is extending benefits to people who are displaced. So if someone in any particular trade agreement loses a job or a company gets hurt, they have the ability to get the worker retraining they need, get the help they need to be able to get the skills they need to find a job and to get themselves back on their feet. So trade adjustment assistance is important.

But within trade adjustment assistance there is something even more interesting. We included an amendment which Senator BROWN—my colleague from Ohio—and I had promoted previously. This is to help all of our workers all around America because it enables us to have the ability to go after countries that send their products to us unfairly, meaning that they subsidize them, which is not fair under the rules of trade, or that they dump them, meaning they sell them at below their cost, which is also unfair.

So this is a very important amendment. We call it the leveling the playing field amendment because as we are expanding exports—which we, of course, should do because that creates more good jobs in my home State of Ohio and around the country—we should also be sure that we are more aggressively enforcing the trade laws that are in place, the international rules and our domestic rules. This amendment that just passed the Senate tonight enables us to do that.

I am excited about it because it gives us the chance to be able to compete. It gives the steelworker in Ohio who is playing by the rules and doing all the right things—being more efficient, being more productive—and companies that are using technology to our advantage the chance to be productive, not to be undercut when other countries dump their products—say, their steel products, their tubes, and other products, structural steel—into the United States of America because they want to get market share. We are going to be able to stop that with this amendment because it enables us to be able to not just file lawsuits against these countries but actually get them resolved more quickly.

Right now, my concern is that too often with these trade laws, by the time you bring a case and are successful at it, you have lost so many jobs that, in effect, although you get a remedy that is winning a trade case and getting higher tariffs on that product, it is too late. This is a really important amendment, the leveling the playing field amendment.

I want to thank my colleagues for supporting it. I know there were some concerns and questions about it. We spent the last couple of months talking about it. Tonight it actually passed. I am told that legislation is now going to go to the House and that it will be passed in the House. I am told that Speaker PELOSI has said today that she is going to support that legislation. This is the trade adjustment assistance legislation with the leveling the playing field amendment as a part of it.

Finally, as part of the TAA, there is another really important measure that I appreciate my colleagues supporting. It is one that I offered in committee, and I have offered it over the years in committee. It is to help workers who were left behind. Back when it was necessary for the U.S. Government to intervene and help our auto companies, there were some people who weren't helped.

This provides a health care tax credit to those individuals who through no fault of their own lost health care and lost pensions. This is when their plans went into the PBGC. This includes Delphi workers in my home State of Ohio. There are several thousand of them. It includes some United Steelworkers. It includes some other employees who were left behind when other workers were given their pensions and given their health care.

Every year we have fought for this. We have now been able to put in place an extension of the health care tax credit they desperately need. For most of these people, it is to provide them the ability between the age they are now—say, in their late 50s—and when they get on Medicare. It is a critical time for them to be able to have this bridge and to be able to provide health care for themselves and for their families.

The health care tax credit is part of this broader TAA, or trade adjustment assistance, legislation that was passed here on the floor of the Senate this afternoon. I thank my colleagues for working with me on this over the past several years but also over the past several weeks with regard to this specific provision. Again, that will go to the House now, and we are told that will pass the House as it is. In other words, the House will take up this exact bill and pass it and send it to President for signature.

This is also a really important opportunity for us to reach out to people who are hurting today through no fault of their own and to provide them the health care tax credit they deserve.

In the legislation that we passed this afternoon, we also did something else really important that we have never done before, and that is to help protect Israel from discrimination. We included language in the trade bill itself that Senator CARDIN and I had championed in the committee. It is the part of the bill that says that countries that engage in boycotts or sanctions or divestment of Israel in a trade agreement with the United States of America would not be able to get the benefits of trade with us.

We think this is incredibly important leverage to help protect Israel from what, unfortunately, is happening around the world too often now, which is a double standard—telling the State of Israel that somehow it is going to be treated differently than other countries are treated.

I think it is part of a larger effort to try to delegitimize the State of Israel, and it is one where the United States ought to stand up. Why is this being done in the context of trade? Because it works. It is an area where we do have leverage.

When I was U.S. Trade Representative, I had the honor to be able to negotiate agreements with various countries. One was Oman, one was Bahrain, and one was Saudi Arabia. In all three cases, we were able to make great progress in the case of boycotts of Israel by telling those countries: If you want to do business with the United States and have a free-trade agreement with us, then you have to treat all countries fairly. You have to follow the MFN, or most favored nation status, which means you treat countries fairly and you don't discriminate against countries.

Initially, they would say: No, gosh, politically that is too hard for us. But after discussions and after the United States stood tall with Israel, we were able to succeed in all three cases: Bahrain and Oman with trade agreements and Saudi Arabia with regard to their accession agreement to the World Trade Organization. I know it works. I have seen it.

Again, that is in the legislation that was passed today here on the floor of this Senate. I am proud of us because we are actually doing some of this work on a bipartisan basis to help our country, to help our workers, to help our service providers, our farmers but also to ensure that these rules of trade are fair globally.

Finally, I will say that we are not done. There is another bill that we were told would be part of this whole package. It is currently being negotiated in conference after this afternoon because we named conferees between the House and Senate. It is the Customs bill.

In that legislation, there are additional provisions that I think are very important that we passed, including one called the ENFORCE Act. This is to avoid the situation where a country is told: You are dumping products in the United States or you are subsidizing your product in the United States, and you can't do that anymore. Instead, they figure out a way to divert their product to another country and

still send it to the United States using the same unfair trade practices.

We need to be sure that we are putting in place provisions that allow us to stop that diversion as well. That is what the ENFORCE Act does. That is in the Customs bill, as one example. There are other important provisions in the Customs bill, as well.

I would urge my colleagues to work with us to get that conference done as quickly as possible because the House and Senate versions are a little bit different and to be sure that we can come up with a way to resolve those differences and bring that back to the floor as part of this package.

The final one in that package is something that is very important to manufacturers in my State. This is to enable us to bring products in from overseas that were not made anywhere in America under what is called miscellaneous tariff bill. This is something that we have not had the opportunity to do in several years because there are concerns about earmarks. I agree with those concerns. We should not have earmarks, whether it is in trade or whether it is in appropriations or elsewhere.

We have resolved that issue by not having it be earmarked under the definition we have in the House and Senate but rather have it go through the International Trade Commission and have them be the ones that determine whether a particular product fits within a miscellaneous tariff bill or not.

This will help in terms of adding employment in America, reducing the cost to consumers, making our economy more productive and more efficient, and adding economic growth. It is another example that when once we complete this package, it includes expanding exports, which was very important. We had to do that today because America has been sitting on the sidelines for too long. We were losing market share for our farmers, our workers, our service providers. We needed to get back in the game and send more products stamped ''Made in America'' around the world. That creates jobs here. That is good.

Second, we need to be sure that we have a level playing field, that we work on this issue of currency manipulation, which has some unprecedented language, and also on these other issues we talked about today with the level the playing field amendment to ensure that products are not being sold unfairly and that we do provide workers with trade adjustment assistance.

Then finally, we move forward with this final bill called the Customs bill to ensure that we include all these provisions which are so important as a package and to make sure that yes, we are expanding exports at the same time and we are letting people know that they are going to get a fair shake. When they work hard and play by the rules here in America, our workers are going to be told: You are in the global marketplace; we are going to watch your back. That is important. It is important to me. It is important to my State. It is important to the people who send us here, who expect us to set the conditions in place for more exports but also to ensure that is more fairly done.

Again, I thank my colleagues for the work that has been done today, and I also urge my colleagues to move quickly, passing trade adjustment assistance in the House and then passing the conference report on the Customs bill so we can keep this package together and actually give our economy a shot in the arm and give American workers the chance to compete.

If they are given that chance, we have the best work force in the world. We will be able not just to compete but to win the global competition.

I yield back my time.

Mr. President, I have been asked to do the closing script, and then the Senator from Massachusetts will be recognized.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 2015

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:50 a.m., Thursday, June 25; 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; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, and that the first hour be equally divided, with the Democrats controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator MARKEY and Senator SHAHEEN.

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

The Senator from Massachusetts.

ALZHEIMER'S & BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, June is Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month—an opportunity to join the global conversation about this equal opportunity killer, Alzheimer's.

Everyone with a brain is at risk to develop Alzheimer's. Worldwide right now there are 47 million people living with Alzheimer's and with other dementias. Without a change, these numbers are expected to grow to 76 million people globally with Alzheimer's by the year 2030.

In 1998, my mother passed away from Alzheimer's. That is the year that I created the bipartisan Congressional Alzheimer's Task Force. The reason I did it was that it is very hard—as people who have an Alzheimer's patient in their family know—to deal with this disease while my mother had it. But for me, it became something very important, something that I felt that Congress had a responsibility to deal with. For 13 years, my mother just stayed in our living room, being cared for by my father. My mother was quite fortunate because my father had been a milkman. The right arm of a milkman carrying milk bottles for decades is the strongest right arm you can have. My father could care for my mother. My father could keep my mother in our home. But not every family has a strong right arm of a milkman.

Keeping an Alzheimer's patient at home is a difficult task. We have to accept the fact that statistically, we now have more than 5 million Americans with Alzheimer's. Let me say that again: 5 million Americans, as we gather here on the Senate floor, have Alzheimer's in our country, but that is before all the baby boomers have retired. By the time all of the baby boomers in America have retired, 15 million of them are going to have Alzheimer's. Like my family, someone else in each one of those families is going to have Alzheimer's as well because they will be the family caregiver. That will be about 30 million people by the time all the baby boomers have retired whose principal reality in life will be this one disease.

How big is this disease as a drain on our country? This year we are going to spend in Medicare and Medicaid dollars $153 billion on Alzheimer's patients.

I will say that again. This year in America, with 5 million people with the disease, we are going to spend $153 billion. How big is that number? While we are debating the Defense bill for our country—how big is the Defense bill to protect our entire country here and overseas? It is $560 billion. One disease, Alzheimer's, is going to cost us $153 billion. By the time all 15 million baby boomers have the disease, the amount of Federal money in Medicare and Medicaid that we will be spending will be equal to the entire defense budget of our country. That is obviously not sustainable.

We have to find a cure for Alzheimer's not just for our country but for every other country in the world. We have to be the leader. Our caregivers are the heroes today, but even heroes need help. As the true neurological wasting effects take hold of the next generation of Alzheimer's patients, the costs to our society will mount unless we make the smart investments to treat and defeat this disease. We have an opportunity here in the Senate to provide the leadership.

For every $27,000 in 2015 that we are going to spend from the U.S. Senate on Alzheimer's out of the Medicare and Medicaid budget, the National Institutes of Health invests $100 in trying to find a cure. That is right. You heard me correctly. For every $27,000 of Federal money this year on an Alzheimer's patient, we are spending $100 to try to find a cure.

The NIH budget has to increase, and it has to increase dramatically because in the long run we cannot balance the Federal budget if in 30 years one disease is going to consume as much Federal money as the entire defense budget in our country.

Every 67 seconds, someone new in this country develops Alzheimer's. In my State of Massachusetts, 12 percent of all seniors have Alzheimer's.

We need a breakthrough in research. Research is medicine's field of dreams from which we harness the findings that give hope to families so that one day children will have to look to the history books to find that there ever was such a disease as Alzheimer's.

Right now is not the time to cut funding at the National Institutes of Health. They are not only the National Institutes of Health, they are also the national institutes of hope, and we must give that hope to American families that we can find a cure. We cannot cut that budget. We cannot allow sequestration to come in and slash the NIH budget once again. In 2015, NIH has buying power that is 20 percent lower than it was 10 years ago. This is at a point where it should be ramped up 20 percent higher, not lower.

This is a debate which we should be having. The terrorist call that people fear is that some doctor will call their house to them that yet another member of their family has Alzheimer's or some other tragic disease.

We need to increase the NIH budget. We need to give that hope to American families. And that is why Senator CRAPO and I worked to pass the Alzheimer's Accountability Act into law. It requires the Director of NIH to submit an annual budget directly to Congress outlining what resources are needed to meet the goal of preventing and treating Alzheimer's disease by 2025. That is why my colleagues, Senator STABENOW, Senator COLLINS, Senator CAPITO, and I introduced the Hope for Alzheimer's Act, which will allow Medicare beneficiaries to receive comprehensive care-planning services when they are diagnosed with Alzheimer's. That is also why Senator WYDEN and I included the Independence at Home Program as part of the Affordable Care Act. This program allows chronically ill Medicare beneficiaries, such as those with Alzheimer's, to receive primary care services in the comfort of their home. Independence at Home allows teams of doctors and nurses to continue to care for severely ill Medicare patients in their home by bringing the house calls of the yesteryear physicians into the 21st century.

Just last week, some game-changing data was released on the success of the first year of this program. We learned that when implemented properly, the Independence at Home Program has the potential to save $21 billion of Medicare money over the next decade, and at the same time it also improves the quality of care for Medicare beneficiaries. This is a win-win situation. It is possible to design Medicare so that it works smarter, saves money, and improves the lives of beneficiaries.

Patients want to be cared for in their living rooms, not in the emergency room. That is what my father, John Markey the milkman, was able to provide for my mother with Alzheimer's. That is what the Independence at Home Program does. It is a program where nurse practitioners, physicians, and nursing homes are able to say: We are going to help to keep your loved one at home. We will give you the help that makes that possible.

Independence at Home is steering our health care system toward a focus of quality and not simply the quantity of care.

As we build a future free of Alzheimer's disease, Congress and the American people need a blueprint on how to be more effective at prioritizing Federal resources to reach our goal. When America makes a plan, America can do great things. We need an action plan to cure Alzheimer's and to care for those who suffer from it.

In the 1960s, President Kennedy called for a mission to the Moon, and we accomplished great things to make that happen. In the 21st century, it is not a mission to the Moon, it is a mission to the mind which is our challenge, and we must make the same kind of investment in research that was made in the 1960s.

We did not allow the Soviet Union to dominate. We cannot allow this disease to devastate 15 million lives with Alzheimer's in this baby boom generation. The legacy we should be leaving is that we found the cure. It was first identified more than 100 years ago. We now have to make sure that our legacy in the 21st century is that we have been able to build the momentum to fund the research that ensures families in our country have hope.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

U.S. AND EUROPEAN SUPPORT FOR ALLIES THREATENED BY RUSSIA

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, last week I returned from 3 days in Poland and Latvia. I participated in the global security forum in Wroclaw, Poland, where I met with key foreign leaders from Eastern Europe in particular. I also visited U.S. and allied forces participating in military exercises in Latvia.

For the first time since the end of the Cold War, the West is confronted by an armed aggressor directly challenging the principle of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. European officials I spoke with see Russian President Vladimir Putin as opportunistic, determined to expand Russia's sphere of influence, and ready to exploit any vulnerabilities in nearby European countries.

Our friends on the frontlines in Central and Eastern Europe want more than words of solidarity from the European Union, NATO, and the United States; they want a more robust response and concrete actions to counter the Russian threat and deter further Russian aggression.

The crucible for this effort must come in Ukraine. With the Euromaidan Revolution of 2013 and the subsequent election of President Petro Poroshenko, the Ukrainian people have made it clear that their future is with the West, with democracy, with responsive and transparent governance. President Putin responded by invading eastern Ukraine, annexing Crimea, and destabilizing the entire Ukrainian State.

Ukraine today is a symbol of democratic Europe's resistance to Russian domination in the same way that Berlin was in 1948. The Ukrainian army has performed commendably under incredibly challenging circumstances, but it is no match for Russia's military.

However, as we witnessed throughout the Communist era in Eastern Europe, military power is not the only kind of power, nor does it necessarily always prevail. There is also the moral power of those who dare to resist, people like Andrei Sakhorov, Vaclav Havel, and Lech Walesa. As dissidents, they didn't command armies; instead, they commanded immense moral authority. They stood for freedom, and ultimately they triumphed.

Last Friday, at that forum in Wroclaw, I had the privilege of presenting Freedom Awards to Ukrainians who embodied their nation's courageous resistance and indomitable spirit. One of the awardees was Nadiya Savchenko. She has been well known in Ukraine for many years as one of the first women to serve as a pilot in the Ukrainian Air Force. In 2014, she joined a volunteer battalion to fight separatist forces in the country's east.

Nadiya Savchenko was not present to receive her Freedom Award because tragically, outrageously, this hero of the fight for Ukrainian independence is imprisoned in a Russian jail. At every turn, Nadiya Savchenko has been courageous and unbowed—the embodiment of Ukraine's defiance of Russian aggression.

Captured while fighting in the east, she was handcuffed to a metal pipe, surrounded by armed men, and interrogated. When asked who was fighting the pro-Russian separatists, she answered, ''All of Ukraine.''

Held as a prisoner in Russia, she went on an 83-day hunger strike. Appearing

in a cage inside a courtroom, she refused to speak Russian, wore a T-shirt that displayed the Ukrainian trident, and held up a sign that read ''I was born Ukrainian, and I die Ukrainian.''

President Poroshenko awarded her the title ''Hero of Ukraine,'' and her fellow citizens elected her to Parliament. But, truly, she is a hero to all of us who seek to restore a Europe that is whole and free.

I presented the second Freedom Award to the Donetsk National University. Last year, pro-Russian separatists seized the city of Donetsk and declared a Soviet-style people's republic. Armed rebels took over the Donetsk's national university, the region's most prestigious college. They ousted the school's Ukrainian rector, ordered the Russification of the curriculum, and destroyed any semblance of academic freedom. Rather than submit, the rector and core faculty members left Donetsk and they transplanted the school roughly 500 miles to the west. Donetsk National University became Ukraine's first university in exile. It has been a struggle to survive, but this university has become a proud symbol of both academic freedom and Ukrainian independence.

The attack on Ukraine has not only galvanized Europe, it also focused the attention of Congress on European affairs like no other event perhaps since the end of the Cold War, certainly like no other event since I have been in the Senate.

On a bipartisan basis, Members of Congress admire and support Ukraine's stand for universal values and independence, and Congress has responded. In December, we passed the Ukraine Freedom Support Act authorizing the President to provide defensive military assistance to Ukraine and to tighten economic sanctions against Russia.

Through the European Reassurance Initiative, the administration has pledged $1 billion to bolster U.S. military deployments, to increase our training exercises, and to step up our partnerships with allies, including the Baltic States, Poland, Ukraine, Moldavia, and Georgia as they strengthen their own defenses. I was pleased to learn last week that the administration is planning to preposition tanks and other heavy weaponry in the Baltic States and in Eastern Europe to support training with regional allies and to show resolve in the face of Russian threats.

These are all important steps forward, but they are not sufficient. Within the Transatlantic Alliance and NATO, the United States remains the indispensable Nation. If there is going to be a renaissance of the alliance in the face of the Russian threat, then the United States must lead it with our European allies.

The United States must mobilize the alliance, our European partners, and international financial institutions, such as the IMF, to provide generous economic support to Ukraine because no amount of security assistance can offset an economic collapse in Kyiv.

We also must recognize that the challenge for Mr. Putin is not only geopolitical; it is ideological. He has mobilized a vast propaganda campaign against what he calls ''decadent'' Western values and Western-style democracy. The United States, along with our allies, must go on the offensive to champion our values and our democracy. Just as we did during the Cold War, we must develop a 21st-century United States Information Agency and a Radio Free Europe-style campaign to counter Russia in the information space, including in the competition of ideas and values.

While American leadership is essential, our European allies must also step up. NATO leaders made important spending pledges at the Wales Summit last September. Now we all need to make good on those commitments, including increasing defense budgets to respond to Russian threats.

As we confront a newly aggressive Russia, we should also take heart from the Transatlantic Alliance's remarkable track record of achievement, thanks in large part to American leadership. Over the last seven decades, we have risen to every major challenge—rebuilding Europe after World War II; maintaining a united front during the Cold War; liberating the captive nations of Eastern Europe and integrating them into a Europe whole and free; and today, standing united against the challenges of terrorism, Russian aggression, and a nuclear Iran.

The Russian threat to Eastern and Central Europe is very real. President Putin is an autocrat whose popularity is based largely on his determination to reassert Russia's domination over its neighbors. But we have the means to counter this threat.

To support Ukraine and other frontline states, we need vigorous U.S. leadership of the Transatlantic Alliance, we need a robust mobilization of the alliance's military and financial resources, and we need to engage Vladimir Putin aggressively in the competition of ideas and ideals.

Our friends in Ukraine are already in this fight. Our allies elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe fear that they could be next. For the West to rise to this new challenge, the United States once again must be the indispensable Nation, and I know that here in the Senate we support that effort.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:50 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 9:50 a.m. tomorrow morning.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:53 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, June 25, 2015, at 9:50 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

KENNETH J. KOPOCIS, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, VICE PETER SILVA SILVA, RESIGNED.

JANET GARVIN MCCABE, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, VICE REGINA MCCARTHY, RESIGNED.

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. MICHAEL H. SHIELDS

THE FOLLOWING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. VICTOR J. BRADEN

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be vice admiral

REAR ADM. RICHARD P. BRECKENRIDGE

IN THE COAST GUARD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS VICE COMMANDANT, UNITED STATES COAST GUARD, AND TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 47:

To be vice admiral

VICE ADM. CHARLES D. MICHEL

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be colonel

JANE E. BOOMER
SETH R. DEAM
JOSEPH F. DENE
ROBERT S. HALL
ROBERT S. HUME
JULIE J. R. HUYGEN
JOSEPH S. IMBURGIA
MATTHEW T. JARREAU
JOHN C. JOHNSON
RICHARD H. LADUE, JR.
LINELL A. LETENDRE
DEBRA A. LUKER
MATTHEW J. MULBARGER
MYNDA L. G. OHMAN
SHELLY W. SCHOOLS
SUZETTE D. SEUELL
SHANNON L. SHERWIN
MATTHEW D. VAN DALEN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

BRANDON R. ABEL
ALICIA D. ABRAMS
LUIS J. ADAMES
GEORGE E. ADAMS
ISAAC E. ADAMS
JOHN F. ADAMS, JR.
BRIAN S. ADCOCK
JOHN T. AGNEW
ROBERT A. AIKMAN II
DANIEL O. AKEREDOLU
ADAM T. AKERS
JAMES D. AKERS II
MICHAEL S. ALBERS
MELISSA M. ALBLINGER
JOHN E. ALDERMAN
JAMES D. ALDRICH
STEPHEN C. ALDRIDGE
DAVID S. ALEXANDER
GARRY J. ALEXANDER
KERRI V. ALEXANDER
PERRY D. ALEXANDER
DANIEL M. ALFORD
PERRY G. ALFRED
BILLY S. ALLEN
CHRISTOPHER B. ALLEN
CHRISTOPHER IAN ALLEN
CHRISTOPHER W. ALLEN
KYLE S. ALLEN
JEARL C. ALLMAN
LANCE P. ALLRED
BRADLEY D. ALTMAN
MARK A. AMENDT
MATTHEW B. AMIG
CRAIG A. ANDERS
KELLY S. ANDERSON
MATTHEW E. ANDERSON
RYAN J. ANDERSON
STEPHEN G. ANDERSON
TODD R. ANDREWSEN
CHRISTOPHER J. ANGLIN

CASSANDRA P. ANTWINE
JAYVIN L. ARBORE
STEPHEN P. ARNOTT
SETH W. ASAY
ALBERT J. ASHBY
GEOFFREY MICHAEL ASHBY
SAMUEL L. ASTON
MICHAEL L. AUL
JENNIFER M. AUPKE
JAMES H. AUSTIN
NELSON AVILESFIGUEROA
GABRIEL C. AVILLA
GERRED J. AYRES
FRANK A. AZARAVICH
PAUL T. BABIARZ
MARCOS MANUEL BACA
NANCY L. BACCHESCHI
ERIC D. BADGER
JAMES A. BADGETT
NANCY E. BADGETT
JASON F. BAGGETT
JOHN M. BAKER
JUDD W. BAKER
MICHAEL B. BAKER
MICHAEL BALLAK
WILLIAM H. BALLARD
JUSTIN D. BALLINGER
RICKIE A. BANISTER
AARON B. BANKS
BENJAMIN P. BARBOUR
JEFFREY L. BARKER
JOSEPH F. BARNARD
NATHAN E. BARRETT
TRACIE A. BARRETT
SUZANNE M. BARROQUEIRO
JASON R. BARTA
JASON R. BARTELS
CAROLYN R. BARTLEY
DAVID R. BARTLEY III
ZACHARY D. BARTOE
CHARLES J. BARTON
JAMES R. BARTRAN II
PATRICK J. BASS
MICHAEL T. BATCHELOR, JR.
CLIFFORD M. BAYNE
RICHARD A. BAYSINGER
JONATHAN R. BEACH
JOSEPH DELANE BEAL
ROBERT J. BEAL
THOMAS M. BEAN
CHRISTOPHER J. BEATTIE
JOHN DONALD BEATTY
WILLIAM M. BEAUTER
CHRISTOPHER D. BEAVER
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KYLE A. MOE
CHRISTOPHER L. MOELLER
JOSEPH E. MONACO
VINCENT J. MONTANO, JR.
KELLY M. MONTIER
DAVID P. MONTMINY
KELLI R. MOON
BRAD W. MOONEY
CRISTINA M. MOORE URRUTIA
CHRISTOPHER M. MOORE
GARY J. MOORE
NICHOLAS J. MOORE
ROBERT L. MOORE
THOMAS R. MOORE
JAMES E. MORAN
CRAIG L. MORASH
MATTHEW R. MORELLO
BRYAN K. MORGAN
NATHAN L. MORGAN
TODD J. MORIN
BRADLEY J. MORRELL
MICHAEL R. MORRIS
PAUL J. MORRIS
WYATT E. MORRISE
JAMIE R. MORRISON
ARTHUR L. MORSE III
MATTHEW R. MOUNTCASTLE
CHRISTOPHER P. MULDER
ERIC C. MULLER
PAUL L. MULLER
CREIGHTON A. MULLINS
ZENSAKU M. MUNN
DENNIS P. MURPHY II
JONATHAN D. MURPHY
PAUL B. MURPHY
NATHAN M. MURRAY
JAMIL I. MUSA
ERIC M. MUSIC
SEAN S. MUSIL
DAVID W. MYRICK
MICHELLE I. NASH
JEFFERY A. NAYLOR
ANGELIQUE NELSON
THOMAS A. NELSON
JENNIFER R. NERIS
PAUL N. NETCHAEFF
SEAN D. NEYLON
JOSEPH EMRON NICHOLAS
TYLER A. NIEBUHR
MATTHEW J. NIENDORF
RONALD F. NIGRO
JAMES K. NILSEN
WILLIAM H. NODINE, JR.
MEERA ANNE DAROY NOE
DANIEL J. NOEL
RANDALL B. NOEL
SCOTT E. NOKE
TREVOR C. NOLAN
RONALD E. NOLTE
BRIAN M. NOVCHICH
GEORGE B. NUNO
MATTHEW E. NUSSBAUM
MARK D. NYBERG
MATTHEW B. OBENCHAIN
CHRISTOPHER OCCHIUZZO
THOMAS P. OHARA
STEVEN K. OHLMEYER
ANDREW D. OILAND
AMANDA L. OKESON
KENDALL W. OKESON
JASON K. OKUMURA
JEREMY V. OLDHAM
STEPHEN T. OLEARY
JAMAL OLIVER
DOUGLAS J. OLSON
DUSTIN E. OLSON
MATTHEW T. OLSON
ROBERT BRYAN OLVIS
TARA L. OPIELOWSKI
JAMES R. ORD
WILFRED G. OREILLY
HECTOR M. ORTEGA
MICHAEL L. ORTEGO
RICHARD C. ORZECHOWSKI
NATHANIEL S. OSBORNE
COREY C. OTOOL
WILLIAM F. OTT, JR.
JERRY OTTINGER
NATHAN L. OWEN
RYAN K. OWEN
JEREMY J. OWENS
GRANT M. PAAP
ERICK PACHECO
MICHAEL S. PADILLA
CHRISTOPHER M. PALACIOS
DOUGLAS J. PALAGI
LAUREN W. PALAGI
CLINTON N. PALMER
MAXX E. PALMER II
SILA PANG
JEREMY PANKOSKI
JOHN J. PANTAGES
SCOTT R. PAPINEAU
JORGE A. PARGAS
SEAN PARK
JASON H. PARKER
STEVEN J. PARKER
ANTHONY J. PARKINSON
STEPHEN R. PARKS
MELISSA M. PARRY
JOSEPH J. PARSONS
ALAN J. PARTRIDGE
JEREMIAH W. PARVIN
JAMES M. PASQUINO
MICHAEL PASTUZYN
JAMES A. PATE
AANAN N. PATEL
JASON VICTOR PAUL
MICHAEL W. PAULUS
PAUL R. PAWLUK
WILLIAM P. PEARSALL
JOHN M. PECARINA
ALEXANDER J. PELBATH
RANDAL W. PENDLETON
DAVID PENNINGTON
DAVID PENUELA
WILHEM A. PEREZ
PAUL A. PERRY
SABINE U. PETERS
ANDREW S. PETERSON
GINA A. PETERSON
NICHOLAS J. PETREN
DAVID J. PETRUCCI
NICOLE M. PETRUCCI
JASON F. PFLUG
NICOLE L. PHELAN
ROBERT A. PHELPS
WILLIAM W. PHILLIPS
BRYAN MICHAEL PICKETT
MICHAEL V. PICKETT
JOHN W. PICKLESIMER
APRIL D. PIERCE
TROY B. PIERCE
JESSE A. PIETZ
NATHAN J. PIFER
LOUIS S. PINE
JASON T. PINKERTON
RALPH E. PIPER II
STEPHEN G. PIPPEL
EDUARDO H. PIRES
CARL B. PITTS
JON A. PITTS
THOMAS B. PLACE
MICHAEL C. POCHET
BRADY J. POE
WILLIAM J. POGUE
ANGELA M. POLSINELLI
MATTHEW L. POMMER
MICHAEL S. PONTIUS
JEFFREY MICHAEL POPLIN
NEIL B. POPPE
JON W. PORATH
ALEC E. PORTER
ANTHONY J. POSADA
RANDALL R. POULIOT
DAVID A. POUSKA
MICHAEL WILLIAM POVILUS
TRAVIS RICHARD PRATER
JUSTIN K. PRESTON
MELANIE M. PRESUTO
MICHAEL D. PROVINS
ANDREW GRAHAM PRUE
KRISTOPHER A. PRUITT
MATTHEW A. PSILOS
TOMASZ A. PUDLO
LANDON E. QUAN
JEFFREY J. QUICK
KEITH E. QUICK
WENDY L. QUICK
ERIC B. QUIDLEY
JOSEPH A. QUINN
QAIS RABADI
MATTHEW R. RABE
JOHN R. RACZKOWSKI
TRIGG E. RANDALL
MICHAEL F. RASINSKI
TIMOTHY DANIEL RAY
STEVEN W. READY
PATRICK M. REAGAN
JOHANNA KATHRYN REAM
EMIL LAWRENCE REBIK
KARL H. RECKSIEK
RICHARD J. REED
CARRIE E. REGISTER
JESSICA L. REGNI
CHRISTOPHER R. REHM
JEREMY R. REICH
SCOTT J. REIN

MICHAEL S. RELLICK
STACIE A. REMBOLD
KARIN E. REYNOLDS
MATTHEW E. REYNOLDS
ERIK PAUL RHYLANDER
PRESTON L. RHYMER
DUANE E. RICHARDSON
LLOYD S. RICHARDSON IV
JAMISON L. RIDDLE
PATRICK D. RIENZI
JOHN J. RIESTER
DANIEL C. RIGSBEE
EDWARD T. RIVERA
JOEL RIVERA
ERIC J. RIVERO
JEFFREY J. RIVERS
TERESA D. RIVERS
NEAL R. ROACH
TYLER W. ROBARGE
BRIAN V. ROBERTS
MICHAEL L. ROBERTS
GREGORY C. ROCKWOOD
BREANNE C. ROECKERS
SHANE D. ROGERS
ALAN T. ROHRER
MARK C. ROMAN
JASON B. ROOKS
DEREK A. ROOT
DARNELL ROPER
ALFRED J. ROSALES
DOMINIC A. ROSS
JASON F. ROSSI
CARL B. ROTERMUND
STEWART L. ROUNTREE
FRANK W. ROVELLO
ADAM C. RUDOLPHI
BEN M. RUDOLPHI
DANIEL E. RUETH
NICOLE K. RUFF
WILFREDO RUIZ
AARON L. RUONA
KAREN P. RUPP
ANGELINDA D. RUSH
CON A. RUSLING
JEREMY J. RUSSELL
NICHOLAS J. RUSSO
KYLENE L. RUTH
JEFFREY L. RUTHERFORD
ANDREW R. RUTKOWSKI
JESSICA N. RUTTENBER
TIMOTHY M. RYAN
CHRISTOPHER J. RYDER
ROBERT W. RYDER, JR.
WILLIAM R. RYERSON
REBECCA SADLER
TROY R. SAECHAO
DON R. SALVATORE
DALE S. SANDERS
JEREMIAH B. SANDERS
LEE T. SANDUSKY
RYAN A. SANFORD
TRACI A. SARMIENTO
JACQUELINE A. SARTORI
MARTHA J. SASNETT
LUKE M. SAUTER
JOSHUA M. SCHAAD
JESSI R. SCHAEFER
JOHN R. SCHANTZ
JOSH C. SCHECHT
BENJAMIN SCHEUTZOW
JAMES E. SCHIESER
NICHOLAS S. SCHINDLER
TRACY A. SCHMIDT
ERNEST R. SCHMITT
ROBERT N. SCHOENEBERG
ANDREW SCHOFIELD
MATTHEW KENNETH SCHROEDER
SCOTT J. SCHROEDER
GREGORY N. SCHULKE
PAUL D. SCHULTZ
AVERY D. SCHUTT
KARL R. SCHWENN
GEORGE W. SCONYERS III
AMANDA K. SCOUGHTON
CLIFFORD N. SCRUGGS
JONATHON S. SEAL
CHRISTOPHER G. SEAMAN
JUSTIN D. SECREST
WILLIAM A. SEEFELDT
JASON L. SEELHORST
ANTHONY EDWARD K. SEKI
LESLIE L. SEMRAU
NEIL R. SENKOWSKI
ADAM J. SERAFIN
CARLOS A. SERBIA
RYAN D. SERRILL
BRIAN R. SERVANT
BRENDAN M. SHANNON
RICHARD R. SHARPE
ROBERT R. SHAW, JR.
ADAM W. SHELTON
NATHAN G. SHELTON
FRANKLYN K. SHEPHERD, JR.
JOHN C. SHERINIAN II
MICHAEL J. SHIELDS
BORIS SHIF
DAN J. SHINOHARA
MATTHEW P. SHIPSTEAD
JOSHUA N. SHONKWILER
MATTHEW R. SHRULL
JEFFREY D. SHULMAN
JOSEPH H. SHUPERT
WESLEY R. SIDES
PAUL D. SIEGLER
MICHAEL S. SIMIC
CHRISTOPHER E. SIMMONS
JEFFREY D. SIMMONS
RYAN S. SIMMS
MICHAEL ANDREW SIMONICH
MICHAEL J. SIMONS
BRYAN P. SIMPSON
CHAD S. SITZMANN
MARK D. SKALKO
JACK SKILES III
ROBERT J. SKOPECK, JR.
CHRISTOPHER A. SKOW
JAMES SLATON
MARTIN J. SLOVINSKY
JONATHAN R. SMITH
PETER M. SMITH
RACHEL K. SMITH
REGINALD L. SMITH
ROBERT SHELBY SMITH
ROCHELLE D. SMITH
SCOTT E. SMITH
WILLIAM CHARLES SMITH
SOL R. SNEDEKER
RYAN E. SNIDER
SAMUEL M. SNODDY
DAVID N. SNODGRASS
MATTHEW P. SNYDER
JASON G. SOMERS
PAUL N. SOMERS
THOMAS E. SONNE
PAUL RUSSELL SORTOR
LEWIS G. SORVILLO
WILLIAM G. SOTO
JOEL R. SOUKUP
BOONE C. SPENCER
KENDALL W. SPENCER
RAYMOND H. K. SPOHR
BRIAN J. SPORYSZ
JULIE SPOSITO SALCEIES
ZAN A. SPROLES
BERNARD R. SPRUTE
JEREMY E. ST LOUIS
CHEO F. STALLWORTH
DAWN STANDRIDGE
MATTHEW F. STANLEY
STUART A. STANTON
EDWARD J. STAPANON III
BROC L. STARRETT
BRUCE A. STAUFER
TROY T. STAUTER
CHAD J. STEEL
ERIC D. STEELE
MICHAEL D. STEFANOVIC
TRAVIS H. STEPHENS
KAREN L. STEVENS
ROBERT D. STEVENS
HELEN STEWART
ZACHARY ROY STEWART
MICHAEL J. STOCK
ERIK STEVEN STOCKHAM
JAMES L. STONE
SCOTT J. STONE
RANDON L. STORMS
JEFFREY P. STRANGE
BRIAN K. STRICKLAND
RICHARD R. STRINGER
MATTHEW D. STROHMEYER
PAUL B. STROM
CHRISTOPHER S. STROUP
PAUL D. STUCKI
JACQUELINE M. SUKHLALL
DAVID A. SULHOFF
JOEY P. SULLIVAN
MARK A. SULLIVAN
MICHAEL J. SULLIVAN
JOSE R. SURITA, JR.
TIMOTHY P. SUTTON
WALTER B. SWAIN III
MICHAEL DAVID SWARD
LAYLA M. SWEET
RICHARD W. SWENGROS
JENNIE A. Y. SWIECHOWICZ
MARK T. SZATKOWSKI
EDWARD V. SZCZEPANIK
YURI P. TAITANO
JOHN A. TALAFUSE
KATHERINE A. TANNER
DARIN R. TATE
THOMAS M. TAUER
YOLANDA S. TAYLOR
BRANDON J. TELLEZ
BRIAN S. TEMPLE
LINDA J. THIERAUF
JASON T. THIRY
ILLYA K. THOMAS
JAMES J. THOMAS
JEREMEY T. THOMAS
WILLIAM D. THOMAS
MICHAEL A. THOMPSON
SHAUNDAL T. THOMPSON
WILBUR L. THOMPSON
LEE C. THOMSON
SCOT A. THORNHILL
PAUL B. THORNTON
DYLAN G. THORPE
JOSEPH W. TIMBERLAKE
DAVID W. TIPTON
JOSEPH C. TOBIN
JUSTIN C. TOLLIVER
PHOENIX L. TORRIJOS
LINDSAY M. TOTTEN
KELLY R. TRAVIS
KEVIN M. TREAT
BRIAN J. TREBOLD
ROBERT J. TREST
JOSHUA J. TROSCLAIR
JOSHUA W. TULL
THOMAS A. TURNER
MATTHEW L. TUZEL
MARK C. UBERUAGA
MICHAEL S. UEDA
VINCENT N. ULLOA
JEFFREY M. ULMER
JOHN M. URSO
VHANCE V. VALENCIA
KEITH W. VANDERHOEVEN
GEORGE H. VANDEVERE
LANCE A. VANN
RYAN M. VANVEELEN
JONATHAN A. VAROLI
CLINTON B. VARTY
LEWIS M. VAUGHN III
JAVIER VELAZQUEZ
PETER J. VENTRES, JR.
MARTIN D. VERMEULEN
STEVEN L. VESTEL
ANTHONY L. VIEIRA
JOSEPH R. VIGUERIA
DERRICK S. VINCENT
SETH K. VOLK
PAUL K. VOSS
ANDREW R. VRABEC
ERIC S. WADDELL
JOHN P. WAGEMANN
JEREMY C. WAGNER
TERRY L. WAGNER
TIMOTHY S. WAGNER
ROBERT D. WAIDER
STEVEN D. WALD
CORY WILLIAM WALDROUP
IAN N. WALKER
THOMAS V. WALKER
JOSEPH D. WALL
BRIAN D. WALLER
BRYAN J. WALTER
ERIC J. WARD
ROBERT A. WARD
RANDY D. WARREN
DAVID L. WASHER
ANGELA MARIE WATERS
RICHARD H. WATERS
JOSEPH P. WATSON
JUSTIN T. WATSON
ERIN OWENS WEATHERLY
BARRY S. WEAVER
JEFFREY S. WEBB
TIMOTHY R. WEBB
JESSICA A. WEDINGTON
MARK A. WEGER
KRISTIN J. WEHLE
SHANE A. WEHUNT
HAYES J. WEIDMAN
JOSEF R. WEIN
JEFFREY E. WEISLER
CHRISTOPHER M. WELCH
JOSHUA N. WENNRICH
CARRIE E. WENTZEL
DANIEL C. WERNER
JOHNNY L. WEST
KELLY WEST
DANIEL L. WESTER
INGEMAR S. WESTPHALL
GLENDON C. WHELAN
JENNIFER L. WHETSTONE
DOUGLAS W. WHITE
TIMOTHY G. WHITE
TANDY R. WHITEHEAD
JASON A. WHITFORD
BENJIMAN C. WHITTEN
NICHOLAS J. WHRITENOUR
RYAN M. WICK
TONY M. WICKMAN
RAY BLAINE WIDDISON
DORSEY C. WILKIN
MICHAEL J. WILLEN
JASON P. WILLEY
DAVID W. WILLHARDT
CRAIG L. WILLIAMS
EDWARD C. WILLIAMS, JR.
KELLEN M. WILLIAMS
RYAN R. WILLIAMS
SCOTT J. WILLIAMS
TIMOTHY S. WILLIAMS
TODD C. WILLIAMS
DEREK L. WILLIAMSON
CHRISTOPHER M. WILLIS
SHAWN M. WILLIS
WILLIAM S. WILLIS
BILLY R. WILSON, JR.
JOHN D. WILSON
LARA L. WILSON
STEPHANIE Q. WILSON
STEPHEN W. WILSON
THOMAS K. WILSON
JEREMY D. WIMER
JAMES L. WINKELHAKE
TRAVIS M. WINSLOW
CYNTHIA E. WITTNAM
JASON B. WOLFF
BRYAN K. WONG
RYAN M. WONG
KRISTEN N. WOOD
MICHAEL R. WOODRUFF
MARC A. WOODWORTH
WILLIAM D. WOOTEN
BRADLEY R. WORDEN
DAVID A. WRAY
STEVEN P. WYATT
REBECCA A. WYFFELS
DAVID J. WYRICK
MICHAEL L. YAMZON
ROBERT J. YATES III
ROWDY E. YATES
EDWARD F. YONCE
MATTHEW J. YOUNGMEYER
FERNANDO L. ZAPATA
GREGORY M. ZELINSKI

JASON M. ZEMLER
NICHOLAS G. ZERVOS
MATTHEW J. ZIEMANN
JOHN C. ZINGARELLI
BARBARA L. ZISKA
CAROLOS J. ZOURDOS
BRANDON A. ZUERCHER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

AFSANA AHMED
KENNETH A. ARTZ
ANDREW R. BARKER
CHELSEA L. BARTOE
PETER THOMAS BEAUDETTE, JR.
NAOMI PORTERFIELD DENNIS
LAUREN N. DIDOMENICO
PAUL E. DURKES
SEAN M. ELAMETO
TODD J. FANNIFF
MICHAEL J. FELSEN
THOMAS A. GABRIELE
BRIAN R. GAGNE
CHARLES J. GARTLAND
JAMES G. GENTRY
RYAN A. HENDRICKS
MATTHEW EDWARD HILL
SCOTT A. HODGES
MICHAEL TODD HOPKINS
CHRISTOPHER DAVID JONES
JACK M. JONES, JR.
JASON F. KEEN
TYSON D. KINDNESS
MICHAEL G. KING
MATTHEW T. LUND
AMER MAHMUD
KRISTIN K. MCCALL
MATTHEW N. MCCALL
NICHOLAS WILLIAM MCCUE
SARAH M. MOUNTIN
JOHN MERRITT PAGE
TRACY A. PARK
LISA M. RICHARD
DAVID R. SCHICHTLE
CHRISTOPHER JOSEPH SCHUBBE
PATRICK M. SCHWOMEYER
JUSTIN A. SILVERMAN
MAXWELL S. SMART
JACQUELINE M. STINGL
FELIX I. SUTANTO
SARA A. SWART
BRIAN D. TETER
GREGORY J. THOMPSON
SCOTT A. VAN SCHOYCK
ROBERT EUGENE VORHEES II
CHARLES G. WARREN
DANIEL J. WATSON
REGGIE D. YAGER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADES INDICATED IN THE REGULAR AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be lieutenant colonel

JOHN C. ROCKWELL
NEIL L. SCHWIMLEY

To be major

TRAVIS A. ARNOLD LLOYD
JENNIFER J. BARTLETT
MAX M. CHAE
CHARLES H. CHESNUT III
JOONE H. CHOI
MELANIE E. DEYSS
PHILIP V. PARRY
CRAIG S. POSTER
KEVIN J. RYCYNA
MARION M. SWALL
STEPHEN J. TORRES

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUALS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be major

ANA M. APOLTAN
ALDO TTINOCO

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

BRIAN H. ADAMS
RONALD SCOTT ADAMS
BRADLY ADAM CARLSON
MARC G. CARNS
ANDREA R. CARROLL
MARK E. COON
HEATHER NOELLE CORROTHERS
TERRY LEE COULTER
ALLISON ANNE DEVITO
HUGH HAMMOND DUBOSE III
CHRISTOPHER M. DYKSTRA
PHILLIP LEE ERVIE
BENJAMIN D. FORD
ERIC HOWARD FRENCK
NICHOLAS C. FROMMELT
KEVIN WAYNE GOTFREDSON
ANDREW G. HALLDIN
AIMEE ROCHELLE HANEY
JEFFREY J. HANNON
JASON MICHAEL HARLEY
THERESA LYNN HILTON
NOEL E. HORTON
CHRISTIE A. JONES
KELBY DANIEL KERSHNER
AARON DOUGLAS KIRK
DEAN W. KORSAK
SARAH LORETTA KRESS
MALCOLM LAFRANCE LANGLOIS
JEFFREY JOSEPH LOREK
ALEXANDER LEONARDO LOWRY
KURT ALAN MABIS
MEGAN CRAMER MALLONE
JACOB ROBERT MARSHALL
MICAH MCMILLAN
TED ADAM NEWSOME
MICHAEL EDWARD OBRIEN
STELLA JEAN PHILLIPS
BRIANNE ELIZABETH RAHN
MATTHEW WALLACE RAMAGEWHITE
JACOB ALLEN RAMER
MATTHEW GAYLORD REAM
CHRISTOPHER LANE SANDERS
MICHAEL ALAN SCHRAMA
RICHARD JOSEPH SCHRIDER
MICHAEL AARON SCHWARTZ
LAURENANN L. SHURE
JEREMY NATHANIEL SNYDER
JAMES RONALD STEELMAN III
JARROD H. STUARD
JESSICA L. SWITZER
ROBERT MATHEWS THOMPSON
RACHEL LYNNE VAN MAASDAM
MATTHEW D. VAN MAASDAM
MELVIN ARTHUR VAUGHN II
KARL JEFFREY VOGEL
DAVID LEE WALKER
MARY JEAN WOOD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

JESSE L. JOHNSON

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be colonel

DAVID G. JONES

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL SPECIALIST CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be colonel

RAYMOND L. PHUA

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR REGULAR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 3064:

To be major

JOHN M. BRADFORD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be major

STEVE J. CHUN
CHRISTOPHER J. COCHRANE
BRYAN S. NEWBROUGH
LUCKEY C. REED
BENJAMIN R. SIEBERT

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be colonel

STEVEN L. ISENHOUR

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be colonel

JOSEPH D. GRAMLING

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be colonel

MARK S. SNYDER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be colonel

KEITH J. MCVEIGH

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR REGULAR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 3064:

To be major

LISA M. STREMEL

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be colonel

MICHAEL N. CLEVELAND
MICHAEL W. SUMMERS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be major

MATTHEW H. BROOKS
JAY D. HANSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be colonel

GIL A. DIAZCRUZ
DAVID S. RASMUSSEN
YESENIA R. ROQUE
RICHARD T. SCHUTE, JR.
SOLIMAN G. VALDEZ

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

THOMAS F. MURPHY III

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUALS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be lieutenant commander

ARSLAN S. CHAUDHRY
ANDREW D. SILVESTRI

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant commander

BENJAMIN M. BOCHE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

MICHAEL J. ELLIOTT

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 6222:

To be lieutenant colonel

JOHN R. BARCLAY

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate June 24, 2015:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CHARLES C. ADAMS, JR., OF MARYLAND, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND.

MARY CATHERINE PHEE, OF ILLINOIS, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN.

NANCY BIKOFF PETTIT, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA.

GREGORY T. DELAWIE, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO.

IAN C. KELLY, OF ILLINOIS, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO GEORGIA.

JULIETA VALLS NOYES, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

ANNE ELIZABETH WALL, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE A DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.