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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. JOLLY).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 30, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DAVID W. JOLLY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

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

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

EXCHANGE INCLUSION FOR A HEALTHY AMERICA ACT OF 2015

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. The Pope visited America and he inspired a lot of people, even cynical Washington, D.C. For one, he inspired Speaker BOEHNER to wake up the next morning and announce his resignation.

As I said last week, it must be hard for a decent man like Speaker BOEHNER to be head of a new know-nothing party of increasingly extreme measures to cut health care for women and to round up and deport millions of undocumented immigrants. It remains to be seen how Republicans in the House will conduct themselves without adult supervision, but the Speaker is going out on a high note.

Having the Pope speak to America from the floor of the House of Representatives was a crowning achievement for the Speaker. Now that his job is no longer on the line, I hope we will see immigration reform as the jewel in that crown and act before he steps down. But we all know that is unlikely. The concurrent hysteria on the campaign trail makes action by these Republicans or any Republicans unlikely.

Even though I still believe we have the votes—like we did for the last several years—to pass immigration reform in the House, I don't think the Speaker, even as a lame duck, will allow a vote. But the Pope's visit certainly inspired me to think about the moral example he sets.

Look, the Holy Father simply reminded Members of Congress about the Golden Rule—''Do unto others as you would have them do unto you''—and he could not even complete his sentence before he got a standing ovation.

If we had a daily reminder of the Golden Rule, we could cut through a lot of the bull in Congress and have a better country and a better world. It is the Golden Rule I am here to discuss. Treat your brother and your sister and your neighbor with compassion as you would like to be treated yourself.

And in the case of health care and access to health care, it is not simply out of a sense of moral altruism, although that is part of it. Rather, it is out of the reality that treating our brothers and sisters and neighbors as we want to be treated when it comes to health care and access to health care and access to health insurance is in our own self-interest as well.

That is why I am introducing the Exchange Inclusion for a Healthy America Act of 2015, a bill to give complete access to the Affordable Care Act regardless of their immigration status. The Exchange Inclusion for a Healthy America will extend healthcare insurance access to millions of our neighbors and family members who live here, work here, raise families here, and will probably live here for the rest of their lives, but who lack legal immigration status.

It gives them access to healthcare exchanges in ObamaCare under the ordinary rules of residency in the States in which they live and makes them eligible for subsidies if and when they file taxes, just like the rest of us. It also subjects them to the individual mandate that requires individuals to have health insurance.

The goal is to make integration and inclusion real for millions of families that are locked out under current law.

Now, if I remember correctly, the President was standing right here in 2009 talking about his healthcare reform proposal would exclude undocumented immigrants and one of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle interrupted him by shouting, ''You lie'' to the President of the United States of America, who, we should all note, was reelected comfortably in 2012.

I do not expect that Member of Congress to join me as a cosponsor. But, in fact, as we all know, he was dead wrong about the Affordable Care Act. In addition to death panels and a number of other fictions, the Republicans were wrong that undocumented immigrants were included in ObamaCare. They just weren't.

I am and have always been an advocate for the single payer approach to universal health coverage, and I fought to include all of the people who live in this country in the Affordable Care Act, but they were written out. As it stands right now, undocumented immigrants are not subject to the individual mandate and cannot buy into the

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health insurance exchanges, even if they use their own money.

My legislation will change that. It says that we stand for inclusion. It says that we understand the principle that, if you are here, if you are working and caring for your family and contributing to society, you should be healthy. Not only that, but your health and your protection from diseases, injuries, and preventable illnesses impacts my health care and the health care of my family.

As a nation, we all benefit when we spread the risk, invite younger, healthier workers to join our exchanges, reduce the costs of compensating hospitals for caring for the uninsured, and reducing the number of uninsured who live and work here.

Doing unto others as you would have them do unto you means moving forward with no restrictions on which brother and sister and neighbor we think of as eligible or deserving or is, in fact, considered my neighbor, my sister or my brother.

My party and the vast majority of my country understands that getting immigrants on the books and into the system and integrating them into today's American society should be the goal, just as we have done with every other group of immigrants throughout our history. My legislation, the Exchange Inclusion for a Healthy America Act, is a step in that direction.

NORTH EAST BLUE RIBBON

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend two schools in my district that were named this week as National Blue Ribbon Schools for 2015.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools program was started by the United States Department of Education in 1982 and recognizes overall academic excellence or the success of the schools in closing achievement gaps in their student population.

Youngsville High School in Warren County and North East High School in Erie County both received this honor. They are among less than 20 schools in the State of Pennsylvania to be recognized, which is quite an accomplishment when you consider the many hundreds of schools in Pennsylvania's 500 school districts. Overall, 285 public schools across the Nation received this honor.

For Youngsville High School, this honor is many years in the making. The school has greatly improved its test scores and is using the collaboration of teachers, students, and staff, along with community members, to make sure its academic success continues to grow.

In Erie County, administrators at the North East High School say that their learning model is built on heart, trust, and respect. School organizations such as National Honor Society, student council, and the school's Inspire group are intended to boost student performance in the classroom and highlight their service in the community.

I know that the administrators for both the Youngsville and North East High Schools have worked for many months toward this goal. I congratulate them, their students, and teachers on this major accomplishment.

TAX REFORM AND INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, Politico yesterday had a fascinating story about CHUCK SCHUMER, widely expected to become the next Democratic leader in the Senate, in talks with Republican leaders in the House and Senate about a major tax and infrastructure deal.

It would give a lower tax rate on hundreds of billions of dollars parked overseas by international corporations and use the tax on those proceeds to finance a more robust 6-year transportation bill. What is not to like?

I have been working tirelessly for us to be able to finance America's failing infrastructure, having introduced the first gas tax increase on the Federal level in 22 years. I have been working with stakeholders, like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, organized labor, truckers, AAA, contractors, transit, the whole array of people who build, operate, use, and rely upon American infrastructure.

I am sympathetic to getting this job done. America is falling apart while we are falling behind. It doesn't work to try to pay for 2015 infrastructure with 1993 dollars.

The simple answer that Ronald Reagan successfully championed as President was raising the gas tax, in his case, 125 percent. It is taking hold around the country as even very red Republican States—six already this year—have raised their gas taxes, and our legislation in Congress is gaining more attention as people understand that this is the best way forward to solve the problem.

What is wrong with the deal that is being examined by Senator SCHUMER? Well, first of all, the path towards international tax reform is very complex and rocky, with many competing interests. No one disputes that the patchwork of our corporate tax system that we have currently is unfair to some and produces distorted results.

We have the highest stated statutory corporate tax rate in the world. But, for many corporations, that is not so much of a problem because they have been working to carve out their own exemptions and loopholes so that what the average that corporations pays is much less than the stated rate. But, for some, particularly those that build and operate in the United States, they do pay that statutory rate and it is a problem and it is unfair.

There is also still the incentive for some to park more money overseas. Most of us think that it is going to require revenue to buy down the corporate rate, to reform it, and repatriated dollars would be a source to adjust that in a way that doesn't make the deficit much, much worse.

There is also a problem of competitiveness. Some organizations actually have offshore operations to be closer to their markets. If you are going to sell in China, for instance, it makes sense perhaps to manufacture it there rather than ship it halfway around the world with all the complexity and expense.

I have been meeting with a wide variety of corporate tax officers who ask the question about equity. Why should they with their overseas operations pay for domestic infrastructure that everybody benefits from? That is a great question.

This has the potential of actually costing the Treasury more in the long run, making it harder to have an equitable adjustment in corporate tax reform, and shift the burden that should be paid by all American users instead concentrated on a small portion of American taxpayers on their overseas operation. They ask where is the equity, and it is hard to see.

That is why we have the basic principle of a user fee: People use a service and they pay for it. The gas tax for decades has served that purpose since it was first introduced in my home State of Oregon in 1919 for road construction. It is still the simplest, most direct, most fair, easiest to administer, and would enable us to solve this problem in a matter of months.

Unfortunately, the path we are on is very uncertain as well as unfair. We are going to have the 35th short-term extension of the highway trust fund next month. No country has become great building its infrastructure 10 months at a time.

The answer is not an elaborate deal that is being discussed which makes it less likely we solve the problems. Why don't we just deal with it directly, put hundreds of thousands of people to work at family-wage jobs, actually reduce the deficit, increase the economy, and strengthen the quality of life in communities large and small all across America.

Let's not engage in gimmickry. Let's rebuild and renew America.

HONORING SPECIALIST KYLE GILBERT

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

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life and legacy of U.S. Army Specialist Kyle Gilbert.

Specialist Gilbert was recently killed in Afghanistan while serving our Nation just days before his 25th birthday.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my most sincere and heartfelt condolences to Kyle's family and to let them know that I and we have them in our thoughts and our prayers.

Kyle is survived by many loving family members and friends, including his mother and stepfather, Ceann and Clyde Tate; father and stepmother, Ralph and Sandra Gilbert; sisters, Sasha Ashley and Becky Bailey; brother, Myles Gilbert; as well as his grandmother, Jean Ann Carrington; his stepbrother, Chris Manning; as well as a host of aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

Mr. Speaker, Kyle was born in Lawrenceville, Georgia, and graduated from Mill Creek High School in 2009 and in 2013 joined the United States Army. He was a 10th Mountain Division soldier with the 2nd Battalion, the 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to share with you that Specialist Gilbert received the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, and the Army Service Ribbon. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, Kyle received the Bronze Star, the Army Good Conduct Medal, and the NATO Medal.

□ 1015

Though I did not have the privilege of meeting Kyle personally, I would like to use this opportunity to sincerely thank him for his incredible service to the State of Georgia and to our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, it has been relayed to me that Specialist Gilbert's deepest dream was to serve our Nation in the military, and I thank him for his incredible service and sacrifice so that so many others can share the American Dream. Kyle leaves a legacy of service, dedication, and kindness that will be sorely missed.

Mr. Speaker, I humbly ask that you join me in praying for Specialist Gilbert's family during this time of their bereavement.

21ST CENTURY WOMEN'S HEALTH ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the 21st Century Women's Health Act to increase access to reproductive health care and to provide compassionate care to survivors of sexual assault.

Funding for the government runs out in a matter of hours. Rather than crafting a bipartisan solution on the Nation's budget, House leadership has been focusing on denying women their right to make their own healthcare decisions.

This is 2015. We should be doing all we can to increase access to health care for women. We should not be rolling back women's rights and cutting access to lifesaving cancer and preventative health screenings for women, men, and youth across the country.

As a mother, a daughter, and a Member of Congress, I understand the value of increasing access to health care for women; and that is why I am proud to introduce the 21st Century Women's Health Act, with my colleagues Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, Congresswoman DIANA DEGETTE, and with our leadership of our ally in the Senate, Senator PATTY MURRAY from Washington.

This comprehensive bill will increase access to preventative health services and contraception for low-income women, and it will help women report instances of inappropriate charges for birth control, a problem that affects too many women across the country. It will also expand the primary care workforce and ensure that survivors of sexual assault are provided with free emergency contraception and compassionate care.

I want my daughter and every woman in this country to live in a place where they have access to affordable healthcare providers like Planned Parenthood, a full range of reproductive choices, and, most importantly, the ability to make their own healthcare decisions.

Colleagues, I grew up before Roe v. Wade, and I know what our country looks like when women don't have access to a full range of reproductive healthcare options. We know that if abortion is restricted, it does not go away.

Let us not return to a time when women had to seek care in the shadows or the back alleys. Let us come together to prevent unwanted pregnancies, and let us champion our march forward toward a more equal society with the introduction of the 21st Century Women's Health Act.

I urge my colleagues to join me as cosponsors, and I look forward to working toward the passage of this important bill.

THANK YOU STATE SENATOR BRANDEN PETERSEN

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

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor State Senator Branden Petersen of Andover for his public service. Branden was elected to the Minnesota House in 2010 at the young age of 24 and then reelected to serve his constituents, but this time in the Minnesota Senate in 2012. Recently, Branden resigned to spend more time with his young family. His leadership in the Minnesota Legislature will be sorely missed.

Branden represents portions of my district, and I have been honored to work with him and to know him. He is a man of great character and principle.

While in office, Branden worked hard to improve Minnesota's schools, economy, and budget, all while being part of a growing family that now includes three little ones at home. It has been wonderful to see Branden's dedication over the past 5 years, and I believe that the people of his district are so lucky to have benefited from his service. Branden's leadership will be truly missed, but I have no doubt that he will find success and happiness in his future endeavors.

Enjoy your time with your family, Senator. You deserve it.

MANUFACTURING DAY 2015

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Manufacturing Day and the importance of Minnesota's manufacturing industry.

Manufacturing is one of the main drivers of the economy in my district and my State. Manufacturers generate billions of dollars in revenue for my State each year, making them a key pillar of Minnesota's economy.

Minnesota is home to an impressive 292,000 manufacturing jobs, and the State's manufacturing industry has the second largest payroll of any business sector.

Minnesotans are hardworking people, and they deserve the best that life has to offer. They deserve a strong State economy, which allows for individual growth, prosperity, and the pursuit of happiness. That is why I will continue to emphasize the importance of manufacturing-friendly policies for as long as I serve in Congress.

I am proud to support Manufacturing Day in our country, but I want to make it clear that every day is Manufacturing Day in Minnesota.

HAL BECKER, A SERVANT TO DELANO

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Hal Becker for his tireless service to the city of Delano and to wish him luck in his upcoming retirement.

Hal graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1977 with a degree in mathematics. Not long after completing his education, Hal began to work at Delano Municipal Utilities and served as the general manager there for 30 years. He was the perfect candidate for this position, as he also graduated from the St. Paul Public Schools electricity course, holds an electrician's license and a water supply system operator license.

Hal has done an outstanding job over the past 30 years, which is proven by the recognition he has received for his work. In 2013, he was the recipient of the impressive American Public Power Association's Larry Hobart Seven Hats Award.

Hal has been a great neighbor and member of our Delano community and, above all, our friend.

Hal, your shoes will be tough to fill, and we will all miss your service. I wish you a peaceful and happy retirement.

MARCO, INC., OF ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate

Marco, Inc., of St. Cloud, Minnesota, for making Fortune's list of best small- and medium-sized companies to work for.

Marco has an incredible story and is proof that the American Dream is alive and well. What began as a small typewriter shop in St. Cloud quickly evolved into one of the top technology providers in the country, with offices located throughout the Midwest.

However, what truly stands out about Marco is that they are one of the first companies to create an employee stock ownership plan, and they are among the few companies in this country to be 100 percent employee owned.

I truly commend Marco, Inc., for understanding that employees are the heart and soul of every company and that they must be taken care of and rewarded. Your quick rise and large success is undoubtedly due to the way you treat your employees and your positive work environment. I am proud to recognize you here today.

NORTH CAROLINA OPPORTUNITIES INDUSTRIALIZATION CENTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a great American, Howard Curtis Jones, a constituent and dear friend who is the founder and president of the Wilson, North Carolina, Opportunities Industrialization Center.

This past Monday, September 29, Mr. Jones was presented with the Outstanding Rural Leader of the Year award at an auspicious occasion in Raleigh, North Carolina, the highest award bestowed by the North Carolina Rural Center and the Rural Economic Development organization.

This recognition could not be awarded to a more deserving individual. Mr. Jones has long been an inspiration to many with his compassion and work. I am honored to call Howard Jones my friend of more than 45 years.

The Rural Leader award recognizes an individual who demonstrates remarkable commitment to improving the way of life in rural North Carolina by enhancing the community and positively impacting the quality of life for its residents.

Mr. Jones has been helping people from Wilson and surrounding communities for more than 40 years. He has earned this recognition through decades of hard work and community involvement.

Born in Sims, North Carolina, during the Depression in 1933 as one of 16 children, Howard has spent the majority of his life trying to empower disadvantaged populations in rural eastern North Carolina. He motivates them to reach their full potential by teaching vocational skills and helping them secure gainful employment.

In 1972, after returning to his home community from employment in New York City, Mr. Jones started OIC of Wilson, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, with the goal of helping to empower individuals to find employment opportunities.

Wilson OIC, as we call it, provides services to disadvantaged youth and adults, including prevocational training, employment readiness and referral services, health educational programs, and programs to help dislocated workers transition to new careers.

Remarkably, Mr. Jones began OIC with little more than his faith in God and an unshakeable resolve and steadfast dedication that it could be done. He had no funding. He had no staff when he started except volunteers.

Over the years, Wilson OIC has expanded to employ 35 workers and place more than 200 citizens per year in jobs. Importantly, Wilson OIC adapts the services and training they provide through our changing world and assists clients in acquiring the skills needed to compete in the 21st century economy.

For 10 years, I had the honor of serving as board chair for Wilson OIC and was involved in helping to secure its present site, which was an abandoned elementary school in the city.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, to Mr. Jones' work with OIC, he has been a leader among OICs nationally and internationally. He was a personal friend and confidant of the national founder, the Reverend Dr. Leon Howard Sullivan, who must be remembered as the first African American to serve on the board of directors for General Motors and the author of the Sullivan principles, which led to the dismantling of South Africa's system of apartheid.

Mr. Speaker, Howard Jones has received more than 100 awards during his career: in 1987, he received the Governor's Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service; in 1987, he was recognized at the national level with the Thomas Jefferson Award; in 1997, President Clinton presented Mr. Jones with the Lifetime Achievement Jefferson Award; and in 2009, he received the First Community Stellar Award by Success Dynamics. The list goes on and on.

Finally, Howard Jones and Wilson OIC, four times each year, distribute thousands of pounds of food to low-income families in the community. When they conduct their food distribution program, hundreds of citizens literally line up through the night to receive these commodities. Howard Jones, Mr. Speaker, is an icon in our community.

Howard has been married to his wife, Sylvia Neal Jones, for many years. He is the father of five adult children and seven grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Howard Curtis Jones on being selected as Outstanding Rural Leader of the Year. He is most deserving of this honor. Mr. Jones is an example of how a single individual can make an immense positive impact in his community, in his State, and in his country.

RUSSIA'S ATTACK ON SYRIA

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

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I had no intention of coming to the floor and actually speaking this morning—I have a committee hearing, in fact—until I saw the news.

Now, let me paint a picture just briefly. Every day there are men, women, and children that live in a nation called Syria that wonder if the next barrel bomb is going to come and drop in their neighborhood. Now, this isn't a barrel bomb targeted, by the way, at any real opposition. It is targeted at inflicting the maximum amount of pain on innocent civilians so that a brutal dictator by the name of Bashar al-Assad can ruthlessly, heartlessly keep power for himself in a country that does not want him.

We know that Bashar al-Assad used chemical weapons against his own people. Young kids were choking and gasping for air, knowing that this was their last breath and knowing that their dreams of becoming a doctor, a police officer, maybe a teacher was cut short by this ruthless, heartless man, Bashar al-Assad.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the President said a few years ago, almost divisively, that the opposition to Bashar al-Assad is just a bunch of doctors, lawyers, and pharmacists, as if that were a bad thing.

□ 1030

I believe that a bunch of doctors, lawyers, and pharmacists in charge of Syria today would be a very good thing. Mr. Speaker, about 2 weeks ago I stood in this Chamber and gave just a 1-minute address and said: Let me be clear. There is one reason and one reason only that Russia finds itself in the Middle East and one reason and one reason only that Russia finds itself in Syria, and that one reason is to prop up this brutal dictator Bashar al-Assad.

Now, let me remind people that ISIS would not exist in Syria had it not been for Bashar al-Assad brutally cracking down on the opposition, the peaceful opposition of his own people, but today we see that ISIS calls Syria home and we find ourselves engaged—albeit halfheartedly—in a war against ISIS because of this brutal dictator Bashar al-Assad. I stood in this Chamber and warned that the reason Russia is there is to prop him up.

Now, I told you that this morning I had no intention of coming onto the floor, Mr. Speaker, except this morning I saw the news that Russia has begun airstrikes in the Middle East. Now, if they were striking against ISIS, some could maybe argue that, hey, this is an opportunity to unite a world coalition. But it appears that, actually, the Russians have struck the doctors, lawyers,

and pharmacists that are the loyal opposition for a free Syria against Bashar al-Assad.

This is not a Russia interested in defeating ISIS for the sake of the peace of the world. This is a Russia interested in rebuilding the Soviet empire and propping up their dictators in the Middle East, regardless of that dictator having killed a quarter million of his own people. This is not a choice between Bashar al-Assad or ISIS. Mr. Speaker, to defeat ISIS, you must defeat Bashar al-Assad. The two choices are not separate. They are one and the same.

Sometimes in my party's Presidential debate I hear candidates, one or two in particular, that say Assad is our best choice in the Middle East. Mr. Speaker, if you would allow me, as a Christian, to say, as a follower of Jesus myself, no Jesus Christ I follow would call a man who brutally murders 250,000, at least, of his own people, especially women and children—no Christ I follow would call that man an ally or a friend in any way.

This is not a choice that is just one layer deep. This is a complicated situation in the Middle East that must be handled with American leadership. Mr. Speaker, I hope that the President sees this as an opportunity to reassert America's role in the Middle East. It doesn't mean he has to send 300,000 troops back into the Middle East. Not a single person I have heard on either side of the aisle has suggested even once another 300,000 troops in the Middle East.

What is being suggested is that, in the absence of American leadership, chaos, violence, death, and poverty follow suit. What we are seeing in the Middle East is a lack of American leadership and a situation spun out of control.

Mr. Speaker, I know George W. Bush has taken his licks for his policy in the Middle East, but at the end of the George W. Bush administration, if you looked at the Middle East then compared to the Middle East today, it is no comparison.

Mr. Speaker, I hope I wake up tomorrow and hear on the news that President Obama has said that America will reassert its leadership in the Middle East, but I won't hold my breath.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DESERVE RESPONSIBLE GOVERNING

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, Senate Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL has described the Republican House and Senate as a ''responsible right-of-center governing majority.'' But how responsible is it that we are about to start a new fiscal year with no plan for how to fund our government? We are hours away from a shutdown, and Congress has yet to even begin budget negotiations.

Instead of doing the job the American people sent us here to do, we are celebrating that maybe we have found a way to keep the government open for 2 months—2 months. That is what we consider a bipartisan victory these days. Now, we may prevent a shutdown today, but let's be clear. Doing the bare minimum to keep the government from closing is not responsible. It is hardly governing at all.

The American people sent us here to take on the big issues and to get things done. They want us to fight for infrastructure, for education, for jobs, not just to keep the lights on. We are letting partisan games get in the way of governing, and it is not only hurting our government, it is hurting our constituents.

Unreliable, unpredictable short-term funding prevents the government from operating effectively and efficiently, and it costs taxpayers money. We are short-term funding, and we are ignoring changes in our policy priorities and restricting agencies from shifting dollars around to meet emerging challenges.

Defense officials recently warned that forcing the Pentagon to operate on a short-term CR would hurt our national security by restricting our ability to respond to new threats. Moreover, a CR severely limits the government's ability to plan ahead or start new projects. That is because there is no guarantee the money will be there in 2 months.

How do agencies manage this uncertainty? By freezing hiring and training, shortening terms for grants and contracts, forgoing maintenance, and delaying scheduled pay raises. In addition, agencies have to waste countless resources preparing for contingency plans for shutdowns that may or may not happen.

Republicans like to talk about running government more like a business. Is this how they would run a business? What successful business budgets 2 months at a time?

What we need and what Democrats have been demanding is for Republicans to sit down with us and craft a long-term, bipartisan budget so we can finally get rid of the harmful, across-the-board spending cuts of sequestration so we can reprioritize and restore funding in areas like education, R&D, infrastructure, and national security in a fiscally responsible way so we can plan for the future.

The best way to do that is to return to regular order. That means offering pro-growth budget resolutions that address our long-term fiscal challenges in a responsible way. No partisan austerity plans that keep the indiscriminate and harmful sequestration in place. It also means bringing appropriation bills to the floor free of ideological policy riders. There is a time and place to debate controversial issues. That is why we have authorizing committees.

I am confident that, as long as we can put partisan politics aside and ignore obstructionist demands, we can get back to passing budgets under regular order, not a partisan budget that fails to address the sequester, not a CR that operates to keep agencies from planning more than 2 months out, and definitely not the threat of another shutdown.

My hope is with the new Republican leadership will come a renewed effort to bring back long-term budgeting under regular order. That is the kind of responsible government the American people expect of us. That is the kind of responsible governing that the American people deserve.

PROTECTING PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. REED) for 5 minutes.

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I have come to this floor numerous times to stand for a priority that I have committed myself to here as a Member of this Congress, and that is to stand up for individuals and protect the private property rights that our fellow American citizens enjoy in owning their properties, their homes, their family farms, and their other property that they have worked tirelessly to obtain.

I care about defending the constitutional rights given to all Americans and the generations that will follow us in the future. I fundamentally believe, Mr. Speaker, the American citizens' land is their land; it is not our government's.

Every day, Mr. Speaker, I am getting more and more input in our office about examples of Big Government taking people's property without just compensation and abusing the power of eminent domain. I have heard of family farms. I have heard of homes. I have heard of rights that have been squashed time and time by Big Government.

And individuals have nowhere to go. They essentially have two choices, either roll over, submit to the government and take what the government gives them or they try to fight and they use up their own precious resources while they fight a Big Government that seems to have endless amounts of resources and time, Mr. Speaker, on their side.

I want to put this in a personal perspective for my fellow Members and American citizens. This gentleman is a gentleman by the name of Charlie Birnbaum of Atlantic City, New Jersey. Mr. Birnbaum is the son of immigrants who came to America after surviving the brutality of the Holocaust. His parents bought a home, raised a family, and passed that home on to Charlie. They lived and are living the American Dream.

Mr. Speaker, this is that home. This is something where they have raised their family, enjoyed family memories, and where Mr. Birnbaum is living the American Dream and providing resources by teaching piano lessons out

of this home and renting portions of it to tenants to make ends meet.

Since early 2014, the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority of New Jersey wants to take this home and give it to an unknown entity. They don't even have a plan to redevelop this home. They just want his property. That is not right, Mr. Speaker. That is not the American way of life. That is not the American Government that I am going to allow to abuse this man's precious home.

The solution is something that I have put together. The Defense of Property Rights Act is a piece of legislation that has come out of the Property Rights Caucus, working with my fellow Members from Maine to Alabama, to California, to stand up for private properties in America.

I introduced the legislation in January. The Defense of Property Rights Act would stand with people like Charlie and say: What America and the Big Government mentality of today is doing is wrong, and there are Members in Washington, D.C. who are joining us in the fight to say no more. We will force through that legislation accountability. We will make sure that government thinks about what it is doing before it destroys Charlie's American Dream and the Charlies across the country. Because, if it can happen to Charlie, Mr. Speaker, it can happen to anyone.

On my watch in Congress, I will do whatever I can to stand with those fellow American citizens and say: We are not going to let this happen.

HONORING FRED SIMON

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

Mr. ASHFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a dear friend who has not only left his mark on a nationally recognized Omaha business, but also on the city itself. Fred Simon joined the family business Omaha Steaks back in 1959, helping to make it the household name and success story it is today.

But the memory of Fred Simon goes beyond the bottom line. Through his love of the arts, he spent many years helping propel the city of Omaha into a world-class community. Art lovers in Omaha have long recognized the role Fred played in elevating the city's cultural stature. It has been said that he knew that great cities need great art. With that goal in mind, Fred helped bring a full-time professional opera company to Omaha, and he didn't stop there.

Serving as Opera Omaha's board president, financially backing and attending the opera for more than four decades, Fred once said that he was sensitive to the meaning of words and the power of music. Fred, you will certainly be missed on many levels. Omaha thanks you for a life that has indeed been well lived.

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF IRANIAN TERRORISM ACT

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

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3457, the Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act. Iran currently owes $43.5 billion to victims of state-sponsored terrorism. Hundreds of Americans have personally felt the impact of Iranian terrorism. In the last 30 years, Americans studying abroad, teaching or traveling through the Middle East have been taken hostage, killed in suicide bombings and gunned down by members of the Islamic jihad.

The damages owed have been previously awarded by U.S. courts under Federal law, and the judgments remain unsatisfied by the Islamic Republic of Iran. Under the President's Iran deal, sanctions on Iran will be lifted, and an estimated $150 billion in assets will be released to them, and not one single cent will be used to pay the debts owed to the victims of Iranian-sponsored terrorism.

□ 1045

H.R. 3457 holds Iran accountable to the victims of its terrorism by ensuring that not one cent of sanction relief goes to Iran until the victims are paid.

I am a proud cosponsor of Mr. MEEHAN's legislation, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

UNWAVERING BOND WITH ISRAEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, this morning, the United Nations will take yet another action that only serves to further undermine the prospects for peace between Israelis and Palestinians and underscores the lengths to which the United Nations and many of its member states will go in order to wrongly isolate and delegitimize the democratic Jewish State of Israel.

By raising the Palestinian flag for the first time ever at the U.N., that body is allowing Palestinians to continue with their scheme to achieve unilateral statehood without having to honor their obligations to reach a peaceful settlement through direct negotiations with Israel.

While addressing the U.N. General Assembly this week, President Obama had an opportunity to denounce this latest stunt and press for the United Nations to abandon its course of action and return to the principles of its own diplomatic agreements with regard to resolving the peace process; yet, as usual, the President remained silent. That silence speaks volumes about the administration's policy toward Israel, our closest friend and ally, and it will surely only serve to embolden Abu Mazen. Today, Abu Mazen will address the U.N. General Assembly, and his speech will be nothing more than political theater.

In his speech later today, Abu Mazen will surely continue his ploy to achieve unilateral statehood recognition from sympathetic states and U.N. entities that are dominated by anti-Israel bias, like the Human Rights Council. What a misnomer. And, of course, he will blame Israel for not being able to achieve peace, when it is Abu Mazen who repeatedly has rebuffed overtures from Israel Prime Minister Netanyahu to return to the table to discuss a mutually agreeable resolution.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen over the past several years—a sight unseemly and unbecoming—the administration publicly admonish and insult our ally Israel and its leaders, applying a false moral equivalency between Israel and the Palestinians; yet when it comes to Abu Mazen's intransigence or Palestinian incitement, the Obama administration remains reserved in its condemnation, if it feigns the appearance of disapproval at all.

For peace, Abu Mazen must recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, must renounce the use of violence and put an end to the repeated rocket attacks and acts of terror, and must sit down with Israel to be an earnest partner for peace.

Abu Mazen, who is currently in his 10th year of a 5-year term as the leader of the Palestinian Authority, is only interested in self-preservation and self-interest. The onus lies with Abu Mazen and the Palestinian Authority to live up to their obligations and previous diplomatic agreements. If and when it doesn't—for surely, I know that they won't—the U.S. must be ready to cut off financial assistance to the Palestinians.

We must see that our assistance is used as leverage to ensure that the Palestinians honor their commitments and negotiate a peaceful two-state solution directly with Israel without any preconditions. We must also veto any attempts by the Palestinians to bring another resolution to the U.N. Security Council to advance their illegal unilateral statehood scheme and must make Abu Mazen pay for the consequences of these destructive actions.

The Obama administration will offer platitudes, and the administration officials will say that no other President has done more for Israel's security. But I caution that it isn't what the administration or the President says regarding Israel; it is what they don't say that we should also be paying attention to. That is why the President's silence on Israel and the Palestinians at the U.N. General Assembly this week is all too telling, and that is why it is up to us in Congress to do what we can to support Israel, to support the Jewish state's right to exist and its right to defend herself, and to use the leverage we have.

Ladies and gentlemen, nearly $10 billion in U.S. taxpayer dollars, your

money, is being sent to the U.N. We must use that leverage at the U.N. to hold those entities accountable and to fight back this fraudulent unilateral statehood scheme and these efforts to delegitimize Israel.

We need to make every effort we can to signal to the world that our commitment is an unbreakable bond between the U.S. and the democratic Jewish state and that that bond is unwavering.

ARE WE IN OR OUT IN ELIMINATING ISIS?

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on September 10, 2014, President Obama announced that the United States would ''degrade and ultimately destroy'' ISIS. ISIS has obviously not gotten the memo. This terrorist group keeps moving across the Middle East, killing those who stand in its way by raping, pillaging, and murdering those who disagree with them. ISIS controls half of Syria and large parts of Iraq. Civilized society is losing to these barbarians.

Despite the U.S. spending billions on a counterterrorism strategy, the terrorist group's numbers have not decreased. In fact, ISIS has grown in size, with affiliates all over the world, including Indonesia, Yemen, Egypt, and even Libya.

A $3 billion U.S. airstrike campaign has been plagued with little measurable successful results. From the very beginning, military officials warned that airstrikes alone that relied on virtually no human intelligence or on-the-ground intelligence would not be successful. Without good intelligence, the number of airstrikes the U.S. has carried out have been few, and the results are uncertain.

Also, ISIS fighters killed by our airstrikes are just replaced by other jihadists. Our intelligence estimates that ISIS' numbers are the same as they were when our airstrikes began.

In addition, the administration's $500 million train and equip program has proved to be a failure by anyone's measure. In July, officials reported they had identified 7,000 planned participants but only trained 60 of these mercenaries. Later that month, 54 fighters crossed into Syria to fight ISIS forces that numbered in the tens of thousands. Of those 54 mercenaries, virtually all were killed, captured, or scattered when attacked. We are now down to four or five U.S.-trained mercenaries, according to General Lloyd Austin of CENTCOM.

Despite this failed policy, just last week, we sent a second group of 70 U.S.-trained mercenaries into Syria. Just 1 day later, reports suggested that one of the officers defected and surrendered his arms to al Qaeda's Syrian affiliate, and several truckloads of weapons were allegedly traded to the terrorist group al-Nusra for safe passage.

It is time to abandon this failed train and equip program.

The reality is just as bleak on the online battlefield. ISIS has 30,000 to 40,000 social media accounts. It uses the Internet to spread propaganda, raise money, and find recruits as far away as Washington State.

In 2011, the administration promised a strategy to combat terrorist use of social media. Four years later, we still haven't seen that plan. No plan, no degrading ISIS, no defeating ISIS.

The intel given to the administration has also been doctored to cover up how badly the war against ISIS is going. Meanwhile, thousands of people are fleeing the Middle East—flooding Europe and demanding entry into other Western nations because of the ISIS carnage and the chaos in Syria as well.

In the face of our failure to destroy ISIS, we should be focusing on what we can do better and how we can improve our strategy without using U.S. ground troops.

ISIS' advances in Syria translate into more direct threats to our national security and interests, both abroad and at home. ISIS wants to destroy the United States and everything we stand for. ISIS fears no one—certainly not the United States—so it continues to murder in the name of its radical jihad. It has already killed innocent Americans.

We need a strategy that protects American people from this radical Islamic threat. So what is the plan? Let the Russians defeat ISIS and prop up the butcher of Syria, Assad, and let him remain in power? Who knows. The current U.S. plan seems to be like the war in Vietnam: don't win, don't lose.

The American people need to know if the U.S. is in or out in the fight against ISIS. If it is in the national security interest of the United States to degrade and defeat them, we need to define the enemy and defeat them.

And that is just the way it is.

SITUATION IN SYRIA

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

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I am not generally in the habit of agreeing with my friend from Texas, but I do thank him for posing some really challenging questions about our activities in Syria.

I think it is fair to say that the situation in Syria has gotten worse, not better. And only now that the chaos in Syria results in the flow of hundreds of thousands of people into Europe and into surrounding and delicately constructed countries, only now that we are having a conversation about how many Syrian refugees we will take in the United States are we beginning to take notice of the moral tragedy that has been with Syria for many, many years.

The civil war in Syria has resulted in the deaths of more than 300,000 people. It has created 4 million refugees and displaced more than 6.5 million people into places like Jordan and Turkey—and now, in Europe and elsewhere around the world.

Sadly, it appears that the efforts that we have made, which my friend from Texas referred to, have been ineffectual, to put it mildly, and the situation grows worse. We watch now the Russians introducing military equipment into Syria, something that can only result in more violence, more death, and more refugees. We see, sadly—and I have watched this closely from my perch on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence—ISIS gaining in strength, not losing strength.

There are lots of conversations to be had about U.S. efforts to train and equip the so-called Syrian moderates. There are conversations to be had about how we deal with Russian influence in the area. But something we must focus on now, and something that is the subject of a letter that I and 54 of my colleagues have sent to the President of the United States, is that the only real solution in Syria, a solution that should be implemented today, is for the international community, all of the players that have a stake and influence in Syria, to come together today to begin the process of working out an international agreement, the terms of which will undoubtedly be uncomfortable for us, but an agreement that will bring an end to the civil war. This agreement should provide for the exit of Bashar al-Assad. He has lost all credibility as a global leader, but he remains there.

Apart from ending the humanitarian and moral crisis in Syria, that conference would allow us to finally align behind an objective that I believe is shared by pretty much everybody in the region, which is the destruction of ISIS.

Until we take this step of coming together around a table that, yes, will involve some unsavory characters, that, yes, will not lead to an agreement that we regard as perfect, until we do that, we will simply be managing chaos. And maybe we will manage chaos well, but it will still be managing chaos: hundreds of thousands of refugees and the destabilization that that will cause, more weaponry being introduced, more U.S. taxpayer dollars expended.

We can do that. That is what we have been doing. We can do it for more months and more years. Or we can do the obvious thing, which is get around a table—and I do call on the President of the United States to show American leadership in this—and say we don't leave the room until this moral tragedy is stopped.

This is what it would mean to be a leader in the world. We can bomb. We can send military equipment. We do that a lot. Real leadership will involve saying we will come together with people we like and people we don't to solve this problem.

I call on this House to assist me and others in the effort to make sure that

this becomes a national priority so we can finally bring this tragedy in the Middle East to an end.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate concurs in the House of Representatives amendment to the Senate amendment with an amendment to the bill (H.R. 719) ''An Act to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes.''.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend William Vanderbush, Cathedral of Praise, Austin, Texas, offered the following prayer:

My gracious Heavenly Father, I stand in awe and gratitude at Your goodness and Your grace for our Nation.

I pray today that You would grant our Congress, our Representatives, and our President a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of You and of Your love.

Fill them with Your Holy Spirit, and may You give them visions, dreams, and new ideas that will shape the course of history for Your glory.

May they display in every decision the States united and not divided. Jesus, let us be one with each other just as we are one with You.

I pray for their families, that You would bless them in their sacrifice and service. I declare healing, grace, wholeness, and peace for all of our Representatives and our Nation today.

Let Your kingdom come, and let Your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.

In Jesus' name, amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

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

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CARNEY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CARNEY 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.

WELCOMING REVEREND WILLIAM VANDERBUSH

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Reverend Bill Vanderbush for serving as guest chaplain of this body today.

When I was a little girl living on a ranch in South Dakota, every Sunday morning, my dad would load us up in a big Oldsmobile four-door diesel car and drive us the long way into town to church. And every Sunday morning he religiously would turn on the radio to KWAT, and we would listen to the sound of Henry Vanderbush's voice fill the car all the way to town.

My dad loved Henry Vanderbush. He was proudly known as the ''cow barn preacher,'' and he spoke to us every single Sunday growing up. When I hear his voice today still, my eyes fill with tears thinking of my dad and how much he loved him.

In a God-ordained meeting a few years ago, I had the opportunity to meet Bill Vanderbush, his son, on an airplane. They have prayed for me; they have encouraged; they have lifted me up, and they have been wonderful friends and prayer partners throughout that.

I want to thank him for coming today and opening this House floor with prayer.

I ask God to continuously bless him and his ministry. They are working to expand it, not only just to people in the country, but people in the city and people across the world. They carry a burden for people's hearts in their souls, and I appreciate them and ask God to richly bless them and their family.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YODER). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

AN AMERICAN HERO

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

Mr. STEWART. Mr. Speaker, I sit by an American hero, my friend, SAM JOHNSON, to recognize three American heroes in my own hometown: a brave police officer and two sisters, Bre and Kaylie Lasley.

Last week, a man broke into their house and began to viciously attack these two sisters with a knife. They defended each other, they supported each other, and they fought for each other's lives.

Fortunately, a police officer was in the area and, when he heard their screams, he ran to the rescue. Just seconds before this intruder was expected to take Bre's life, this heroic police officer entered the scene and saved her.

Speaking of this officer, Bre said: ''Right when we made eye contact, I knew that I was safe. It's a miracle that he had so much composure. He was our angel.''

I am proud to serve in a country where police officers put their lives on the line every single day to save us. I am proud to serve in a country where we know that the country isn't great because of the actions of the government; it is great because of heroic and courageous actions of individuals, which is why I would like to present this police officer with my first Profile of Courage award.

MANUFACTURING DAY

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, this Friday, October 2, is Manufacturing Day, a day to celebrate the American manufacturing industry that has made our country great and to highlight emerging opportunities in the field of advanced manufacturing.

My home State of Rhode Island is the birthplace of the American industrial revolution. It was in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, where Samuel Slater opened our country's first successful cotton spinning factory that marked the beginning of a new era in American innovation.

From the textile mills in Woonsocket to the shipyards in Newport, good-paying manufacturing jobs helped build a thriving middle class in Rhode Island and all across our country.

Today, advanced manufacturing fields like 3–D printing, medical device production, and renewable energy offer the promise of new opportunities to a

new generation of Rhode Island and American workers. It is critical that we seize these opportunities to help our country lead the world in manufacturing.

Let's honor the great manufacturing history of America by investing in policies that create good-paying American jobs. I urge my colleagues to stand up for commonsense policies that will enable the American manufacturing industry to lead the world. Let's move forward in a bipartisan way with our Make It In America agenda.

GOLD STAR PARENTS

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this weekend was Gold Star Mother's Day, a day we set aside each year to honor the women who have lost a child or a grandchild who was actively serving in our great Nation's military. It is a time to honor their strength, will, and perseverance. It is also a time to honor the memories of their loved ones.

Freedom is not free. There is a cost, and that cost is paid first by our veterans and their families. That is why I am glad this week the House also did something to honor America's Gold Star Fathers with the Gold Star Fathers Act. This bill grants these men the same status as Gold Star Mothers, regardless of their eligibility for civil service.

To all Gold Star parents, please know your Nation supports you and that we are grateful for the service and sacrifice of your loved ones.

RECOGNIZING JIM GILLIAM, SR.

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

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and work of Mr. Jim Gilliam, Sr.

Mr. Gilliam was one of Delaware's most prominent leaders. He fought tirelessly for social justice, gave voice to the voiceless, and created opportunities for generations of Delawareans. We are unquestionably better off because of the work to which Mr. Gilliam devoted his life.

Mr. Gilliam served our country as a Buffalo Soldier in the U.S. Army. Afterwards, he served Delaware in many capacities, from being a peacemaker after the assassination of Martin Luther King to the director of New Castle County's Department of Community Development and Housing.

I was privileged to work with Mr. Gilliam in New Castle County, and since then, I have often sought and respected Mr. Gilliam's counsel. He never minced words or pulled punches when giving you his opinion.

I joined Mr. Gilliam for lunch recently, and he was as engaged as ever in challenging me to do the right thing and take on those in Congress who are getting in the way of progress.

Mr. Gilliam was a real leader and great Delawarean whose legacy will live on through those who continue to fight for fairness and equal opportunity for all Americans.

HONORING HARRY WEBB

(Mrs. WALORSKI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a pharmacist in my district, Harry Webb, for his dedication to curbing the meth epidemic that has taken America by storm.

Meth has infected rural communities across America, consuming working class Americans who build meth labs in rural areas using household products and ingredients.

Make no mistake, Indiana's meth problem is appalling. In 2013, the Hoosier State had more meth incidents than any other State in the U.S.

Harry and his team, the Citizen Action Committee, are working to curb meth production by partnering with local and State officials and pharmacies to reduce pseudoephedrine sales, the active ingredient in producing meth. They have taken the initiative in marketing drug abuse resistant products to their customers.

This is a critical issue for the whole country, but I am grateful for Harry's dedication and work to reduce the amount of meth labs in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, once again, join me in honoring Harry Webb for his meth lab reduction program and his service to our State.

WEAR RED WEDNESDAY

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

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today is Wear Red Wednesday to bring back our girls. All summer we have heard reports of Boko Haram's atrocities. This summer of savagery and brutality left us fearful for the fate of Nigeria and the Chibok girls.

But with a change of the seasons comes renewed help. We have learned of the reopening of public schools in Borno State, the very region where the Chibok girls were kidnapped over 500 days ago simply because they wanted an education. This reopening of schools gives us hope that, once the girls are returned, they will receive the education Boko Haram tried to steal from them. There are also negotiations taking place for the release of the girls.

Until these precious girls are returned and Boko Haram is defeated, we will wear red every Wednesday and we will continue to tweet, tweet, tweet #bringbackourgirls.

Tweet, tweet, tweet #joinrepwilson.

RURAL CALIFORNIA HARMED BY OBAMACARE

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, ObamaCare is simply failing rural America. A recent report showed that rural residents are left with even higher skyrocketing costs and even more barriers to care.

A knee replacement in northern California, for example, is $43,000, but the price tag for that same service for a knee replacement in Los Angeles is $27,000. In addition, residents in northern California face a 7 percent increase, or a total of $384 a month or $4,600 a year, under Covered California.

Our health industry needs competition, the key to driving costs down and increasing options for quality care. Unfortunately, the ACA has only discouraged competition, especially in rural areas where more and more physicians and providers are closing up shop, citing difficulties to operate under arbitrary regulations coming out of D.C.

Mr. Speaker, rather than hindering small business with red tape, let's work to advance policies that encourage competition and location of doctors and nurses coming to rural America; and reward that innovation so we can tackle the issues plaguing rural health care, such as the staggering doctor and nurse shortage and increasing premiums and barriers to timely care.

□ 1215

CONGRESS NEEDS TO SIT DOWN AT THE TABLE

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

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, it looks like Congress will narrowly avoid another costly and unnecessary shutdown. That is the good news. The bad news is that Congress will have the same fight again just before the holidays start.

Why does this place keep playing the same dysfunctional record over and over? In my region, the last shutdown cost furloughs at our military installations; Olympic National Park closed its doors, hurting local employers; tribes and social service providers and others faced painful disruptions of funding. I don't want to see that happen again.

This place is spending a lot of time and energy obsessing about who the next Speaker will be. That is one job. We should be more concerned about the thousands of jobs we need to grow and keep not just in my region, but all around this country.

Congress needs to end the grandstanding and sit down at the table. Let's hammer out a budget agreement that finally ends the across-the-board sequestration cuts and focuses on this Nation's economy and its long-term growth.

HONORING CHERYL THIBODEAU WITH THE FRIST HUMANITARIAN AWARD

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

Mr. GUINTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize one of New Hampshire's leading citizens, Cheryl Thibodeau of Portsmouth Regional Hospital. The hospital, serving the seacoast region of my State, awarded Cheryl its 2015 Frist Humanitarian Award for her service to the local community.

A nurse in the emergency ward, Cheryl is a consummate teammate to her coworkers, frequently going above and beyond the call of duty. Outside work, she donates her time as part of the Pease Greeters organization to welcome home returning troops at Portsmouth airport.

She is an active participant in Sarah's Ride, a charity that raises money for the Portsmouth Firefighters Charitable Association. Also in her spare time, Cheryl lends her medical expertise and friendly bedside manner to others in need of home care and she teaches New Hampshire's young about the valuable profession she is engaged in.

It seems that everyone has something positive to say about Cheryl and her efforts to make our State a better place. I have seen up close what she and the fantastic doctors and nurses at Portsmouth Regional Hospital do and could not be prouder of her work.

DO YOUR JOB

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans have brought us again to the brink of another government shutdown. Here we are, the last day of the fiscal year, and what we have before us today is a temporary, 2-month budget to keep the government open, basically kicking the can down the road, failing to take up the priorities of the American people, failing to bring any kind of a jobs plan, any kind of a plan to fix our roads and bridges in this country to put Americans back to work.

When I go home, I hear one thing over and over again, and I imagine other Members do, too. They tell us: Do your job. Do your job. You have had months to bring budgets to this floor. Do your job.

It is that simple. We may disagree on what the outcome looks like, but what we can't accept is the fact that the Congress of the United States fails to do the one thing that it is directed to do under this Constitution. Do your job.

This has gone on far too long. Democrats are ready to sit down and negotiate, to work together to try to come up with solutions to the big problems we face, but we can't do it all by ourselves. We need a partner. Do your job.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS APPRECIATION MONTH

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

Mr. ZINKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor October as Special Operations Appreciation Month. The significance of October dates back to the roots of the first Special Forces service, aka the Devil's Brigade. This unit, like others—Scouts and Raiders, Rangers, and Naval Demolition Units—is where modern Special Operations Forces draw their roots.

We should also recognize the sacrifices of the families of these warriors. From my own experience, having served 23 years as a Navy SEAL and commander at SEAL Team 6, my wife, Lola, was oftentimes both mom and father. At one time during the war in Iraq, my wife, Lola, was at home with our two young boys while her husband, daughter, and son-in-law were all forward deployed.

Special Operations Appreciation Month is just as much about the heroes at home as it is the heroes abroad. I ask you today to please join me in supporting and recognizing October as Special Operations Appreciation Month. May God bless America and the troops that defend her.

DO THE BUSINESS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, from the moment that House Republicans came to power, the majority has failed to do its job. They have consistently abdicated their responsibility to govern. They have consistently taken the American people on reckless legislative joyrides guaranteed to crash and burn. As former New York Knick Michael Ray Richardson once famously observed as his team's season was headed in the wrong direction, this ship be sinking.

Mr. Speaker, House Republicans need to end their obsession with the Affordable Care Act, end their obsession with hurting immigrant families, end their obsession with Planned Parenthood. It is time to end sequestration, to fully fund the government, and get back to doing the business of the American people.

OUR NATION'S DEBT IS EATING US ALIVE

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

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, our Nation's debt is eating us alive, and without changing our disastrous fiscal course, the CBO warns that our interest costs will exceed our entire defense budget in just 8 years.

For the first time in a decade, this Congress has adopted a budget to restore fiscal solvency. Having set that course, we now must stay that course. That is what the appropriations process is all about.

For months, Senate Democrats have blocked consideration of any of the appropriations bills we have sent them unless we discard the budget and put our country back on the road to bankruptcy.

Today we have reached the fiscal deadline. A temporary funding bill is necessary to keep the government open, and I would support it if the House and Senate leadership announced a timetable to complete our work and pledged to keep to that timetable. Without that announcement, a short-term CR simply continues us on an unsustainable course.

HUNGER TOUCHES EVERY COMMUNITY

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

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, this September Feeding America's national network of food banks and hunger advocates took part in Hunger Action Month, yet here in Congress, as September comes to an end, I am not sure that Hunger Action Month ever began. Nearly 49 million Americans, including over 15 million children, live in food-insecure households. That is shameful.

Hunger touches every community—every community. In my own Florida district in Palm Beach and Broward Counties, about 15 percent of households are food-insecure. That is nearly half a million people who don't know where their next meal will come from.

Thankfully, the generosity of our community and the work of groups like Feeding South Florida help keep hungry families fed, but those with the greatest power to end hunger are right here in the United States Congress. As Pope Francis said to this Chamber just last week: The fight against poverty and hunger must be fought constantly and on many fronts. Let's heed his words.

This week I will introduce the Food Security Improvement Act of 2015, a bill to ensure SNAP benefits reflect the real costs of feeding a family in need. I invite my colleagues to join me in sponsoring this legislation. Let's mark the end of Hunger Action Month by taking action here in this House.

NATIONAL PEDIATRIC BONE CANCER AWARENESS DAY

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

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Speaker, today I rise because September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. Every year countless children are diagnosed with different cancers, altering their lives forever.

Fourteen-year-old Kaitlyn Jankovsky of Corpus Christi was diagnosed last year with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Although her cancer and treatment have been a challenge, Kaitlyn has shown great tenacity in her fight against cancer.

Our country should take inspiration from children like Kaitlyn and thousands of others living with cancer every day. It is why I have introduced H. Res. 102 to designate a day in September as National Pediatric Bone Cancer Awareness Day.

Today we wish Kaitlyn and all the other children living with pediatric cancer well. Treatment and survival rates for pediatric bone cancer have remained virtually unchanged for a quarter of a century. For Kaitlyn and other children, let's start changing that.

SICKLE CELL ANEMIA

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

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss a topic near and dear to my heart: sickle cell anemia. Sickle cell is an inherited blood disease where red blood cells are abnormally shaped, making it hard to deliver oxygen throughout the body, often causing extreme pain, damaging vital organs, and possible stroke.

I have seen these effects firsthand. My sister died from sickle cell just 2 weeks before her 27th birthday. I will never forget the many night trips to the emergency room to get care for her, since we didn't have health insurance.

Back then we didn't know much about sickle cell disease. Today medical treatment and research for sickle cell has evolved. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, more people now have health insurance, but we must still support Federal efforts to fund additional research and treatment opportunities.

That is why I am proud to cosponsor H.R. 1807, the Sickle Cell Research Surveillance, Prevention, and Treatment Act, which supports funding for advanced medical treatment and research.

My colleagues, please join me in recognizing September as Sickle Cell Awareness Month by supporting legislation to treat this disease and by keeping our government running so critical sickle cell research and treatment can continue at the National Institutes of Health.

SEQUESTRATION IS HURTING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to how sequestration and the current dysfunction in the House is hurting the American people, our infrastructure, our education, our national security, and our veterans. Sequestration has caused a severe slowdown in our job growth in this country, especially as it affects the middle class.

We have seen reduction of job growth resulting in the potential loss of close to 800,000 American jobs. These are jobs my constituents in Baltimore County region desperately need. Just yesterday my staff met with a constituent from Owings Mills, Maryland, who was laid off from a defense contractor due to sequestration cuts.

The current fiscal year 2016 transportation and housing appropriation bill cuts TIGER grants, which are used to fund critical highway, transit, and important investments, by approximately $400 million. That is less than the fiscal year 2015 level and $1.2 billion less than the President's request. We need this transportation money for jobs. Our infrastructure is failing.

We cannot stay competitive without investment. Sequestration is not the answer. Continuing resolutions are not the answer. Passing the buck is not the answer. It is time for Congress to stop the nip-and-tuck tactics and make tough decisions about our priorities.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken later.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EXPIRING AUTHORITIES ACT OF 2015

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 2082) to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain expiring provisions of law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 2082

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2015''.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. References to title 38, United States Code.
Sec. 3. Scoring of budgetary effects.

TITLE I—EXTENSIONS OF AUTHORITY RELATING TO HEALTH CARE

Sec. 101. Extension of authority for collection of copayments for hospital care and nursing home care.
Sec. 102. Extension of requirement to provide nursing home care to certain veterans with service-connected disabilities.
Sec. 103. Extension of authorization of appropriations for assistance and support services for caregivers.
Sec. 104. Extension of authority for recovery from third parties of cost of care and services furnished to veterans with health-plan contracts for non-service-connected disability.
Sec. 105. Extension of authority for pilot program on assistance for child care for certain veterans receiving health care.
Sec. 106. Extension of authority to make grants to veterans service organizations for transportation of highly rural veterans.
Sec. 107. Extension of authority for DOD–VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund.
Sec. 108. Extension of authority for joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund.
Sec. 109. Extension of authority for pilot program on counseling in retreat settings for women veterans newly separated from service.

TITLE II—EXTENSIONS OF AUTHORITY RELATING TO BENEFITS

Sec. 201. Extension of authority for the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education.
Sec. 202. Extension of authority for calculating net value of real property at time of foreclosure.
Sec. 203. Extension of authority relating to vendee loans.
Sec. 204. Extension of authority to provide rehabilitation and vocational benefits to members of the Armed Forces with severe injuries or illnesses.

TITLE III—EXTENSIONS OF AUTHORITY RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

Sec. 301. Extension of authority for homeless veterans reintegration programs.
Sec. 302. Extension of authority for homeless women veterans and homeless veterans with children reintegration program.
Sec. 303. Extension of authority to provide housing assistance for homeless veterans.
Sec. 304. Extension of authority to provide financial assistance for supportive services for very low-income veteran families in permanent housing.
Sec. 305. Extension of authority for grant program for homeless veterans with special needs.
Sec. 306. Extension of authority for the Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans.
Sec. 307. Extension of authority for treatment and rehabilitation services for seriously mentally ill and homeless veterans.
Sec. 308. Extension of authority to provide referral and counseling services for certain veterans at risk of homelessness.

TITLE IV—OTHER EXTENSIONS AND MODIFICATIONS OF AUTHORITY

Sec. 401. Extension of authority for transportation of individuals to and from Department facilities.
Sec. 402. Extension of authority for monthly assistance allowances under the Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events.
Sec. 403. Extension of authority for operation of the Department of Veterans Affairs regional office in Manila, the Republic of the Philippines.
Sec. 404. Extension of requirement to provide reports to Congress regarding equitable relief in the case of administrative error.
Sec. 405. Extension of authorization of appropriations for adaptive sports programs for disabled veterans and members of the Armed Forces.
Sec. 406. Extension of authority for Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans.
Sec. 407. Extension of authority for temporary expansion of eligibility for specially adapted housing assistance for certain veterans with disabilities causing difficulty ambulating.
Sec. 408. Extension of authority to enter into agreement with the National Academy of Sciences regarding associations between diseases and exposure to dioxin and other chemical compounds in herbicides.
Sec. 409. Extension of authority for performance of medical disabilities examinations by contract physicians.
Sec. 410. Restoration of prior reporting fee multipliers.
Sec. 411. Extension of requirement for annual report on Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Interagency Program Office.
Sec. 412. Modification of authorization of fiscal year 2008 major medical facility project at Department medical center in Tampa, Florida.
Sec. 413. Authorization of major medical facility projects.

TITLE V—MATTERS RELATING TO MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECT IN DENVER

Sec. 501. Increase in authorization for Department of Veterans Affairs medical facility project previously authorized.
Sec. 502. Project management of super construction projects.

TITLE VI—OTHER MATTERS

Sec. 601. Technical and clerical amendments.

SEC. 2. REFERENCES TO TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE.

Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 3. SCORING OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled ''Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation'' for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

TITLE I—EXTENSIONS OF AUTHORITY RELATING TO HEALTH CARE

SEC. 101. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR COLLECTION OF COPAYMENTS FOR HOSPITAL CARE AND NURSING HOME CARE.

Section 1710(f)(2)(B) is amended by striking ''September 30, 2015'' and inserting ''September 30, 2016''.

SEC. 102. EXTENSION OF REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE NURSING HOME CARE TO CERTAIN VETERANS WITH SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES.

Section 1710A(d) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2015'' and inserting ''December 31, 2016''.

SEC. 103. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CAREGIVERS.

Section 1720G(e) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''and'';

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

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

''(3) $625,000,000 for fiscal year 2016.''.

SEC. 104. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR RECOVERY FROM THIRD PARTIES OF COST OF CARE AND SERVICES FURNISHED TO VETERANS WITH HEALTH-PLAN CONTRACTS FOR NON-SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY.

Section 1729(a)(2)(E) is amended, in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''October 1, 2015'' and inserting ''October 1, 2016''.

SEC. 105. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR PILOT PROGRAM ON ASSISTANCE FOR CHILD CARE FOR CERTAIN VETERANS RECEIVING HEALTH CARE.

(a) EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY.—Subsection (e) of section 205 of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–163; 124 Stat. 1144; 38 U.S.C. 1710 note) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2015'' and inserting ''December 31, 2016''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Subsection (h) of such section is amended by striking ''and 2015'' and inserting '', 2015, and 2016''.

SEC. 106. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO MAKE GRANTS TO VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION OF HIGHLY RURAL VETERANS.

Section 307(d) of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–163; 124 Stat. 1154; 38 U.S.C. 1710 note) is amended by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2016''.

SEC. 107. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR DOD–VA HEALTH CARE SHARING INCENTIVE FUND.

Section 8111(d)(3) is amended by striking ''September 30, 2015'' and inserting ''September 30, 2016''.

SEC. 108. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR JOINT DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL FACILITY DEMONSTRATION FUND.

Section 1704(e) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111–84; 123 Stat. 2573), as amended by section 722 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. ''Buck'' McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (Public Law 113–291;128 Stat. 3417), is amended by striking ''September 30, 2016'' and inserting ''September 30, 2017''.

SEC. 109. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR PILOT PROGRAM ON COUNSELING IN RETREAT SETTINGS FOR WOMEN VETERANS NEWLY SEPARATED FROM SERVICE.

(a) EXTENSION.—Subsection (d) of section 203 of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–163; 124 Stat. 1143) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2015'' and inserting ''December 31, 2016''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Subsection (f) of such section is amended by striking ''and 2015'' and inserting ''2015, and 2016''.

TITLE II—EXTENSIONS OF AUTHORITY RELATING TO BENEFITS

SEC. 201. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR THE VETERANS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

Section 3692(c) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2015'' and inserting ''December 31, 2016''.

SEC. 202. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR CALCULATING NET VALUE OF REAL PROPERTY AT TIME OF FORECLOSURE.

Section 3732(c)(11) is amended by striking ''October 1, 2015'' and inserting ''October 1, 2016''.

SEC. 203. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY RELATING TO VENDEE LOANS.

Section 3733(a)(7) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''September 30, 2015'' and inserting ''September 30, 2016''; and

(2) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''September 30, 2015,'' and inserting ''September 30, 2016,''.

SEC. 204. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE REHABILITATION AND VOCATIONAL BENEFITS TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES WITH SEVERE INJURIES OR ILLNESSES.

Section 1631(b)(2) of the Wounded Warrior Act (title XVI of Public Law 110–181; 122 Stat. 458; 10 U.S.C. 1071 note) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2015'' and inserting ''December 31, 2016''.

TITLE III—EXTENSIONS OF AUTHORITY RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

SEC. 301. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR HOMELESS VETERANS REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS.

Section 2021(e)(1)(F) is amended by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2016''.

SEC. 302. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR HOMELESS WOMEN VETERANS AND HOMELESS VETERANS WITH CHILDREN REINTEGRATION PROGRAM.

Section 2021A(f)(1) is amended by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2016''.

SEC. 303. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR HOMELESS VETERANS.

Section 2041(c) is amended by striking ''September 30, 2015'' and inserting ''September 30, 2016''.

SEC. 304. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR VERY LOW-INCOME VETERAN FAMILIES IN PERMANENT HOUSING.

Section 2044(e)(1)(E) is amended by striking ''fiscal years 2013 through 2015'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2015 through 2016''.

SEC. 305. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR GRANT PROGRAM FOR HOMELESS VETERANS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.

Section 2061(d)(1) is amended by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2016''.

SEC. 306. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS.

Section 2066(d) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2015'' and inserting ''December 31, 2016''.

SEC. 307. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR SERIOUSLY MENTALLY ILL AND HOMELESS VETERANS.

(a) GENERAL TREATMENT.—Section 2031(b) is amended by striking ''September 30, 2015'' and inserting ''September 30, 2016''.

(b) ADDITIONAL SERVICES AT CERTAIN LOCATIONS.—Section 2033(d) is amended by striking ''September 30, 2015'' and inserting ''September 30, 2016''.

SEC. 308. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE REFERRAL AND COUNSELING SERVICES FOR CERTAIN VETERANS AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS.

Section 2023(d) is amended by striking ''September 30, 2015'' and inserting ''September 30, 2016''.

TITLE IV—OTHER EXTENSIONS AND MODIFICATIONS OF AUTHORITY

SEC. 401. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR TRANSPORTATION OF INDIVIDUALS TO AND FROM DEPARTMENT FACILITIES.

Section 111A(a)(2) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2015'' and inserting ''December 31, 2016''.

SEC. 402. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR MONTHLY ASSISTANCE ALLOWANCES UNDER THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL VETERANS SPORTS PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EVENTS.

Section 322(d)(4) is amended by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2016''.

SEC. 403. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR OPERATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS REGIONAL OFFICE IN MANILA, THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES.

Section 315(b) is amended by striking ''September 30, 2015'' and inserting ''September 30, 2016''.

SEC. 404. EXTENSION OF REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE REPORTS TO CONGRESS REGARDING EQUITABLE RELIEF IN THE CASE OF ADMINISTRATIVE ERROR.

Section 503(c) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2015'' and inserting ''December 31, 2016''.

SEC. 405. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR ADAPTIVE SPORTS PROGRAMS FOR DISABLED VETERANS AND MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

Section 521A(g)(1) is amended by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2016''.

SEC. 406. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MINORITY VETERANS.

Section 544(e) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2015'' and inserting ''December 31, 2016''.

SEC. 407. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR TEMPORARY EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES CAUSING DIFFICULTY AMBULATING.

Section 2101(a)(4) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''September 30, 2015'' and inserting ''September 30, 2016''; and

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''each of fiscal years 2014 and 2015'' and inserting ''each of fiscal years 2014 through 2016''.

SEC. 408. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO AGREEMENT WITH THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES REGARDING ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN DISEASES AND EXPOSURE TO DIOXIN AND OTHER CHEMICAL COMPOUNDS IN HERBICIDES.

Section 3(i) of the Agent Orange Act of 1991 (Public Law 102–4; 38 U.S.C. 1116 note) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2015'' and inserting ''December 31, 2016''.

SEC. 409. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR PERFORMANCE OF MEDICAL DISABILITIES EXAMINATIONS BY CONTRACT PHYSICIANS.

Subsection (c) of section 704 of the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003 (38 U.S.C. 5101 note) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2015'' and inserting ''December 31, 2016''.

SEC. 410. RESTORATION OF PRIOR REPORTING FEE MULTIPLIERS.

Section 406 of the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–175; 38 U.S.C. 3684 note) is amended by striking ''one-year'' and inserting ''two-year''.

SEC. 411. EXTENSION OF REQUIREMENT FOR ANNUAL REPORT ON DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS INTERAGENCY PROGRAM OFFICE.

Section 1635(h)(1) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (Public Law 110–181; 10 U.S.C. 1071 note) is amended by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2016''.

SEC. 412. MODIFICATION OF AUTHORIZATION OF FISCAL YEAR 2008 MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECT AT DEPARTMENT MEDICAL CENTER IN TAMPA, FLORIDA.

(a) MODIFICATION OF AUTHORIZATION.—In chapter 3 of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252; 122 Stat. 2326), in the matter under the heading ''Department of Veterans Affairs–Departmental Administration–Construction, Major Projects'', after ''Five Year Capital Plan'' insert the following: ''and for constructing a new bed tower at the Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in Tampa, Florida, in lieu of providing bed tower upgrades at such medical center''.

(b) EMERGENCY DESIGNATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) is designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 4(g) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (2 U.S.C. 933(g)).

(2) DESIGNATION IN SENATE.—In the Senate, subsection (a) is designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 403(a) of S. Con. Res. 13 (111th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2010.

SEC. 413. AUTHORIZATION OF MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECTS.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out the following major medical facility projects, with each project to be carried out in an amount not to exceed the amount specified for that project:

(1) Construction of a community living center, outpatient clinic, renovated domiciliary, and renovation of existing buildings in Canandaigua, New York, in an amount not to exceed $158,980,000.

(2) Seismic corrections to the mental health and community living center in Long Beach, California, in an amount not to exceed $126,100,000.

(3) Seismic correction of 12 buildings in West Los Angeles, California, in an amount not to exceed $70,500,000.

(4) Construction of a spinal cord injury building and seismic corrections in San Diego, California, in an amount not to exceed $205,840,000.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2015 or the year in which funds are appropriated for the Construction, Major Projects, account, a total of $561,420,000 for the projects authorized in subsection (a).

(c) LIMITATION.—The projects authorized under this section may only be carried out using—

(1) funds appropriated for fiscal year 2015 pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in subsection (b);

(2) funds available for Construction, Major Projects for a fiscal year before fiscal year 2015 that remain available for obligation;

(3) funds available for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year after fiscal year 2015 that remain available for obligation;

(4) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for fiscal year 2015 for a category of activity not specific to a project;

(5) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year before 2015 for a category of activity not specific to a project; and

(6) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year after 2015 for a category of activity not specific to a project.

TITLE V—MATTERS RELATING TO MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECT IN DENVER

SEC. 501. INCREASE IN AUTHORIZATION FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECT PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2(a) of the Construction Authorization and Choice Improvement Act (Public Law 114–19; 129 Stat. 215), as amended by section 1 of Public Law 114–25, is further amended by striking ''$1,050,000,000'' and inserting ''$1,675,000,000''.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2016 authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to transfer discretionary unobligated balances appropriated for fiscal year 2015 and discretionary advance appropriations for fiscal year 2016 to fund the increase under subsection (a) of the authorization to carry out the medical facility construction project in Denver, Colorado, specified in section 2 of the Construction Authorization and Choice Improvement Act (Public Law 114–19; 129 Stat. 215).

(c) PROHIBITION ON TRANSFER OF CERTAIN AMOUNTS.—The Secretary may not transfer any amounts from the Veterans Choice Fund established under section 802 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note) to fund the increase under subsection (a) of the authorization to carry out the medical facility construction project described in subsection (b).

SEC. 502. PROJECT MANAGEMENT OF SUPER CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 8103 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(e)(1) In the case of any super construction project, the Secretary shall enter into an agreement with an appropriate non-Department Federal entity to provide full project management services for the super construction project, including management over the project design, acquisition, construction, and contract changes.

''(2) An agreement entered into under paragraph (1) with a Federal entity shall provide that the Secretary shall reimburse the Federal entity for all costs associated with the provision of project management services under the agreement.

''(3) In this subsection, the term 'super construction project' means a project for the construction, alteration, or acquisition of a medical facility involving a total expenditure of more than $100,000,000.''.

(b) APPLICATION.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to the following:

(1) The medical facility construction project in Denver, Colorado, specified in section 2 of the Construction Authorization and Choice Improvement Act (Public Law 114–19; 129 Stat. 215).

(2) Any super construction project (as defined in section 8103(e)(3) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)) that is authorized on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

TITLE VI—OTHER MATTERS

SEC. 601. TECHNICAL AND CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.

Title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in section 111(b)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''subsection (g)(2)(A)'' and inserting ''subsection (g)(2)''; and

(B) in paragraph (3)(C), by striking ''(42 U.S.C. 1395(l))'' and inserting ''(42 U.S.C. 1395m(l))'';

(2) in the table of sections at the beginning of chapter 5 of such title, by striking the item relating to section 521A and inserting the following:

''521A. Adaptive sports programs for disabled veterans and members of the Armed Forces.'';

(3) in section 1503(a)(5), by striking ''subclause'' and inserting ''subparagraph'' each place it appears;

(4) in section 1710(e)(1)—

(A) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''(as defined in section 1712A(a)(2)(B) of this title)''; and

(B) in subparagraph (F)(viii), by striking ''Myleodysplasic'' and inserting ''Myelodysplastic'';

(5) in section 1710D(c)(1), by striking ''(as defined in section 1712A(a)(2)(B) of this title)'';

(6) in section 1720G(a)(7)(B)(iii), by striking ''has'' and inserting ''have'';

(7) in section 1781(a)(4), by striking the semicolon and inserting a comma;

(8) in section 1832(b)(2), by striking ''(b)(2)'' and inserting ''(b)(3)'';

(9) in section 2044(b)(1)(D), by striking ''federal'' and inserting ''Federal'';

(10) in section 2101(a), by moving the margins of paragraph (2), and of the subparagraphs, clauses, and subclauses therein, 2 ems to the left;

(11) in section 2101(a)(2)(B) by striking clause (ii) and inserting the following new clause (ii):

''(ii) The disability is due to—

''(I) blindness in both eyes, having only light perception, plus

''(II) loss or loss of use of one lower extremity.''.

(12) in section 2109(a) by striking ''provisions of section'' and inserting ''provisions of sections'';

(13) in section 2303(c), by striking ''internment'' and inserting ''interment'';

(14) in section 2411(e)(1), by striking ''federal official'' and inserting ''Federal official'';

(15) in section 3108(b)(4), by inserting ''the'' before ''rehabilitation program concerned'';

(16) in section 3313, by striking ''1070a'' each place it appears and inserting ''1070a(b)'';

(17) in section 3313(e)(2)(A)(iii), by striking the second period;

(18) in section 3313(g)(3)(A)(iii), by inserting a comma after ''books'';

(19) in section 3319, by striking ''armed forces'' each place it appears and inserting ''Armed Forces'';

(20) in section 4102A(c)(9)(A)(ii)(III), by striking the quotation mark at the end;

(21) in section 5302A—

(A) by amending the enumerator and section heading to read as follows:

''§ 5302A. Collection of indebtedness: certain debts of members of the Armed Forces and veterans who die of injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in a combat zone''; and

(B) in subsection (b), by striking ''(as that term is defined in section 1712A(a)(2)(B) of this title)'';

(22) in section 7309(c)(1), by inserting ''the'' before ''Veterans Health Administration'';

(23) in section 7401(3)(A)(ii), by striking ''that'';

(24) in section 7683(d), by inserting a period at the end; and

(25) in section 8162(a)(2), by inserting ''if'' after ''housing and''.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

□ 1230

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 2082.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this bill, which is sponsored by our Senate colleague, Senator ISAKSON, chairman of the Senate VA Committee, would extend a number of expiring current authorities and critical programs at both the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labor. These include extensions for veterans' health care and homeless programs; benefits for disabled veterans; vocational rehabilitation programs for servicemembers and veterans; home loan programs; and a variety of advisory committees, pilot programs, and medical facility projects.

Absent passage of this legislation today, these important and noncontroversial authorizations and programs are set to expire at the end of this fiscal or calendar year. These are not new programs, and the costs have either been fully offset or have been assumed in the baseline budget for fiscal year 2016. Furthermore, both the majority and minority of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs have worked on this language and agree on the need to extend all of these programs.

In addition to the extensions that are included, this bill also contains language that would increase the total authorization for the Denver Replacement Medical Center project to $1.675 billion. This is an increase of $625 million above the amounts that have previously been authorized for this project.

To ensure that the many egregious mistakes the VA has made in Denver are not repeated in the future, this bill would put into place initial reforms for managing the most expensive VA construction projects. Namely, these reforms include creating a new classification category called a super construction project.

A super construction project would be defined as the construction, alteration, or acquisition of a VA medical facility involving the total expenditure of more than $100 million. Each super construction project would be managed not by VA, but instead by a non-Department Federal entity, such as the Army Corps of Engineers. Importantly, the bill would classify the Denver project as a super construction project.

While I am supportive of the provisions of this bill up to this point, I vehemently oppose and disagree with the Department's proposal to cover some of the increased costs of the Denver project. This bill could allow VA to proceed with the Department's proposed plan to use $200 million in offsets from the medical services account and through delayed activations for other construction projects.

Mr. Speaker, to understand the magnitude of the management incompetence of the Department of Veterans Affairs as it relates to construction, I think a little history is in order.

The replacement of the existing Denver VA Medical Center began as a discussion item back in 1999. The project was first envisioned as a shared facility on the former Fitzsimons Army Base in Aurora, Colorado. The initial estimate for a shared facility was $328 million.

After undergoing numerous scope changes over a period of several years, VA requested appropriations in 2010 for a stand-alone medical center replacement with a total estimated cost of $800 million. However, in December of last year, with less than 50 percent of the facility complete and staring down the $800 million authorization cap, the Civilian Board of Contract Appeals found VA to be in breach of its contract with its general contractor Kiewit-Turner. As a result, VA had no choice but to come to Congress and finally admit the severity of the mismanagement and the cost and schedule overruns that have come to characterize the Denver project.

In June, following an assessment to determine the probable cost of completing the project, the Army Corps of Engineers provided the final total required to finish the Denver project: $1.675 billion.

Several weeks ago, VA provided the committee with their plan as to what budget resources would be made available to fund the remaining dollars necessary for this project. This bill assumes that VA's plan is an appropriate way to move forward on this project.

VA first proposes to use $100 million in offsets derived from the higher than budgeted medical collections VA expects it will receive in fiscal year 2015 and 2016. Under law, VA medical care collection funds are retained by VA medical facilities to supplement their budgets to care for veterans. Thus, their proposed offset actually reduces VA's medical care budget by $100 million in fiscal year 2016 to partially fund the remainder of the Denver project.

I would have reservations about reducing VA's medical care budget in any year, but I am particularly concerned this year, because just a few weeks ago, I am sure the Members will recall, VA sounded the alarm that the funds budgeted for hepatitis C medications and care in the community for fiscal year 2016 are short.

VA also stated that they would need to shut down the whole hospital system. The whole hospital system would have to be shut down if additional funds for fiscal year 2015 were not provided. As a result, Congress met VA's eleventh hour plea with an additional $3.43 billion to ensure that veterans

were not denied the care that they had earned.

Obviously, VA's proposal to cut medical care funds to complete the Denver replacement hospital when the public record clearly reflects VA's previous testimony over lack of funding in the medical care account is entirely inconsistent and inappropriate. Frankly, it borders on an attempt to mislead this Congress.

Secondly, VA proposes to use $100 million in offsets derived from reductions in construction and leasing activation costs due to schedule adjustments associated with several projects. When I asked what VA's plan was to address the funding for these adjustments, VA's response was that the Department would ensure that they request sufficient activation funding in future budget years to account for the reductions in the other projects.

In other words, it is not really an offset. They are going to ask for the money back. So by reducing other projects by $100 million in one year only to ask Congress next year for the funds to be replaced strains credibility once again for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

This isn't an offset. It is nothing more than a delayed supplemental request. In other words, VA is expecting the taxpayers to bail them out again. To agree to such a tactic would be akin to taking a child's allowance away for misbehavior, only to increase it later to make up for the reduction.

Offsetting the biggest construction failure in VA's history by cutting money from VA's medical services account and delaying facility activation costs until next year punishes the veterans of this Nation and the taxpayers for VA's incompetence.

Now, I appreciate the challenge VA has in identifying available money and producing a way ahead for this project that is fair to taxpayers and veterans alike in a tight fiscal environment. However, VA continues to be oblivious to the need to prioritize their spending.

For example, as I address this House this afternoon, VA officials from across the country have gathered 40 miles away in Leesburg for a leadership conference that is costing the Department $1 million. That may seem like a small amount, but this is in addition to the $33.4 million that VA reported spending on conferences so far through the end of the third quarter of this fiscal year. To repeat, VA has reported spending $33.4 million so far through the end of the third quarter, with at least one and, likely, several other costly conferences that have yet to be accounted for.

What's more, Monday, the VA inspector general released a report on VA's relocation expenses program, which found that senior Veterans Benefits Administration officials had misused their positions for their own personal and financial benefit. These senior officials engineered the transfers of other senior officials as a way to increase pay for themselves and to other senior executive service employees and work around the pay freezes and bans on performance awards for senior leaders. One VBA leader alone received almost $300,000 in relocation expenses when she moved from Washington, D.C., to Philadelphia.

In total, VBA spent over $1.7 million on reassignment expenses, including almost $1.3 million on relocation expenses for senior executives for fiscal years 2013 through 2015.

And now yesterday, the VA Office of Inspector General substantiated allegations that the St. Louis VA Health Care System mental health clinic inappropriately changed the status of mental health consults to ''complete'' prior to a provider actually completing the appointment with a patient in 60 percent of sampled consults.

To make matters worse, the IG substantiated that, in a review of fiscal 2013 facility performance pay assessments, eight full-time outpatient psychiatrists received an average of nearly $14,000 in performance pay. Seven of the eight psychiatrists met or exceeded the productivity goal, and, as a result, each received an average of around $2,900 for what proved to be faulty productivity achievements.

This is in keeping with the wanton and abusive VA spending practices that the committee has uncovered at VA facilities across our country.

For example, the committee recently found that the VA Palo Alto Health Care System has spent at least $6.3 million on art and consulting services. These projects include an art installation on the side of a parking garage that displays quotes by Abraham Lincoln and Eleanor Roosevelt in—wait for it—Morse code that cost $285,000. It actually lights up; also, a large rock sculpture in the courtyard in the middle of the mental health center that cost $1.3 million—for a rock; a stainless steel and aluminum sculpture in the aquatic center entrance that cost $365,000; another sculpture that I am at a loss to describe in an exterior lobby that cost $305,000; a sculpture in the shape of a half arc that is located inside the mental health center that cost $330,000. As many of these projects are not yet complete, these costs actually could increase.

Let me be clear: spending money on conferences and relocation expenses for VA employees and on art installations for VA facilities is not more important than taking care of the veterans of this Nation, providing them the health care that they have earned. It is simply beyond me why VA would choose to pay to complete the Denver project by cutting medical services and medical facility dollars, but not the exorbitant conference spending, bloated relocation expenses, or art.

I remain committed to finding a way forward in Denver, and I am going to be supporting the bill today. However, I am equally convinced that we must ensure that the offsets that VA uses in Colorado do not come at the expense of VA's most important mission: providing high-quality health care for veterans. Unfortunately, VA's plan offers no assurance.

I am also frustrated that the Department's plan, which this bill presumes is appropriate, offers no measure of accountability for those responsible for allowing this project to balloon out of control. The VA senior executives in charge of the Denver disaster collected massive bonuses as projected costs increased and delays stretched on for years. They have all retired with full retirement benefits. It is inexcusable.

To allow rewards, bonuses, and full retirement benefits to be retained, even when the facts indicate that an employee has not performed at the level expected, is not only wrong, it is a blatant and woeful misuse of taxpayer dollars.

□ 1245

I have said repeatedly that the great majority of VA employees are hardworking public servants who go to work every day and live up to President Lincoln's words, to provide quality health care and benefits to our Nation's veterans.

What's more, I believe that the majority of VA employees who are dedicated to the mission and purpose of the Department are just as frustrated and demoralized as we are when they see problem employees receiving bonuses or performance awards in spite of poor, unethical, and sometimes illegal job performance.

I just wish that this legislation could assure those quality employees that the veterans that they serve—that this Congress and this Department are committed to breaking VA's vicious cycle of ignoring and even rewarding poor performance.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, how much time do we have?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 20 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Florida has 4½ minutes remaining.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise in support of S. 2082, the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2015.

This bill is an important and necessary bill for us to take up and pass today and send to the President. Let me repeat that. This bill is an important and a necessary bill for us to take up and pass today and send to the President.

S. 2082 makes sure that some of the vital programs we have in place to take care of our veterans continue past the end of the fiscal year and continue to help our veterans. I want to highlight just some of those importance programs.

S. 2082 ensures that several programs serving the homeless veterans continue, including the Homeless Veterans

and Homeless Veterans With Children Reintegration Programs.

S. 2082 ensures that there is adequate authorization levels for much-needed assistance and support service for veterans' caregivers.

S. 2082 continues a successful pilot program that counsels newly separated women veterans in retreat settings. This is an important program.

I have a bill, H.R. 1575, that would make this program permanent and has passed the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and I hope it will be brought to the floor soon so that we can vote for it.

S. 2082 also extends the authorization of the National Academy of Sciences to continue its research into the health consequences of Agent Orange exposure, providing the necessary link for the VA to make disability presumptions.

I am disappointed that the provision mandating the Secretary to make these presumptions is not in the bill, and I know that we will all work together to make sure that the VA does the right thing for our veterans.

S. 2082 extends the authorization for the VA to provide transportation grants for highly rural veterans and the ability of the VA to provide transportation to and from VA facilities. This is important to ensure that our veterans have access to care.

S. 2082 extends the authorization of the VA to provide rehabilitation and vocational benefits for our wounded warriors.

And, finally, S. 2082 provides for an increase in the authorization level for the Denver Regional VA Medical Center. This center will provide specialty care for all VISN 19, which includes Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas, Utah, and Idaho. We need to finish this project and better provide health care for our veterans.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN), a distinguished member of the committee.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 2082, and I thank Chairman MILLER for his efforts to extend authority for various VA healthcare, benefits, disability, housing, education, job training, and other assistance programs.

Part of this bill also ensures that Colorado veterans will receive a completed, state-of-the-art new hospital in Denver.

In addition to funding the hospital, though, S. 2082 ensures that the type of construction mismanagement and cost overruns will not happen on future large-scale VA construction programs.

The VA has shown us on multiple projects, Denver being, unfortunately, the largest, that they are not properly equipped to handle these large construction projects with their own in-house capabilities.

The bill requires that the Army Corps of Engineers or NAVFAC or a different construction agency, but not the VA, will take on the task of managing these large construction programs.

We must be good stewards of the taxpayers' money and use that money wisely to care for the veterans. This bill is a step in the right direction to get VA construction back on the right path, while fulfilling the promise made with the hospital to our Nation's veterans.

We have a sacred trust to take care of the men and women who have defended our country.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS).

Ms. TITUS. I thank the ranking member for yielding and for her leadership on the VA Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in reluctant support of this bill, S. 2082, the VA Expiring Authorities Act.

As my colleagues have outlined, this legislation will extend the authorization for some very good programs at the VA that provide valuable support and services for our Nation's heroes.

I have serious concerns, however, about one provision included in the bill. Title V raises the authorization for the Denver medical facility by more than $600 million. This facility is already $1 billion over budget and years behind schedule.

The bill, however, does not explain how we are going to pay for this increase. That will come later today when the House considers a continuing resolution to keep the government running for another 10 weeks. Buried in the CR is a provision that allows the VA to play a shell game within their budget to pay for the Denver project.

Now, we all believe that veterans everywhere, including in Denver, should have access to the best health care possible. But the funds for the Denver project should not come at the expense of veterans in Nevada and in other parts of the country.

Nonetheless, the VA has identified the $600 million to pay for the Denver facility and has said that these specific cuts are designed to ''minimize the impact on veterans.''

Well, this couldn't be further from the truth, and it ignores reality. It is the epitome of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Let me remind you that, in the summer of 2014, we passed an emergency CHOICE Act of some $15 billion to help the VA with the healthcare backlog.

Then the VA came back to us this summer and said they would have to close hospitals if we didn't allow them to move some money out of the CHOICE Act.

Then the VA came back and said they needed $200 million just to keep the Denver project going for a while. Now the VA is saying: Oh, no problem. We can just move $600 million out of existing programs so we can help Denver without it hurting veterans.

How can they possibly do this?

The VA, I can tell you, has proposed cutting IT services, despite the fact that many of their IT systems are 30 years old and need to be replaced.

They want to cut funds for a program that helps recruit and retain the best personnel to serve veterans at a time when they are struggling to recruit and retain qualified employees, including specialists and doctors. They want to cut eight construction projects around the country, from operating rooms to a dialysis center.

Now, how can you say these cuts won't hurt veterans?

Now, we know a thing or two about sure things in Las Vegas. Well, I can tell you it is a sure thing that, soon enough, the VA will be coming back to Congress, proclaiming yet another doomsday if we don't refill these accounts that they are now robbing.

So I say to you Congress needs to do its job and actually pay for what we have bought. Wars are expensive. We need to recognize that. We can't keep playing budget games and nickel-and-dime the services that the brave men and women who fought in these wars need and deserve when they come home.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Denver (Mr. COFFMAN), an able co-chair of the committee who has been in the forefront of this entire fight looking at the cost overruns, the mismanagement, and trying to keep this project on schedule.

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my support for the Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2015. This legislation will continue numerous programs of critical importance to our Nation's veterans, including a pilot program to increase women veterans' access to health care, nursing home care authorities, and measures to combat veteran homelessness.

I am proud that this legislation will allow for the completion of the VA replacement hospital in Aurora, Colorado, an absolutely critical project which will serve veterans not just in Colorado, but also in Utah, Montana, Wyoming and parts of four other States.

In spite of the incredible mismanagement of this project by the VA and a shocking lack of accountability for those responsible, completing the hospital in Aurora has been my number one legislative priority. We must not punish our Nation's veterans for the sins of incompetent VA bureaucrats.

Finally, this bill would accomplish a goal that I have worked towards for over a year, getting the VA out of the major construction business once and for all.

For decades, the Government Accountability Office has highlighted enormous construction management deficiencies by the VA.

After the GAO highlighted hundreds of millions in cost overruns in April of 2013, the House passed my legislation, which would have handed over the

worst VA projects to experts at the Army Corps of Engineers.

Worse, billions of dollars have been wasted by VA on mismanaged construction projects which could have gone instead towards veterans' health care and benefits.

I am proud that this bill will finally leave the construction management of large projects to the experts, organizations like the Army Corps of Engineers, and allow VA to focus back to its core competencies, providing health care and benefits to our veterans.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Denver, Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER), who really can give us a little institutional memory on the Denver regional hospital and who has been at the forefront of this hospital and this regional problem from the beginning.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I thank Ranking Member BROWN for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman of the committee for bringing S. 2082 to the floor for debate and hearing today.

I rise today to support S. 2082, the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act. The legislation before us passed the Senate unanimously last week and is important for a number of VA programs our veterans rely on day in and day out.

In addition to these important VA extensions, this legislation will authorize completion of the VA Medical Center under construction in Aurora, Colorado. This center is part of a major medical campus that includes the University of Colorado Medical School as well as Children's Hospital of Denver.

The professors at the University of Colorado are also many of the doctors at the VA Medical Center. The center will include a full range of medical, laboratory, research, and counseling services as well as a 30-bed spinal cord injury unit serving hundreds of thousands of veterans throughout the Rocky Mountain West.

As the chairman mentioned, this hospital's genesis began under President Clinton in 1999 with the Secretary of VA at that time. Under George Bush, it went through four Secretaries of the VA and, under President Obama, now two VA Secretaries.

□ 1300

It is moving forward and, with this bill, will continue to move forward.

There is no doubt the VA mismanaged this project from the start; and as disappointing and unacceptable as this situation has been, we are where we are. Under the leadership of Secretary McDonald and Deputy Secretary Gibson, the VA has admitted their mistakes on this project, and they are both personally involved in completion of this facility.

Today, construction continues on the project in earnest. The facility is more than 50 percent complete, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been brought in to oversee completion of the medical center. Bringing in the Army Corps is important so we, as a Congress, can be certain that any additional funds spent on this project are spent appropriately and the facility is completed without further delay.

The contractor, Kiewit-Turner, and subcontractors have shown tremendous commitment to our Nation's veterans by building a world-class facility, and I am confident they will deliver this facility to our veterans throughout the Rocky Mountain West.

This bill requires the VA to use a non-VA Federal entity, like the Army Corps, to complete major construction projects valued at over $100 million. This is critically important towards ensuring accountability and preventing these large projects from being mismanaged again.

I want to thank Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member BROWN, as well as Congressman CHARLIE DENT and Congressman BISHOP, for their work with me and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN), who now represents the district.

There has been a great deal of anger at the VA recently and much of it is well-deserved, but through the help of the Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Appropriations Committee, Rocky Mountain veterans will eventually see this medical center completed and receive the health care that they earned by their service to the United States of America.

I thank my friend, the gentlewoman from Florida, for yielding.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER) for working so closely with Mr. COFFMAN, a true bipartisan effort, to see this project to completion.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee). The gentleman from Florida has 1½ minutes remaining. The gentlewoman from Florida has 9 minutes remaining.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, might I inquire from Ms. BROWN if she would yield 5 minutes of her time.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, since I have 9 minutes remaining, and I have no further speakers, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Florida yields 5 minutes to the gentleman from Florida.

Without objection, the gentleman from Florida will control those 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida is recognized.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. ABRAHAM), a member of the committee that has worked very hard on this particular issue, especially the Expiring Authorities bill, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

Mr. ABRAHAM. I thank the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I stand today in support of S. 2082; however, I would like to note that I am also deeply disappointed that we are not voting on the House bills which would have limited awards and bonuses to VA employees. It is my belief that we have missed an opportunity to bring much-needed accountability to the VA, and know that I will work tirelessly to bring accountability to the VA for the American people.

S. 2082, also known as the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2015, includes multiple necessary provisions supporting our Nation's heroes, including veterans who are homeless, disabled, or suffering from PTSD.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, I introduced a particular provision in S. 2082 to extend contract exams for veterans applying for disability benefits. Extending contract exams is a commonsense measure to cut through the bureaucratic red tape and ensure our veterans are getting the care they need when they need it.

Many veterans undergo a VA medical examination in support of their application for disability benefits. The problem is that there are not enough examiners to perform these evaluations in a timely manner in the VA system.

Expanding contract exams will make it easier for the VA to arrange for the veterans to get disability examinations by permitting a licensed physician to conduct these examinations anywhere in the United States as long as the doctor is under a VA contract. This is common sense, and I urge passage of the bill.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the former chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee, a stalwart supporter of America's veterans.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I thank my good friend for yielding, and I thank the gentlewoman from Florida, CORRINE BROWN, for her courtesy.

Mr. Speaker, I served on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee for a quarter of a century, including stints as vice chairman and full committee chair. I believe that our Nation's veterans are fortunate to have a great champion with the gentleman from Florida, Chairman MILLER, at the helm.

Chairman MILLER has led the committee with aggressive oversight and accountability of the often-troubled Department. He has shepherded numerous bills into law, including the VA Choice Program, which expands timely and local access to health care for veterans, and, working so closely in a bipartisan way with Ranking Member BROWN, ensured that the VA has the resources and the authorities to meet

evolving needs. The chairman always puts veterans and their dependents first.

Chairman MILLER has explained the bill. I will just take a brief moment to comment on title III.

Title III reauthorizes a number of provisions from a law that I wrote back in 2001 known as the Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act, or Public Law 107–95. That law established the grant programs that included female veterans, homeless veterans with special needs, children, serious mental illnesses, and incarcerated veterans. The act authorized dental care. We learned through our hearing process that not only oral health—but overall health as well—is negatively affected with broken and diseased teeth and gums. And you don't get a job with busted teeth. Oral health was critical, so we put that into the bill. Job training and expanded domiciliary care programs were also expanded. It also authorized the Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans and launched the national goal, which has now been replicated since 2010, of attempting to end chronic homelessness among veterans. We also did the Department of Labor's Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program and the HUD-VASH program.

In 2001, the estimation from VA was that almost 300,000 veterans were homeless at some time during that year. By fiscal year 2013, that number had decreased to approximately 140,000 veterans. Of course we now have a different, altered way of calculating, but, unfortunately, on any given night last year, just under 50,000 veterans were still on the street.

This legislation will go far and do much so that no veteran is on the street and suffering homelessness. We need to bring them back into society.

Again, I thank Chairman MILLER for his strong leadership.

Thank you, Chairman MILLER, for your leadership on this bill and your staff's work to bring it to the floor in a timely manner to ensure that the VA continues to provide the services necessary for veterans to successfully transition back to civilian life and live independently.

Mr. Speaker, I served on the House Veteran's Affairs Committee for a quarter of a century, including stints as vice and full committee chair and I believe that our nation's veterans are fortunate to have a great champion with Chairman MILLER at the helm. Chairman MILLER led the committee with aggressive oversight and accountability of the often troubled Department. You have shepherded numerous bills into law including the VA Choice program which expands timely and local access to healthcare for veterans and you've ensured that the VA has the resources and authorities to meet evolving needs. You have always put veterans and their dependents—first.

Mr. Speaker, the bill we are voting on today will reauthorize over 30 critical programs that provide healthcare, education, and child care benefits to veterans and continue the VA's homeless veterans and caregiver assistance.

Since Chairman MILLER has explained the bill let me focus for a moment on Title III which extends many provisions first authorized by landmark legislation I authored in 2001 known as the Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act (Public Law 107–95).

That law established the grant programs we are reauthorizing today that focused on homeless female veterans; homeless veterans with special needs, children, serious mental illnesses, and incarcerated veterans. The Act authorized dental care—for better oral health and overall health—job training and expanded domiciliary care programs. It is hard to get a job if your teeth are cracked and deteriorated. It authorized the Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans and launched the national goal of attempting to end chronic homelessness among veterans within a decade of the enactment of the Act. And among its many other provisions, it increased funding for two programs that were effective but seriously underfunded.

The first was the Department of Labor's Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program—which helps homeless veterans reenter and stay in the labor force. Allowing more veterans access to this program was critical, as a steady job is key to successfully maintaining a residence.

The second is the HUD-VASH program, which combines rental assistance with case management and clinical services. After enactment, utilization of these services spiked and more veterans received the assistance that has led to self-sufficiency and independence.

Today, these programs continue to be a highly effective means of reducing homelessness among our veterans population.

In 2001, it was estimated that almost 300,000 veterans experienced homelessness that year. By fiscal year 2013, that number had decreased to approximately 140,000 veterans.

The VA and HUD have since changed how they calculate homeless veterans to a point-in-time estimate. The latest numbers show that we still have much work to do: on any given night last year, just under 50,000 veterans were on the street.

Of course one homeless veteran is one too many. Yet we are continuing to make progress and the numbers demonstrate how these programs, coupled with other recent and successful programs like the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program which we are reauthorizing today, are tangibly assisting homeless or potentially homeless women and men who served in our nation's armed forces. It is estimated that approximately 135,000 veterans and their families got assistance through SSVF in (FY) 2015 including funds to Soldier On and other initiatives in my state.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting S. 2082, sending this important bill to the President so that the vital programs helping our veterans will continue past the end of this fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER).

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I thank Ranking Member BROWN for her courtesy in yielding an additional few minutes for some of our Members who wanted to speak.

I, too, think it is very important that we pass this piece of legislation today, but our job here is not finished. We must ensure that the appropriators now do their job and make sure that VA doesn't, as the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS) said, rob Peter to pay Paul. It is important that we not take necessary dollars away from veteran health care in order to pay for their massive mismanagement of this particular facility.

I urge a positive vote on this Senate bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my good friend from Florida for his work on the VA extenders bill. I appreciate his partnership as we continue to fight for our veterans.

However, Mr. Speaker, I remain deeply disappointed that this extenders bill does not include an extension of the Agent Orange Act.

As you know, Congress passed the Agent Orange Act in 1991 to ensure care and compensation to Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange. Before this bill, it was up to our veterans to prove their cancer or Parkinson's was connected to their service in Vietnam and their exposure to Agent Orange.

The Agent Orange Act changed all of that, shifting the burden of proof from the veteran to the VA. Under the Agent Orange Act, the IOM would study Agent Orange and determine which diseases were associated with exposure to Agent Orange. This process removed the burden of proof from our Vietnam veterans when they applied for disability compensation.

Over the years, the IOM has issued reports that have led to the presumption of service connection for diseases such as Parkinson's, B-cell leukemia and early onset peripheral neuropathy. Without these studies, thousands of Vietnam era veterans would have gone without the benefits they greatly deserve.

The Agent Orange Act is set to expire tomorrow, but IOM is still working on their last report.

And, despite the good the Agent Orange Act has done for our Vietnam veterans, Congress is going to let this bill expire tomorrow.

And it's all because it costs too much.

Mr. Speaker, it never costs too much to ensure justice for our veterans.

We should be ashamed that we are letting this bill expire and leaving it up to the VA to add new diseases to the presumption list.

The Agent Orange Act has worked for our veterans for over a decade, and it is irresponsible to let our oversight expire and simply leave it up to the VA's discretion.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot step away from our responsibilities and hand them over to an agency, simply because we do not like the price tag.

Instead, we should do the right thing and find an offset.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to demand Leadership go back and find an offset outside of the VA to ensure our veterans get the benefits they earned.

We have a responsibility to these veterans. They completed their mission in Vietnam, now we must complete ours.

By finding an offset and passing this extension, we will make certain that when the IOM's final report is published, the VA is obligated to review it and follow their recommendations.

We owe these heroes nothing less.

Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my concerns regarding

two provisions in S. 2082, the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2015: Sec. 501 the increased authorization for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facility project in Denver, Colorado and Sec. 412 the modification of authorization for the VA medical facility project in Tampa, Florida which is designated as an emergency.

SEC. 501 INCREASED AUTHORIZATION FOR THE VA MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECT IN DENVER, COLORADO

Originally budgeted to be an $800 million dollar project, the VA is now requesting yet another funding transfer from Congress to bring the total price tag of this medical facility to an astounding $1.675 billion, more than $800 million dollars over budget. Mismanagement of construction projects, and the unacceptable waste of taxpayer dollars, unfortunately have been an ongoing problem at the VA. It is deplorable and should not be tolerated by Congress or the Administration.

This project is a perfect example of why the VA is in dire need of wholesale reform in addition to continued oversight by Congress to ensure that the VA is transparent, accountable, and ultimately able to best serve our nation's veterans. I fully support the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Chairman JEFF MILLER's efforts to directly address the construction problems at the VA and other efforts by his Committee to enforce accountability agency-wide, including H.R. 1994, the VA Accountability Act of 2015, which passed the U.S. House of Representatives on July 29, 2015. I also applaud Chairman MILLER's version of an increased authorization for the Denver project bill, H.R. 3595, because it included offsets to help pay for the increase in costs at the Denver facility. These offsetting policies in H.R. 3595 are a clear indication that the U.S. House of Representatives is no longer willing to tolerate misbehavior and poor performance at the VA and include the following: limitation on awards and bonuses for VA employees, reduction of benefits for members of the Senior Executive Service at the VA convicted of certain crimes, and authority for the VA Secretary to recoup bonuses or awards paid to employees in the past if deemed appropriate pursuant to regulations. Unfortunately, S. 2082 does not include these offsets and allows the VA to decide which funds to transfer to the Denver project.

As Chairman of the House Committee on the Budget, I do not condone mismanagement by any Federal agency, especially an agency tasked with the heavy responsibility of taking care of the men and women who have served our country in uniform. Our veterans should not be punished by the lack of competence within the VA bureaucracy, which would be the effect of not approving the transfer of additional funds for this medical facility. However, the VA should not take the approval of this newest transfer of funds as an indication of congressional support for their mismanagement of the Denver facility. Further, the VA is hereby placed on notice that the Budget Committee will work closely with the Veterans' Affairs Committee in the months ahead to advance the long overdue efforts to reform the department's dysfunctional operations. Our veterans who have served this nation with honor and distinction deserve nothing less than Congress' commitment to fix the management problems at the VA.

SEC. 412 MODIFICATION OF AUTHORIZATION FOR THE VA MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECT IN TAMPA, FLORIDA

S. 2082 calls for modifying the authorization for the Tampa facility from "providing bed tower upgrades," which was originally authorized and appropriated in the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2008 (P.L. 110–252), to "constructing a new bed tower" and designating this new purpose of the monies as an emergency requirement. The emergency designation, which is under the jurisdiction of the Budget Committee, is defined for needs that are urgent, unforeseen, and would result in imminent loss of life or property if left unmet. I do not believe that the authorization modification in S. 2082 meets these criteria since it is occurring seven years after the original emergency designation for this purpose in P.L. 110–252. I think most members of Congress would agree that this provision does not qualify as an emergency as defined by the Committee's criteria and I am disappointed that this emergency provision is included in S. 2082.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2082.

The question was taken.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 10 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1409

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON) at 2 o'clock and 9 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H. CON. RES. 79, DIRECTING THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN THE ENROLLMENT OF H.R. 719, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE SENATE AMENDMENT TO THE HOUSE AMENDMENT TO THE SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 719, TSA OFFICE OF INSPECTION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015

Mr. COLE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114–272) on the resolution (H. Res. 448) providing for consideration of the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 79) directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make corrections in the enrollment of H.R. 719, and providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 719) to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H. CON. RES. 79, DIRECTING THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN THE ENROLLMENT OF H.R. 719, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE SENATE AMENDMENT TO THE HOUSE AMENDMENT TO THE SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 719, TSA OFFICE OF INSPECTION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 448 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 448

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 79) directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make corrections in the enrollment of H.R. 719. All points of order against consideration of the concurrent resolution are waived. The concurrent resolution shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the concurrent resolution are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the concurrent resolution to adoption without intervening motion or demand for division of the question except 20 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled by the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader or their respective designees.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 719) to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendment to the House amendment to the Senate amendment thereto, and to consider in the House, without intervention of any point of order, a motion offered by the chair of the Committee on Appropriations or his designee that the House concur in the Senate amendment to the House amendment to the Senate amendment. The Senate amendment and the motion shall be considered as read. The motion shall be debatable for one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the motion to adoption without intervening motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), my

good friend, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, earlier today the Committee on Rules met and reported a rule for consideration for both H. Con. Res. 79, directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make corrections in the enrollment of H.R. 719, and H.R. 719, the Continuing Appropriations Act 2016.

The rule provides for consideration of H. Con. Res. 79 under a closed rule with 20 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled by the majority leader and his designee and the minority leader or her designee. In addition, the rule makes in order a motion offered by the chair of the Committee on Appropriations that the House concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 719, with 60 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and the ranking member of the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. Speaker, first, this resolution allows for consideration of H. Con. Res. 79, which directs the Clerk of the House to include the text of the Defund Planned Parenthood Act of 2015 in the enrollment of H.R. 719. This would allow the House to again state its position in opposition to the funding of Planned Parenthood as it has already done by passage of both H.R. 3495 and H.R. 3134. In addition, Mr. Speaker, the rule provides for consideration of the short-term continuing resolution.

As a member of the Committee on Appropriations, I am always disappointed when we are forced to consider continuing resolutions, especially given the work this House has done in the appropriations process this year.

□ 1415

For the first time since 2009, the House Appropriations Committee was able to complete all 12 appropriations bills, and complete them before the August recess. Unfortunately, just as in years past, Senate Democrats prevented consideration of any appropriations bills on the floor of that body. This leads us to the unfortunate situation of having to put forward a short-term CR to fund the government through December 11.

This continuing resolution is simple. Most programs will continue being funded at their FY15 levels; however, it does adjust certain spending levels for critical needs, such as providing $700 million for wildfire suppression activities in the West, and it extends several programs that would otherwise lapse, like the collection of recreation fees for public lands. In addition, it maintains the moratorium on State and local jurisdictions' taxation of the Internet.

I hope that in the weeks and months ahead the House, the Senate, and the President can come to an agreement on a path forward which ensures we are not in this same place in December.

Some of my colleagues have stated publicly that they cannot support this CR because it provides funding for Planned Parenthood. I want to assure my colleagues that no funding for Planned Parenthood is included in this legislation.

First, a majority of Planned Parenthood funding, about 90 percent, comes through Medicaid and is not subject to appropriations. Of the remaining 10 percent, the largest portion, roughly $28 million, is funded through title X. These grant programs are competed for every year and are awarded in April, long past the length of this continuing resolution.

While I share the same disgust over the evidence seen in the atrocious videos that are so widely known, I want to assure my colleagues that no additional funds are provided for this organization in this bill.

I am encouraged by the hard work of Chairman ROGERS, Ranking Member LOWEY, and, of course, the Speaker, whose leadership has made all this possible.

One of the preeminent responsibilities we are tasked with as Members of Congress is to ensure that the government continues to function. While a continuing resolution is not the ideal vehicle, the alternative of a government shutdown is not what we have all been sent to Washington to do.

I urge support of the rule and the underlying legislation.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, when the House shut down in 2013, I happened to be on the floor at midnight. Why, at this moment, eludes me. But I remember when the clock struck midnight that I made the comment that the great government of the United States of America was closed.

That 16-day exercise took $24 billion out of this economy at a time when we were struggling, really, to get our economy back on track. That money mostly came from mom-and-pop stores that were in Federal buildings or in the national parks. The inconvenience to Federal employees was enormous. They did get paid, but they were worried to death whether they would be able to meet their mortgage payments or to meet the college tuition payments. And yet so many people were dispossessed, practically. Veterans came to Washington to visit their memorials, only to find them closed.

I certainly concur with Mr. COLE. We do not want to see that again. It was foolish then; it would be doubly foolish now. We are now on the edge of what we are going to do because we couldn't get anything done.

I am obsessed today by what occurred last night on television. I want to explain it to you, because I have said on this floor so many times—mostly during the 54 times we voted to defund health care—that what was going on here was a gigantic hoax.

I said just this morning at the Rules Committee that what we do has only a passing resemblance to what we are supposed to do. And I want to read a quote from what was said last night on Fox News by Representative MCCARTHY, who is the presumptive new Speaker of the House. He said:

> What you are going to see is a conservative Speaker, that takes a conservative Congress, that puts a strategy in place to fight and win. And let me give you one example.
>
> Everybody thought Hillary Clinton was unbeatable, right? But we put together a Benghazi special committee, a select committee. What are her numbers today? Her numbers are dropping. No one would have known any of that happened had we not fought and made that happen.

Sean Hannity responds:

> I agree. I'll give you credit for that.

I tell you what that means, Mr. Speaker. It means that this was used as a hoax. We concerned ourselves with that, and now we are going to see another one of these special committees. The Benghazi Committee has already spent $4.5 million, on top of all the money that was spent in committees, to point out that there was nothing wrong in Benghazi.

And, once again, I was on the floor of the House for the rule talking about setting up special committees for Benghazi, when I got a call from the mother of one of the former Navy SEALs who had died in that awful attack saying that her son had been a Navy SEAL, he knew his risks, and would we please stop bringing this up over and over again.

We heard basically the same thing from the Ambassador's family, who said that he knew the language. He liked to be out with the people. He could not be confined behind a wall.

So what are we doing here today? More hoax? More money wasted? Perhaps.

I told the chairman of the Rules Committee this morning that we would be happy to give them the rule for the CR. We want a clean CR. We were pleased as all get out when the Senate sent us a clean CR. But no, we are not going to do that. We are going to pretend, as part of the CR rule, that we are going to defund Planned Parenthood, which Mr. COLE just pointed out has no money allocated to it directly in the Federal budget.

So what we are going to defund is I don't know what. HHS? Who knows. Maybe we will find out, maybe we won't. But they are doing this hoax again simply to fool some of the people on their side who obviously know

about it because it has been in every paper and on everybody's lips that I have talked to that we were going to have to probably do that. But putting that on the rule this morning meant that we cannot support it. Perhaps you have the votes to do it by hoaxing people, but I don't know.

We do know that that most conservative wing has harangued its leadership enough to add that vote on the bill even though, as I point out, we were very willing to give the votes on our side.

Now, the Senate had 78 majority votes to keep the Senate open and Congress moving, but we will not do that because we want to try to restrict a woman's access to health care. We do it all the time. We have already had 14 votes. We did two or three this week.

What in the world is it that makes this majority want to take health care away from people—54 times to kill health care, 14 times to kill choice, which is constitutionally protected, I must add.

So across the country, our constituents must be thoroughly surprised at what really is going on here. A lot of money is getting spent. It takes $24 million a week to run the House of Representatives. And think of the Benghazi Committees. If you recall, at both Armed Services and Intelligence, their Republican chairs—and bless them for it—said there is nothing there.

But we find out last night that the whole purpose of all of it was never to do anything except to cause eternal grief to the families of the four people who lost their lives and to destroy a Presidential candidate. Could the Congress really stoop that low? I certainly hope not. The facts belie my hope.

So we will be back here in December, December 11, actually, when I suspect we will go through the same thing: Are we going to shut down the government or are we going to try to do our job? We do the same thing. We will have to put some things in to fool some people all the time so that they will think they are voting for something entirely different. Frankly, I am not going to try to explain why this is happening, because the people that it is meant to appease obviously know we are appeasing them. And it won't last, but it sure is expensive.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I want to, first, point out a couple of areas where my friend and I do disagree. We certainly disagree about the value of the Benghazi Committee. Frankly, I think it has been conducted professionally and seriously by Mr. GOWDY. I think we have already learned some things we wouldn't have known, including the fact that the former Secretary of State had a private server over which only she had access and control, a very unusual arrangement. So I will just let the committee continue its work and see where we end up at the end of the day.

I want to disagree with my friend, with all due respect, on Planned Parenthood. That is just an area where we have a difference of opinion. I don't think it is appropriate that they receive Federal funds. There are plenty of other ways. We provide $3.5 billion to thousands of public healthcare centers and community healthcare centers around the United States. Those provide all these same services. That is appropriate, and we should do that.

But I also want to agree with my friend. I agree very much with her sentiments on a government shutdown. She is precisely right, in my view, about what happened in the last government shutdown. It should not have occurred. This is a sincere effort to make sure that doesn't occur now. The Appropriations Committee is certainly doing everything in its power to do that.

Obviously, we need the administration, the Senate, and the House leadership to sit down and give us a framework. We are trying to buy them that time. I think we are doing it in a very responsible way.

So, while my friend and I may have some disagreements in some areas, on the functioning of the government we have absolutely no disagreement whatsoever. I am pleased to be here working with her in those areas, and I am hopeful that the President, the Speaker, the majority leader, and the respective minority leaders can indeed come to a larger agreement that would allow a normal appropriations process to take place. First, an omnibus bill this year, and, hopefully, next year, an actual complete appropriations process such as we haven't seen around here in many, many, many years.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, we find ourselves in a precarious time. At midnight tonight, the Government of the United States will close yet once again. Mr. COLE and I certainly have strong agreement on that, and I am happy for that. He is a true gentleman and a scholar here in Congress. But I continue to say that it saddens me greatly, because all of us who were wanting to vote for a clean CR, because of this rule, we will not have an opportunity to do that.

I call for a ''no'' vote on the rule.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I want to thank my friend again for also emphasizing the areas where we agree, which is on the maintenance of the government. And while we may have a difference over the rule, I would hope that my friend and many of her colleagues on the CR that has been agreed to would look on that favorably and would be able to support the CR, itself, as opposed to the rule.

Mr. Speaker, passage of the CR is critical to prevent a government shutdown and to demonstrate to the American people that Congress can actually govern. The CR abides within the budget caps and does not provide any additional funding for Planned Parenthood, as some have claimed. In addition, the rule provides for consideration of an enrollment correction bill that would again make the position of the House clear in opposition to any additional funding for Planned Parenthood.

I want to encourage my colleagues to support this rule and the underlying legislation. And, frankly, I want to encourage those who are now engaged in negotiations to arrive at a framework where the appropriations process can actually go forward, where we can sit down and seriously consider in a bipartisan way how best to fund the government in the coming year, and where, hopefully, we can get an agreement large enough that we can have a normal appropriations process next year where we actually bring bills individually to this floor, as we did 6 times, but actually do it for the full 12 that would be in order. That is my hope. That is what I am going to be working toward. I know my friend will be working in the same direction.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on adoption of the resolution will be followed by a 5-minute vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 2082.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 239, nays 187, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 525]

YEAS—239

Abraham	Clawson (FL)	Forbes
Aderholt	Coffman	Fortenberry
Allen	Cole	Foxx
Amash	Collins (GA)	Franks (AZ)
Amodei	Collins (NY)	Frelinghuysen
Babin	Comstock	Garrett
Barletta	Conaway	Gibbs
Barr	Cook	Gibson
Barton	Costello (PA)	Gohmert
Benishek	Cramer	Goodlatte
Bilirakis	Crawford	Gosar
Bishop (MI)	Crenshaw	Gowdy
Bishop (UT)	Curbelo (FL)	Granger
Black	Davis, Rodney	Graves (GA)
Blackburn	Denham	Graves (LA)
Blum	Dent	Graves (MO)
Bost	DeSantis	Griffith
Boustany	DesJarlais	Grothman
Brat	Diaz-Balart	Guinta
Bridenstine	Dold	Guthrie
Brooks (AL)	Donovan	Hanna
Brooks (IN)	Duffy	Hardy
Buchanan	Duncan (SC)	Harper
Buck	Duncan (TN)	Harris
Bucshon	Ellmers (NC)	Hartzler
Burgess	Emmer (MN)	Heck (NV)
Byrne	Farenthold	Hensarling
Calvert	Fincher	Herrera Beutler
Carter (GA)	Fitzpatrick	Hice, Jody B.
Carter (TX)	Fleischmann	Hill
Chabot	Fleming	Holding
Chaffetz	Flores	Huizenga (MI)

Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—187

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huelskamp
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Massie
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—8

Brady (TX)
Culberson
Hudson
Johnson (GA)
Kelly (IL)
Meeks
Reichert
Ryan (OH)

□ 1500

Mr. SARBANES changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mrs. GRANGER and Mr. WENSTRUP changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EXPIRING AUTHORITIES ACT OF 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 2082) to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain expiring provisions of law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 423, nays 0, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 526]

YEAS—423

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Latta
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
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Pallone
Palmer
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Rangel
Ratcliffe
Reed
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)

Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—11

Bishop (UT)
Brady (TX)
Culberson
Hudson
Johnson (GA)
Kelly (IL)
Larson (CT)
Meeks
Reichert
Ryan (OH)
Westmoreland

□ 1507

Mr. BLUMENAUER changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian Pate, one of his secretaries.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3457, JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF IRANIAN TERRORISM ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1735, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. BYRNE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114–273) on the resolution (H. Res. 449) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3457) to prohibit the lifting of sanctions on Iran until the Government of Iran pays the judgments against it for acts of terrorism, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1735) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; and providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

PERMISSION TO POSTPONE PROCEEDINGS ON MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the question of adopting a motion to concur pursuant to House Resolution 448 may be subject to postponement as though under clause 8 of rule XX.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENHAM). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kentucky?

There was no objection.

TSA OFFICE OF INSPECTION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 719, and that I may include tabular material on the same.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 448, I call up the bill (H.R. 719) to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendment to the House amendment to the Senate amendment thereto, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the Senate amendment to the House amendment to the Senate amendment.

The text of the Senate amendment to the House amendment to the Senate amendment is as follows:

At the end add the following:

The following sums are hereby appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, and out of applicable corporate or other revenues, receipts, and funds, for the several departments, agencies, corporations, and other organizational units of Government for fiscal year 2016, and for other purposes, namely:

SEC. 101. (a) Such amounts as may be necessary, at a rate for operations as provided in the applicable appropriations Acts for fiscal year 2015 and under the authority and conditions provided in such Acts, for continuing projects or activities (including the costs of direct loans and loan guarantees) that are not otherwise specifically provided for in this Act, that were conducted in fiscal year 2015, and for which appropriations, funds, or other authority were made available in the following appropriations Acts:

(1) The Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015 (division A of Public Law 113–235), except section 743 and title VIII.

(2) The Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015 (division B of Public Law 113–235).

(3) The Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2015 (division C of Public Law 113–235), except title X.

(4) The Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015 (division D of Public Law 113–235).

(5) The Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act, 2015 (division E of Public Law 113–235).

(6) The Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2015 (Public Law 114–4).

(7) The Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015 (division F of Public Law 113–235).

(8) The Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015 (division G of Public Law 113–235), except title VI.

(9) The Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2015 (division H of Public Law 113–235).

(10) The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015 (division I of Public Law 113–235).

(11) The Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2015 (division J of Public Law 113–235), except title IX.

(12) The Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015 (division K of Public Law 113–235).

(13) Section 11 of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (Public Law 113–235).

(b) The rate for operations provided by subsection (a) is hereby reduced by 0.2108 percent.

SEC. 102. (a) No appropriation or funds made available or authority granted pursuant to section 101 for the Department of Defense shall be used for: (1) the new production of items not funded for production in fiscal year 2015 or prior years; (2) the increase in production rates above those sustained with fiscal year 2015 funds; or (3) the initiation, resumption, or continuation of any project, activity, operation, or organization (defined as any project, subproject, activity, budget activity, program element, and subprogram within a program element, and for any investment items defined as a P–1 line item in a budget activity within an appropriation account and an R–1 line item that includes a program element and subprogram element within an appropriation account) for which appropriations, funds, or other authority were not available during fiscal year 2015.

(b) No appropriation or funds made available or authority granted pursuant to section 101 for the Department of Defense shall be used to initiate multi-year procurements utilizing advance procurement funding for economic order quantity procurement unless specifically appropriated later.

SEC. 103. Appropriations made by section 101 shall be available to the extent and in the manner that would be provided by the pertinent appropriations Act.

SEC. 104. Except as otherwise provided in section 102, no appropriation or funds made available or authority granted pursuant to section 101 shall be used to initiate or resume any project or activity for which appropriations, funds, or other authority were not available during fiscal year 2015.

SEC. 105. Appropriations made and authority granted pursuant to this Act shall cover all obligations or expenditures incurred for any project or activity during the period for which funds or authority for such project or activity are available under this Act.

SEC. 106. Unless otherwise provided for in this Act or in the applicable appropriations Act for fiscal year 2016, appropriations and funds made available and authority granted pursuant to this Act shall be available until whichever of the following first occurs: (1) the enactment into law of an appropriation for any project or activity provided for in this Act; (2) the enactment into law of the applicable appropriations Act for fiscal year 2016 without any provision for such project or activity; or (3) December 11, 2015.

SEC. 107. Expenditures made pursuant to this Act shall be charged to the applicable appropriation, fund, or authorization whenever a bill in which such applicable appropriation, fund, or authorization is contained is enacted into law.

SEC. 108. Appropriations made and funds made available by or authority granted pursuant to this Act may be used without regard to the time limitations for submission and approval of apportionments set forth in section 1513 of title 31, United States Code, but nothing in this

Act may be construed to waive any other provision of law governing the apportionment of funds.

SEC. 109. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, except section 106, for those programs that would otherwise have high initial rates of operation or complete distribution of appropriations at the beginning of fiscal year 2016 because of distributions of funding to States, foreign countries, grantees, or others, such high initial rates of operation or complete distribution shall not be made, and no grants shall be awarded for such programs funded by this Act that would impinge on final funding prerogatives.

SEC. 110. This Act shall be implemented so that only the most limited funding action of that permitted in the Act shall be taken in order to provide for continuation of projects and activities.

SEC. 111. (a) For entitlements and other mandatory payments whose budget authority was provided in appropriations Acts for fiscal year 2015, and for activities under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, activities shall be continued at the rate to maintain program levels under current law, under the authority and conditions provided in the applicable appropriations Act for fiscal year 2015, to be continued through the date specified in section 106(3).

(b) Notwithstanding section 106, obligations for mandatory payments due on or about the first day of any month that begins after October 2015 but not later than 30 days after the date specified in section 106(3) may continue to be made, and funds shall be available for such payments.

SEC. 112. Amounts made available under section 101 for civilian personnel compensation and benefits in each department and agency may be apportioned up to the rate for operations necessary to avoid furloughs within such department or agency, consistent with the applicable appropriations Act for fiscal year 2015, except that such authority provided under this section shall not be used until after the department or agency has taken all necessary actions to reduce or defer non-personnel-related administrative expenses.

SEC. 113. Funds appropriated by this Act may be obligated and expended notwithstanding section 10 of Public Law 91–672 (22 U.S.C. 2412), section 15 of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 2680), section 313 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995 (22 U.S.C. 6212), and section 504(a)(1) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3094(a)(1)).

SEC. 114. (a) Each amount incorporated by reference in this Act that was previously designated by the Congress for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 or as being for disaster relief pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(D) of such Act is designated by the Congress for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of such Act or as being for disaster relief pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(D) of such Act, respectively.

(b) The reduction in section 101(b) of this Act shall not apply to—

(1) amounts designated under subsection (a) of this section; or

(2) amounts made available by section 101(a) by reference to the second paragraph under the heading ''Social Security Administration—Limitation on Administrative Expenses'' in division G of Public Law 113–235; or

(3) amounts made available by section 101(a) by reference to the paragraph under the heading ''Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services—Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control Account'' in division G of Public Law 113–235.

(c) Section 6 of Public Law 113–235 shall apply to amounts designated in subsection (a) for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism.

SEC. 115. During the period covered by this Act, discretionary amounts appropriated for fiscal year 2016 that were provided in advance by appropriations Acts shall be available in the amounts provided in such Acts, reduced by the percentage in section 101(b).

SEC. 116. Notwithstanding section 101, amounts are provided for ''Department of Agriculture—Domestic Food Programs—Food and Nutrition Service—Commodity Assistance Program'' at a rate for operations of $288,317,000, of which $221,298,000 shall be for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program.

SEC. 117. Amounts made available by section 101 for ''Department of Agriculture—Rural Housing Service—Rental Assistance Program'' may be apportioned up to the rate for operations necessary to pay ongoing debt service for the multi-family direct loan programs under sections 514 and 515 of the Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1484 and 1485): Provided, That the Secretary may waive the prohibition in the second proviso under such heading in division A of Public Law 113–235 with respect to rental assistance contracts entered into or renewed during fiscal year 2015.

SEC. 118. Amounts made available by section 101 for ''Department of Commerce—National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—Procurement, Acquisition and Construction'' may be apportioned up to the rate for operations necessary to maintain the planned launch schedules for the Joint Polar Satellite System.

SEC. 119. (a) The first proviso under the heading ''United States Marshals Service—Federal Prisoner Detention'' in title II of division B of Public Law 113–235 shall not apply during the period covered by this Act.

(b) The limitation in section 217(c) of division B of Public Law 113–235 on the amount of excess unobligated balances available under section 524(c)(8)(E) of title 28, United States Code, shall not apply under this Act to the use of such funds for ''United States Marshals Service—Federal Prisoner Detention''.

SEC. 120. (a) The authority regarding closeout of Space Shuttle contracts and associated programs provided by language under the heading ''National Aeronautics and Space Administration—Administrative Provisions'' in the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009 (Public Law 111–8) shall continue in effect through fiscal year 2021.

(b) This section shall be applied as if it were in effect on September 30, 2015.

SEC. 121. (a) Notwithstanding section 1552 of title 31, United States Code, funds made available, including funds that have expired but have not been cancelled, and identified by Treasury Appropriation Fund Symbol 13–09/10–0554 shall remain available for expenditure through fiscal year 2020 for the purpose of liquidating valid obligations of active grants.

(b) For the purpose of subsection (a), grants for which the period of performance has expired but are not finally closed out shall be considered active grants.

(c) This section shall be applied as if it were in effect on September 30, 2015.

SEC. 122. The following provisions shall be applied by substituting ''2016'' for ''2015'' through the earlier of the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act or the date of the enactment of an Act authorizing appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense:

(1) Section 1215(f)(1) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 (Public Law 112–81; 10 U.S.C. 113 note), as most recently amended by section 1237 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. ''Buck'' McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (Public Law 113–291).

(2) Section 127b(c)(3)(C) of title 10, United States Code.

SEC. 123. (a) Funds made available by section 101 for ''Department of Energy—Energy Programs—Uranium Enrichment Decontamination and Decommissioning Fund'' may be apportioned up to the rate for operations necessary to avoid disruption of continuing projects or activities funded in this appropriation.

(b) The Secretary of Energy shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate not later than 3 days after each use of the authority provided in subsection (a).

SEC. 124. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, except section 106, the District of Columbia may expend local funds under the heading ''District of Columbia Funds'' for such programs and activities under the District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 2015 (title IV of division E of Public Law 113–235) at the rate set forth under ''District of Columbia Funds—Summary of Expenses'' as included in the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Request Act of 2015 (D.C. Act 21–99), as modified as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 125. Notwithstanding section 101, no funds are provided by this Act for ''Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board—Salaries and Expenses''.

SEC. 126. Amounts made available by section 101 for ''Small Business Administration—Business Loans Program Account'' may be apportioned up to the rate for operations necessary to accommodate increased demand for commitments for general business loans authorized under section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)).

SEC. 127. Sections 1101(a) and 1104(a)(2)(A) of the Internet Tax Freedom Act (title XI of division C of Public Law 105–277; 47 U.S.C. 151 note) shall be applied by substituting the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act for ''October 1, 2015''.

SEC. 128. Section 101 shall be applied by assuming that section 7 of Public Law 113–235 was enacted as part of title VII of division E of Public Law 113–235.

SEC. 129. The authority provided by section 831 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 391) shall continue in effect through the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act.

SEC. 130. Section 401(b) of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1324a note) shall be applied by substituting the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act for ''September 30, 2015''.

SEC. 131. Section 610(b) of the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1993 (8 U.S.C. 1153 note) shall be applied by substituting the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act for ''September 30, 2015''.

SEC. 132. Subclauses 101(a)(27)(C)(ii)(II) and (III) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(27)(C)(ii)(II) and (III)) shall be applied by substituting the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act for ''September 30, 2015''.

SEC. 133. Section 220(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Technical Corrections Act of 1994 (8 U.S.C. 1182 note) shall be applied by substituting the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act for ''September 30, 2015''.

SEC. 134. Section 810 of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C. 6809) is amended by striking all that follows after ''shall terminate'' and inserting ''September 30, 2017.''.

SEC. 135. In addition to the amount otherwise provided by section 101 for ''Department of Agriculture—Forest Service—Wildland Fire Management'', there is appropriated $700,000,000 for an additional amount for fiscal year 2016, to remain available until expended, for urgent wildland fire suppression activities: Provided, That such funds shall only become available if funds previously provided for wildland fire suppression will be exhausted imminently and the Secretary of Agriculture notifies the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate in writing of the need for these additional funds: Provided further, That such funds are also available for transfer to other appropriations accounts to repay amounts previously transferred for wildfire suppression:

Provided further, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amount shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amount and transmits such designation to the Congress.

SEC. 136. The authorities provided by sections 117 and 123 of division G of Public Law 113–76 shall continue in effect through the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act.

SEC. 137. (a) The authority provided by subsection (m)(3) of section 8162 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2000 (40 U.S.C. 8903 note; Public Law 106–79) shall continue in effect through the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act.

(b) For the period covered by this Act, the authority provided by the provisos under the heading ''Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission—Capital Construction'' in division E of Public Law 112–74 shall not be in effect.

SEC. 138. Section 3096(2) of the Carl Levin and Howard P. ''Buck'' McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 is amended by inserting ''for fiscal year 2015'' after ''$37,000,000''.

SEC. 139. Funds made available in prior appropriations Acts for construction and renovation of facilities for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention may also be used for construction on leased land.

SEC. 140. Subsection (b) of section 163 of Public Law 111–242, as amended, is further amended by striking ''2015–2016'' and inserting ''2016–2017''.

SEC. 141. Section 101 shall be applied by assuming that section 139 of Public Law 113–164 was enacted as part of division G of Public Law 113–235, and section 139 of Public Law 113–164 shall be applied by adding at the end the following: ''and of the unobligated balance of amounts deposited or available in the Child Enrollment Contingency Fund from appropriations to the Fund under section 2104(n)(2)(A)(i) of the Social Security Act and the income derived from investment of those funds pursuant to 2104(n)(2)(C) of that Act, $1,664,000,000 is rescinded''.

SEC. 142. Section 114(f) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1011c(f)) shall be applied by substituting the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act for ''September 30, 2015''.

SEC. 143. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, there is appropriated for payment to Tori B. Nunnelee, widow of Alan Nunnelee, late a Representative from the State of Mississippi, $174,000.

SEC. 144. Of the discretionary unobligated balances of the Department of Veterans Affairs from fiscal year 2015 or prior fiscal years, or discretionary amounts appropriated in advance for fiscal year 2016, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may transfer up to $625,000,000 to ''Department of Veterans Affairs—Departmental Administration—Construction, Major Projects'', to be merged with the amounts available in such account: Provided, That no amounts may be transferred from amounts that were designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget, the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, or the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010: Provided further, That no amounts may be transferred until the Secretary submits to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate a request for, and receives from the Committees written approval of, such transfers: Provided further, That the Secretary shall specify in such request the donor account and amount of each proposed transfer, the fiscal year of each appropriation to be transferred, the amount of unobligated balances remaining in the account after the transfer, and the project or program impact of the transfer.

SEC. 145. Notwithstanding section 101, amounts are provided for ''Department of Veterans Affairs—Departmental Administration—General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration'' at a rate for operations of $2,697,734,000.

SEC. 146. Notwithstanding section 101, section 226(a) of division I of Public Law 113–235 shall be applied to amounts made available by this Act by substituting ''division I of Public Law 113–235'' for ''division J of Public Law 113–76'' and by substituting ''2015'' for ''2014''.

SEC. 147. Section 209 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6436) shall be applied by substituting the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act for ''September 30, 2015''.

SEC. 148. Amounts made available by section 101 for ''Broadcasting Board of Governors—International Broadcasting Operations'', ''Bilateral Economic Assistance—Funds Appropriated to the President—Economic Support Fund'', ''International Security Assistance—Department of State—International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement'', ''International Security Assistance—Department of State—Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining and Related Programs'', and ''International Security Assistance—Funds Appropriated to the President—Foreign Military Financing Program'' shall be obligated at a rate for operations as necessary to sustain assistance for Ukraine to counter external, regional aggression and influence, including for the costs of authorized loan guarantees.

SEC. 149. Section 1334 of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6553) shall be applied by substituting the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act for ''October 1, 2015''.

SEC. 150. (a) Funds made available by section 101 for ''Department of Housing and Urban Development—Management and Administration—Administrative Support Offices'' may be apportioned up to the rate for operations necessary to maintain the planned schedule for the New Core Shared Services Project.

(b) Not later than 3 days before the first use of the apportionment authority in subsection (a), each 30 days thereafter, and 3 days after the authority expires under this Act, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report specifying each use of the authority through the date of the report.

This Act may be cited as the ''Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016''.

MOTION OFFERED BY MR. ROGERS OF KENTUCKY

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the motion.

The text of the motion is as follows:

Mr. Rogers of Kentucky moves that the House concur in the Senate amendment to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 719.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 448, the motion shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations.

The gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present H.R. 719, a short-term continuing resolution to keep the government open and operating after the end of the fiscal year on September 30.

This necessary measure funds government and services at the current rate through December 11 of this year. As in previous years, the CR also includes a small across-the-board reduction to keep within the fiscal year 2016 cap level set by the Budget Control Act.

Mr. Speaker, this is a responsible measure that prevents a harmful government shutdown, while allowing time for a larger budget agreement to be reached, and time to complete the full year appropriations work for 2016.

It also includes a few responsible provisions to prevent disastrous, irreversible damage to government programs or to address current urgent needs. These changes are limited in scope and noncontroversial. For instance, these provisions extend the authority for critical Department of Defense activities that fight terrorism, increase funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs to help address the disability claims backlog, and provide emergency funding to the Forest Service to help respond to the disastrous wildfires that are devastating our Western States.

While I firmly believe this legislation is the best path forward at this time, it is also my strong opinion that Congress should do its job and enact actual, line-by-line, separate appropriations bills ahead of our September 30 deadline. Clearly, this is not an option at this time, so we must resort to a temporary measure like this CR.

A CR doesn't reflect our most current budgetary needs. It creates uncertainty across the whole government and does not adequately address our national security obligations, and it causes needless waste when taxpayer dollars are spent inefficiently and ineffectively.

So it is to my great dismay, Mr. Speaker, that we have arrived at this point once again requiring a temporary Band-aid to buy us time to do our constitutionally mandated duty.

The House this year got off to a great start—beginning our appropriations work at the earliest date since 1974—the current Budget Control Act's anniversary—and passing six of our 12 bills by July of this year. My committee reported out all 12 bills for the first time since 2009. And yet, the Senate refuses to act, giving us no choice but to try a continuing resolution.

□ 1515

But now, with progress stalled, it is clear that all sides must come together to find some sort of agreement that addresses our current fiscal situation in a comprehensive way. This CR, while not ideal, is the next step toward that end, keeping the government's lights on as we work to find a solution.

With current funding set to expire just hours from now, I urge my colleagues to do the responsible and reasonable thing and support this continuing resolution today.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, we may temporarily avert this most recent crisis if we can get this bill to the President tonight, just hours before the entire Federal Government shuts down, but it is certainly not a cause for celebration.

This very short-term continuing resolution avoids the most immediate crisis. But what is step two? After we enact this stopgap measure, are there any firm plans to begin negotiating the full-year appropriations bills we should be passing today? I remain deeply concerned about the potential of finding ourselves facing a government shutdown again in December.

The stakes are very high. We have an economy that is genuinely recovering. Unemployment is down. Economic growth is up. But we still have progress to make. The uncertainty and unnecessary tumult of playing games right up to the brink of a government shutdown is not helpful to our fragile economy. The last shutdown cost the economy $24 billion in GDP, according to Standard & Poor's.

This continuing resolution buys us 10 weeks and takes care of only a handful of the most pressing Federal responsibilities: Provides desperately needed emergency firefighting funds to address the cataclysmic fires raging in the West; provides additional resources for processing disability claims at the Veterans Administration; increases the authorization in the Small Business Loan Guarantee Program to ensure new loans can be administered to help small businesses across the country; and extends several expiring authorizations for programs within the Department of Homeland Security.

Notably, the continuing resolution does not address other key priorities that could bolster our economy, such as the expired authority of the Export-Import Bank, which has created or sustained 1.5 million private sector jobs at no cost to the taxpayer since 2007 and supported billions in American economic activity.

By settling on this short-term extension, we fail to provide proposed increases for medical research at the National Institutes of Health and the Nation's aging transportation system and infrastructure. The President's request for defense funding is shortchanged, which would put our national security at risk in a long-term CR.

Leaving our Federal agencies on autopilot without the line-by-line, year-by-year adjustments that should come from this committee and this Congress is irresponsible and hurts our ability to grow our economy, create jobs, and give hard-working families the services they need.

Yet, with the Republican dysfunction that has driven a change in the majority's leadership on the brink of a government shutdown, the prospects for forging a reasonable, responsible solution by December are not good.

One more indication of the dire outlook is the cynical gimmick—an ''enrollment correction''—the majority has put forward today to supposedly defund Planned Parenthood. Fortunately, it will have no practical effect on the CR for two reasons. First, the Senate will ignore it. Second, there is no need for a correction since, as my friend Mr. COLE noted this weekend, ''there is no money'' in the CR for Planned Parenthood. PolitiFact even confirmed this claim.

I will strongly oppose this attack on women's health today as I support the temporary continuing resolution and urge all of my colleagues to do the same so we can at least avoid a worst-case scenario.

But I again implore outgoing and incoming Republican leadership to please engage with the President and House Democrats immediately on an agreement to replace the sequester-level caps, avert the next crisis just weeks away, stop playing political games with women's health, and invest in American economic growth and security.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE), a very valued member of my committee who happens also to be the chairman of the Labor HHS Subcommittee.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, first, I want to begin by congratulating both my chairman and my ranking member for the exceptional job they have done this year in getting all 12 appropriations bills through the full committee for the first time since 2009. So we really have on the Appropriations Committee done our work. Six of those bills have come across the floor.

And, frankly, I think we would have had more across the floor if our friends in the Senate, who are blocked by the Democratic minority, had an opportunity to bring their bills to the floor. I think we are here, in part, because the inaction by the minority in the United States Senate has ground the whole process to a halt.

But I am very pleased to see both my chairman and my ranking member here making the argument to keep the government funded. I think we all know that shutting down the government is always a mistake. It is a political mistake, frankly, for people that want to use it to achieve some political tactic.

But, more importantly, it is simply the wrong thing to do for the American people. They send us here expecting us to get our work done. The fact that some amongst us has kept that from happening is regrettable and I think a disservice to all of our constituents.

I also believe, in this particular case, that we have an opportunity, if we pass this continuing resolution for those that are, as I like to say appropriately, above our pay grade—that is, the President, the Speaker, the majority leader, and the two minority leaders—to have time to negotiate the framework for a larger deal, for a larger understanding, that would allow us to move ahead and actually have an omnibus bill where we actually—not as good as moving it across the floor—but had a large bill where we looked at every line, we made concessions to one another, we made agreements, we moved the ball forward, and it could open up a possibility for a normal appropriations process next year.

In that regard, I was very heartened by Majority Leader MCCONNELL's recent remarks that he is interested in a 2-year deal, somewhat similar to Ryan-Murray in terms of its duration. Again, that would allow this House next year to move appropriations bills across the floor one at a time in a give-and-take bipartisan manner. I think that is extraordinarily important.

If you look at where this committee was at in terms of frozen activity before my good friend, the chairman, became the chairman, he and, again, with my good friend, the gentlewoman from New York, have brought us back a long, long way. If we don't finish that journey in the next 2½ months, we have got several things that are going to happen, the worst of which will be a sequester of $40 billion, roughly, on the American military.

That is an unacceptable outcome. And, frankly, that is something that the Commander in Chief and the respective leaders on both sides of the aisle in this body need to make sure doesn't happen.

I promise you, if the administration, the Senate, and the House can get to a larger agreement, I have no doubt that my chairman and my ranking member and their counterparts in the United States Senate will then introduce a normal negotiating process and we will get to the right place.

So we have a moment, an opening, a little bit of bipartisanship here. I would expect, when this bill is actually voted on, we will have large majorities on both sides of the aisle that actually support it.

So I urge the other Members—again, both Democrat and Republican—to seize this opportunity, to not just focus on where there are differences, but focus here where we have come together, bought the time, and then, frankly, where they can use their influence on both sides of the aisle in both Chambers and with the President to make sure that an adequate deal is arrived at and that we spare the country and certainly the men and women in uniform that defend us each and every day from the agony of dealing with a second sequester.

This is not the time for that to happen. It is a dangerous world. We have not Russia relitigating the borders of Eastern Europe. We have got China building islands in the South China Sea. We have got ISIL having established a caliphate of sorts in the Middle East. We have a dangerous Iran.

The worst thing in the world would be to not do this CR and then not carry

it through to a fuller agreement and undercut our military. So I think the stakes of what we are doing are very, very high here.

I want to conclude again by commending my chairman and commending our ranking member for working together, as they have this entire year, so we could get our bills across, as they are doing now in this process, to buy our leaders time, and, frankly, as I know they will do in normal negotiation on an omnibus bill at the end of this process and then, hopefully, on a regular appropriations process next year.

Again, I urge my fellow Members on both sides of the aisle to pass this very important piece of legislation.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), a distinguished member of the committee.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed in this bill. We are faced with this continuing resolution in order to avert a government shutdown. This is no way to govern. America deserves better than a month-to-month government, forever on the brink of a shutdown and held back by needless budget constraints.

Those who call this a clean continuing resolution are mistaken. In fact, it puts in place yet more indiscriminate cuts. It cuts .2 percent across the board for most discretionary programs. Apparently, we have not learned our lesson about mindless austerity.

Instead of fighting over women's health care, we should use the next month to negotiate a budget agreement that addresses the single biggest economic issue that we face in this country. Today working men and women in the United States are in jobs that don't pay them enough money. Real wages have been stagnant for 30 years.

We need to stop spending hundreds of billions of dollars every year on tax loopholes for the wealthy and for big corporations. We need to invest once more in education and job training and health and all the other priorities that American families hold dear.

Right now we cannot meet their needs. Poor children are struggling. Their vocabularies are, on average, one-third those of their middle income peers. But since 2010, we have cut over $1 billion in real terms from education.

Workers need help learning the right skills, finding work in a tough economy, so that they can support their families, but we have cut more than $1 billion from job training programs.

Millions of Americans depend upon lifesaving medical research to cure disease and to improve the quality of life. I stand here as a survivor of ovarian cancer. I am here because of the grace of God and biomedical research. Yet, we will continue to cut biomedical research. We have cut more than $3.5 billion from the National Institutes of Health.

The list of failures goes on and on. We are failing our workers. We are failing working families. We are failing students and medical researchers and first responders and veterans and families and millions of others.

Our job in this body is to provide opportunity for people. During this economic struggle that we have, we ought to be focused like a laser on the issues that work to better the economic situation of working families in this country.

□ 1530

What we do here is to continue to hold a cap on what we need to move forward, and, more importantly than that, what we do from the other side of the aisle is to threaten the government shutdown over the issue of women's health.

Who are we? What are we about? Where are the great values of this Nation that helped to provide an opportunity so that families could join the middle class of this country and continue to make it strong?

That is what our job is today to do, not to be involved in these mindless exercises that the other side of the aisle continues to move forward on.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT), a hardworking member of the Appropriations Committee, the chairman of the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Subcommittee, and, coincidently, the chairman of the House Ethics Committee.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of passing a clean continuing resolution, the one the Senate sent over to us. We should do that immediately.

It would be utterly reckless to let the government shut down for any reason, regardless of one's feelings about Planned Parenthood. Whether you like them or not isn't the point. We should never shut the government down over that or, frankly, any other issue at this time.

It is imperative that we pass this CR so that it will give us the time and space we need to enter into a broader budget agreement, hopefully, for this fiscal year and the next and so that we can then, also, pass the appropriations bills.

As our very fine Chairman ROGERS mentioned, I am the chair of the Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies. This CR is essential to making sure that veterans' services go uninterrupted. It also makes sure that we can continue moving forward on many of the projects that are ongoing within the VA system through the anomalies. Nevertheless, we need to move forward on this for that reason.

Also, I want to make a point that we need to stop lurching from one budget crisis to the next. The events of the last few weeks have been very dismaying to me, personally. That said, we are not going to have a government shutdown, and that is good news, but we need to get on with the business of this budget agreement.

Also, I wanted to point out—I heard my friend and colleague from Connecticut made a comment about biomedical research—in the bill that we had passed out of the Labor, Health, and Human Services Subcommittee, we actually did increase funding for the National Institutes of Health by $1.1 billion. I do hope that, in the event that we do come to a budget agreement and move the appropriations bills, we will be able to see an increase in funding for the NIH. We will be able to provide for our veterans and, in my case, also the military construction projects.

Also, our friends who are serving overseas, our men and women serving overseas in the Armed Forces, are very much depending on us to do the right thing, to pass appropriations bills, a long-term continuing resolution, not the one we are voting on today. If we are to do one after December 11, it would have real impacts on our force readiness and the ability for our troops and our men and women overseas to do the jobs that we have asked them to do.

So for all these reasons, I am urging people to vote for this CR today, keep the government functioning, do our duty, and then set up a process where we can complete the appropriations process in December and take care of the responsibilities that have been entrusted to us.

I want to thank Chairman ROGERS and, also, Ranking Member LOWEY for their strong leadership on the Appropriations Committee. They are doing all that they are doing to try to help us work together and make sure that Congress maintains its power of the purse and does exactly what we promised the American people we would do, and that would be to govern.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. ISRAEL).

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my very good friend and colleague from New York, Ranking Member LOWEY.

Mr. Speaker, I have a tremendous amount of respect for the chairman, the gentleman from Kentucky. I have great personal admiration for him and his leadership, and I thank him for his earnest, hard work; but what we are doing today is a disappointment to the American people, and it is a disappointment to those of us who are on the Appropriations Committee. Success can't be defined as avoid catastrophe, and all we are doing today is avoiding catastrophe. The majority's triumph today is not shutting down the government.

Mr. Speaker, there is not a small-business owner anywhere in America who would say ''had a good day because I am not shutting down,'' ''had a good day because I am not throwing my employees out of work,'' ''had a good day

because I am not telling my customers they can't come for services.'' That is not success. That is failure. That is, by itself, a catastrophe.

Mr. Speaker, the managers of those small businesses are judged by their performance and success. The managers of this Congress, the majority, are judged in the same way. They are judged by their ability, as the majority, to produce bills, to pass budgets, to do the work of the American people.

It is time for them to do their jobs, to stop the gimmicks, to pass a long-term budget that invests in the education of our children, that supports job skills for people and careers, that protects our veterans and our national security. It is time to do their jobs, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM), a distinguished member of the Appropriations Committee.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, this Republican majority has driven the expectations of the American people so low that the very act of funding government operations has become a significant achievement. Unfortunately, the cost extraction by the Republican extremists for this 3-month clean CR was the resignation of Speaker BOEHNER, a good man who has served this House honorably.

Passing this CR, however, will keep the government working, which is critical to American families, their economy, and the safety and security of our Nation, and it continues to protect by providing healthcare coverage for women.

In 2013, when the Republicans shut down the government for 16 days, the U.S. economy lost $24 billion, and more than 100,000 Americans lost their jobs. The American people cannot afford another Republican shutdown. Passing this 3-month CR is the first step toward responsibly meeting the needs of the American people.

As a ranking Democrat on the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, I am pleased that this bill includes $700 million in emergency funds for Forest Service to fight wildland fires in Western States. This is critical funding.

The CR will keep our national parks open to the public, keep Native American healthcare and education programs operating, and prevent the furloughing of tens of thousands of Federal employees in the Department of the Interior and EPA.

I am going to vote to pass this continuing resolution, and I applaud all the Democrats and Republicans who will vote to pass the CR, but we need to work to find a bipartisan path forward to fund the government for the coming year. Our job is to serve the American people. The American people expect Congress to do their job. Today, I hope all Members will do their job and vote to pass this CR.

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

I have no further requests for time. I am prepared to close if the gentlewoman is prepared.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I was thinking about that, except, I believe, we have some distinguished members of our committee who are running a little late.

So I would just like to say, Mr. Speaker, that I am very pleased that we are here today, and I do hope that there will be strong bipartisan support for the continuing resolution.

This has been a difficult year. I know how hard our distinguished chairman has worked, trying to put together a bipartisan appropriations bill. Although I am very pleased that we are passing a continuing resolution today, it is really amazing that we should be celebrating in the United States of America, the most distinguished country, supposedly representative of our great democracy, that we are keeping the government open.

I feel very confident, Mr. Speaker, that if members of the Appropriations Committee, both Democrats and Republicans, would sit down very seriously, we could work out an arrangement whereby we would lift the sequester, just as we did with Ryan-Murray.

I was on that committee with some distinguished members of the party, and we had some good discussions. We had some differences of opinion; we had some lively debates; but at the end of the day, we came up with a product that we could be proud of.

So, Mr. Chairman, I do hope that after this continuing resolution has passed—and I think you have another speaker who would like to speak while we are waiting for our speaker.

In closing, I would just like to say that I am cautiously optimistic that, after the CR is passed, we can really do our work and come up with a good, strong omnibus bill that reflects our values.

I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), our distinguished leader.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I thank her for her leadership, as well as that of our distinguished chairman, Mr. ROGERS, to bring us to the floor today where we can vote in a bipartisan way to keep government open without doing harm to women's health in our country.

To shut government down is a really bad decision for this Congress to make. The last time we did that, we lost $24 billion. The last time this Congress voted to shut down government, we lost $24 billion to our economy, 120,000 jobs in our workforce. Our Federal workforce, which contains more than 30 percent of veterans in its composition, was furloughed or worse. The American people deserve better.

So as we go forward from this continuing resolution, which is a good outcome of the conversations that have gone back and forth—a strong bipartisan vote in the Senate, and I hope a strong bipartisan vote in the House—let us take heed of the words of Pope Francis, who just, not even 1 week ago, spoke to us in this Chamber.

Pope Francis asked us to work together for the common good of the people. He urged and said a good leader would have a spirit of openness and pragmatism, again, to get the job done for the American people.

□ 1545

As we go forward, we will have some difficult choices to make. We all share the values of strengthening our national security, investing in our children's future, reducing the deficit as we go forward, but as we do so, there are some important differences that we share.

Let's hope that we recognize a good idea, wherever it springs from. Let us also recognize what our responsibilities are to the American people first and foremost.

I consider this a very positive action we are taking today. I wish that we were finished with all of our appropriations work. As an appropriator, I know that that is always the goal of our chairman and ranking member.

I thank our ranking member, Congresswoman LOWEY, for her leadership, but also for the optimism she just expressed, that, as we go forward, we will do so in a timely fashion, maybe long before December 11, so we will have removed all doubt in the public's mind that government will work, that it will function, as the Pope had asked us, for the good of the American people.

There are important decisions ahead, though, in terms of what our priorities are in a budget. A budget should be a statement of our national values, and what is important to us should be reflected on how we allocate those resources. We have the omnibus bill to deal with.

We also have investments in the infrastructure of our country and our transportation. That will be an important bill that we will be debating at the same time, but has a relationship in terms of how we offset, how we pay for that.

We have the issue of the Ex-Im Bank, a great job creator for our country and, yet, still unauthorized, long overdue for us to authorize it.

Before Thanksgiving probably we will have the issue of a vote on honoring the full faith and credit of the United States of America. The last time that was put into doubt, it was unfortunate because it lowered our credit rating, even though we didn't follow through with it. Even though the full faith and credit ended up being honored, just the threat, the suspicion, that it could be undermined lowered our credit rating.

We have really important work to do for the good of the people. Again, let us

honor our responsibilities in the beautiful spirit of Saint—Pope Francis. I say Saint Francis because that is the patron saint of my city, of San Francisco, and the namesake also of Pope Francis.

But Pope Francis instructed us as to what good leaders do, and good leaders have a sense of humility to respect the views of other people and not be condescending in terms of our views are the only ones that matter.

In that spirit, I look forward to working with you, Mr. Chairman, with the Speaker, with others, and certainly under the leadership of our distinguished ranking member, Congresswoman LOWEY.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. JOLLY), a member of our committee.

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, my compliments to the chairman and to the ranking member for shepherding us thus far into this year.

I often say the first job of Congress is to govern, and that means keeping the government open. I think what we are doing today is honoring the responsibility we have, our article I responsibilities to keep the government open.

We talk a lot about Congress having the power of the purse, but with the power also comes responsibility. So as we have hard conversations as a country and as a Congress about whether we fund certain programs, whether we fund certain entities, that is an appropriate conversation to have, and I think we have handled that appropriately thus far.

You sometimes would not know that based on comments on the other side of the aisle because they continue to try to score political points and use political capital to suggest we are on the brink of a shutdown. The simple fact is we are not.

Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have acknowledged today that they intend to vote for what is a responsible continuing resolution that will ensure that our government remains funded.

The irony of some of the criticisms that often come—and this comes from colleagues on our committee—is that, to finally reach a deal, to finally have responsible governance, it takes a willing partner on the other side of the aisle and it takes intellectual honesty on both sides of the aisle of every member of our committee.

I would respectfully point out to those on the other side of the aisle who serve on the committee that we had a debate over and over and over with each markup about the Budget Control Act and the caps that are in place by statute. There were very good suggestions from both sides of the aisle about where taxpayer dollars should be invested, which programs they should be invested in, from defense to transportation, to education, to healthcare research, and so forth.

The irony is that, for each good idea on the other side of the aisle about where to invest money, there was a willful ignorance of the fact that any additional investment must come with an offset under the Budget Control Act. There were good amendments in the committee, and, frankly, many of them would have passed if they had included responsible offsets. But there were no offsets.

I point that out only for this, not to relitigate all the markups we had in committee, but to suggest that somehow it is the Republicans' issue that somehow we have to resolve this. We have not had a willing partner throughout the markup of all of these bills.

Just as the spirit of cooperation is here on the floor—and rightfully so—and we are going to pass the CR that funds the government and keeps it open—that highway of goodwill has to go both ways. Rather than just talk about what is not funded, let's talk about how we are going to operate under what is a statute, what is the law of the land that was signed by this President and, frankly, recommended by this President.

As we talk about where spending comes between now and December 11, we have to recognize and be honest with the American people that we operate under a budget agreement that has statutory caps signed by this President. There are great ideas on both sides of the aisle about where to spend money, but if we ignore the fact that they are required to be offset, then we have not advanced this conversation one day.

It is important that we keep the government open. I am glad that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and enough colleagues on this side of the aisle are saying: Yes, we have to keep the government open. We have to keep the Department of Defense funded. Our men and women in uniform who carry the flag for us every day, we have to ensure that they are funded. Our first responders, DHS, coastguardsmen, coastguardswomen, our transportation programs, education, critical healthcare research is all that we will continue to fund through this responsible continuing resolution.

We all wish we had a full-year bill that we were considering today, but we do not have that. The responsible action by this body is to pass this bill with sufficient numbers on both sides of the aisle. I would charge those on my side of the aisle who care deeply about certain extraneous issues involved in the debate this week, we have responsible ways to continue to address how we provide critical nonabortion-related women's healthcare service in underserved communities, while we still act today to keep the government open. It is a responsible path forward.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for bringing this forward.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I just want to reiterate again to my colleagues that I look forward to working in a bipartisan way with the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Appropriations to move the process forward.

I particularly think, because it was just mentioned by the previous speaker, that for us not to increase the appropriations to the National Institutes of Health—this is just one area of the bill that came through the committee in the committee process. This means research for a whole range of illnesses, whether it is autism or diabetes or heart.

We have a responsibility to lift these caps, negotiate a really good bill, and provide adequate funding for the American people. This is important for their health, for their work life. We have to be sure we are investing so we are creating jobs and keep the economy moving. I look forward to that process.

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

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I shall be brief.

I appreciate the work of my colleague, Mrs. LOWEY, ranking member on the committee, and all of the people on her side of the aisle and, of course, on our side of the aisle as well. This is a good bill. It is a responsible bill. It does not do anything controversial.

It does do one important thing, and that is keep the government operating. We can't afford to abandon our soldiers, particularly those overseas in harm's way. We can't abandon the people that depend upon the programs that our Federal Government provides.

I urge Members to vote ''yes'' on this bill. It is a good bill, and it keeps the government operating.

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

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this continuing resolution, which will allow us to avoid another completely unnecessary and potentially devastating government shutdown. My vote in favor of the CR does not mean I support the irresponsible sequestration-level budget resolution that has made it impossible to pass FY 2016 appropriations bills, much less the reckless manner in which the majority continues to manage the budget process.

The Republican budget announced this spring made no room for the critical investments in infrastructure, housing, research, health care, and education that our country needs to thrive. In fact, it made deeply damaging reductions.

Defense appropriators were able to avoid sequestration levels only by using the so-called OCO gimmick, amounting to a $38 billion sleight of hand.

It was evident from the beginning that we would have to negotiate new budget numbers—if not a comprehensive agreement of the sort that balanced the budget in the 1990s, then at least a more modest deal like the Ryan-Murray agreement of the last two

years—in order to pass our appropriations bills. I and other Democratic colleagues took to the floor again and again to decry these unacceptable budget numbers that simply set us up for failure. Our leaders have been offering to negotiate for months, knowing full well that President Obama would be forced to veto any appropriations bills passed under the Republican budget. Will it take a government shutdown, we asked, to make us do our job?

Apparently the answer is "yes". The Senate couldn't pass a single appropriations bill. The House passed a few with Republican votes alone, and then the process collapsed under the weight of the Confederate battle flag debate. That was a particularly disgraceful episode, but the process was already on life support. It was never going to work, and Republican leaders have known that all year.

Despite the failure of the appropriations process, as represented by this short-term CR, all hope is not lost. We can still salvage the hard bipartisan work of my and other appropriations subcommittees, if, when this CR expires, we can stitch together an omnibus appropriations bill for the balance of the year.

The Appropriations Committee still avoids some of the ideological battles that divide this body, and I have been able to work closely with Chairman DIAZ-BALART to negotiate a framework for transportation and housing funding. I know that many of the other subcommittee Chairs and Ranking Members have made similar progress. Given realistic funding levels, these bills can relatively quickly be converted into acceptable appropriations legislation.

So I once again join my colleagues in urging Speaker BOEHNER to resume bipartisan budget negotiations and produce reasonable, responsible funding levels that can allow the appropriations process to move forward. Today, we're buying ourselves a couple of months. Instead of lurching toward another crisis in December, let's actually come to a consensus on the kind of investments in our future that a great country must make.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 448, the previous question is ordered on the motion to concur.

The question is on the motion to concur by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

DIRECTING THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN THE ENROLLMENT OF H.R. 719

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 448, I call up the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 79) directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make corrections in the enrollment of H.R. 719, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 448, the concurrent resolution is considered read.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 79

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 719, the Clerk of the House of Representatives shall make the following corrections:

(1) Insert after the enacting clause (before section 1) the following:

"DIVISION A—TSA OFFICE OF INSPECTION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015".

(2) Insert after section 8 (before the statement of appropriations) the following:

"DIVISION B—CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS RESOLUTION, 2015".

(3) Insert after section 150 (before the short title) the following new section:

''SEC. 151. Except as expressly provided otherwise, any reference in this division to 'this Act' shall be treated as referring only to the provisions of this division.''.

(4) Add at the end the following new division:

"DIVISION C—DEFUND PLANNED PARENTHOOD ACT OF 2015

"SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE.

''This division may be cited as the 'Defund Planned Parenthood Act of 2015'.

"SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

''Congress finds the following:

''(1) State and county health departments, community health centers, hospitals, physicians offices, and other entities currently provide, and will continue to provide, health services to women. Such health services include relevant diagnostic laboratory and radiology services, well-child care, prenatal and postpartum care, immunization, family planning services (including contraception), cervical and breast cancer screenings and referrals, and sexually transmitted disease testing.

''(2) Many such entities provide services to all persons, regardless of the person's ability to pay, and provide services in medically underserved areas and to medically underserved populations.

''(3) All funds that are no longer available to Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc., and its affiliates and clinics pursuant to this division will continue to be made available to other eligible entities to provide women's health care services.

''(4) Funds authorized to be appropriated, and appropriated, by section 4 are offset by the funding limitation under section 3(a).

"SEC. 3. MORATORIUM ON FEDERAL FUNDING TO PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION OF AMERICA, INC.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—For the one-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this division, subject to subsection (b), no funds authorized or appropriated by Federal law may be made available for any purpose to Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc., or any affiliate or clinic of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc., unless such entities certify that Planned Parenthood Federation of America affiliates and clinics will not perform, and will not provide any funds to any other entity that performs, an abortion during such period.

''(b) EXCEPTION.—Subsection (a) shall not apply to an abortion—

''(1) if the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest; or

''(2) in the case where a woman suffers from a physical disorder, physical injury, or physical illness that would, as certified by a physician, place the woman in danger of death unless an abortion is performed, including a life-endangering physical condition caused by or arising from the pregnancy itself.

''(c) REPAYMENT.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Agriculture shall seek repayment of any Federal assistance received by Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc., or any affiliate or clinic of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc., if it violates the terms of the certification required by subsection (a) during the period specified in subsection (a).

"SEC. 4. FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER PROGRAM.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated, and appropriated, $235,000,000 for the community health center program under section 330 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b), in addition to any other funds made available to such program, for the period for which the funding limitation under section 3(a) applies.

''(b) LIMITATION.—None of the funds authorized or appropriated pursuant to subsection (a) may be expended for an abortion other than as described in section 3(b).

"SEC. 5. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

''Nothing in this division shall be construed to reduce overall Federal funding available in support of women's health.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The concurrent resolution shall be debatable for 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the majority leader and minority leader or their designees.

The gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY) and the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks, and to include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 79.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 79, a concurrent resolution directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make corrections in the enrollment of H.R. 719. This resolution directs the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make several corrections in the enrollment of H.R. 719, the Continuing Appropriations Act 2016, including by adding at the end of the text of the House-passed version, H.R. 3134, the Defund Planned Parenthood Act of 2015.

The House passed H.R. 3134 by a vote of 241–187 on September 18. The bill precludes any Federal funds from being authorized or appropriated for 1 year for any purpose to Planned Parenthood Federation of America or any affiliate or clinic of that organization unless entities certify that affiliates and clinics will not perform and will not provide any funds to any other entity that performs elective abortions during such period. The bill also redirected funding from Planned Parenthood facilities to federally qualified health centers to provide women's health services.

This resolution and the related enrollment process sends a signal about

this House's commitment to bar funding for Planned Parenthood and gives the Senate the opportunity to limit funding in the continuing resolution.

Mr. Speaker, this is actually the exact same language in the Defund Planned Parenthood Act sponsored by my friend, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK), which the House passed earlier this month. Mrs. BLACK is a tireless defender of the unborn, and I have been privileged to work with her on several pro-life measures, including a very similar defund correction to the spending bill back in 2011.

So why this correction? My colleagues might be wondering if I just saw what happened in the Senate. Why take up this bill when the votes just aren't there in the Senate? The answer is simple. Because I believe, as long as there is an opportunity before us to defund Planned Parenthood, we should take it because, when it comes to this fight, I want to leave it all on the field.

I understand that, so far, we have lacked the votes in the Senate to include defund language in the continuing resolution, and I realize this is a last-ditch effort to do this and that the chances of this correction maneuver succeeding in the Senate are low. But I believe, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have to fight until the very end.

□ 1600

I have always been up front with those I represent about the low likelihood of defunding Planned Parenthood, especially in a stopgap spending bill. Pro-life advocates in my State and around this country understand the math; and while they hope that Senate Democrats will change their hearts, they don't really expect them to. What they do expect is for us to try, to fight to the very end, and to exhaust every possible option in our effort to stop tax dollars from flowing to this organization.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in the House and in the Senate to support this defund correction and to join me to fight until the very end to defund Planned Parenthood.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

This ''enrollment correction'' is yet another procedural maneuver. It is designed to destroy health care for millions of American women. It is unacceptable, and we will not stand for it.

The disgraceful rightwing assault on reproductive freedom has become an all-out war on the health and the well-being of millions of low-income American women. Each year, Planned Parenthood provides 2.7 million people, men and women, with lifesaving services.

I would hope that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would open their hearts—open their hearts—to healthcare services for women who don't have the wherewithal to go to the same kinds of private doctors that the men and women of the United States House of Representatives have the opportunity to do. Open your hearts, because for many, Planned Parenthood is their only way of receiving these healthcare services.

The president of the American Congress of OB–GYNs has warned that, without Planned Parenthood, many patients will be left without a doctor; and that is what these attacks are designed to achieve. The rightwing does not want poor women to have health care, period. It is spiteful, it is cruel, and it is wrong.

We know what happens when funding is taken away from Planned Parenthood. In Scott County, Indiana, a full-scale HIV epidemic was triggered that has been declared a public healthcare emergency. Do we want more people to die? Are we really prepared to see that picture repeated across the country?

The American people have made it clear that they will not accept any bill that cuts funding for women's health care or compromises reproductive freedoms. Let us in this body respect and trust the healthcare decisions that women make.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Ms. DELAURO. I yield myself an additional 10 seconds.

Let's respect and trust the healthcare decisions that women make. We must respect their wishes. I urge my colleagues to vote against this disgraceful bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. ROBY. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), someone who has spent her entire career working at issues that help working families with their health care, and particularly women.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, this resolution is more political theater: all sound and fury, signifying nothing and going nowhere. We are proceeding to debate this resolution even though there is no money—zero money—in the CR for Planned Parenthood and even though we all understand that if the Senate also adopts this resolution, it will effectively shut down the government, slowing economic growth and job creation.

Planned Parenthood provides essential preventive health services, including birth control, lifesaving cancer screenings, well-women exams, and advice on family planning to nearly 3 million women each year.

Community health centers are not an alternative to Planned Parenthood. The California Primary Care Association noted: ''Eliminating Planned Parenthood from our State's comprehensive network of care would put untenable stress on remaining providers. We do not have the capacity for such an increase in care.''

I urge a ''no'' vote on the resolution.

Mrs. ROBY. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. ADAMS)

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a woman who is angry. These attacks on Planned Parenthood aren't about some deceptive videos. It is about a woman's right to make decisions about her own body. Women's reproductive rights are decisions she should make. It should be between a woman, her doctor, and her family, not a male-dominated Congress.

So let's be clear. Attacking Planned Parenthood is part of a ploy to roll back women's rights. What hypocrisy. I wish my colleagues on the other side of the aisle cared this much about the millions of women and children who go hungry every day or the educational inequities that exist in our most vulnerable communities.

I stand with Planned Parenthood for the services they provide. Last year, they served more than 2.7 million across our Nation, and more than 31,000 in North Carolina just through nine centers. More than 21,000 patients received safe contraception; more than 18,000 STI tests were conducted, and more than 3,500 Pap tests and more than 2,500 breast exams. Real women getting real preventive care.

I will continue to advocate for women's comprehensive health care and their right to control their own body. The war on women must stop.

Ms. DELAURO. I would inquire as to how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Connecticut has 5 minutes remaining.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. First, I want to thank Congresswoman DELAURO for yielding and for her tremendous leadership on so many issues important to women and the entire country.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H. Con. Res. 79, which once again attempts to defund Planned Parenthood for 1 year. This callous action would leave millions of women across the country without access to critical healthcare services. This shameful resolution is the 15th anti women's health vote this year.

We know that Planned Parenthood centers are essential to the health and well-being of women and their families. They serve as primary care facilities for women seeking birth control, comprehensive family planning services, and cancer and STI screenings.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, in 21 percent of counties where Planned Parenthood operates health centers, it is the county's only family planning provider. Mr. Speaker, for these communities, there are no other options. Defunding Planned Parenthood would hurt the communities that need help the most: low-income women and women of color.

Politicians have no business interfering with a woman's personal health

decisions that are best for her and her family, and she needs family planning centers to exercise all of her options as it relates to her health care.

This resolution is deceitful and it is wrong. It is past time to end this war on women, and it is past time for Republicans to listen to the American people, develop a responsible budget, and stop their attacks on women's health.

Vote ''no'' on this very backward, egregious resolution. It is going to harm women. It is going to hurt women. It does not protect the health and safety of women.

Ms. DELAURO. I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. I thank my good friend for her incredibly excellent work on this bill.

A threat to shut down the government over funding Planned Parenthood's contraceptive and preventative care measures looms again in 3 months, although 73 percent of the public is against forcing a shutdown over Planned Parenthood.

I am grateful for the high-quality coverage Planned Parenthood gives women's health across the board, including abortion services, not funded by the Federal Government. The District of Columbia is the only jurisdiction Congress denies the full reach of Roe v. Wade to low-income women, by denying the local government the right to spend its own local funds on abortion services for poor women.

For the Nation, to cut government funds for Medicaid, family planning, and preventative care would cut off our collective noses to spite our faces. Every public dollar spent on family planning services alone saves $7 in undesired births and other preventative care.

For all the heat generated by Republicans, Planned Parenthood is regarded more favorably now than it was before the current fight began. The reason is, for nearly a century, Planned Parenthood's incredibly effective work for women's health has won it a strong following across our country from both parties.

Ms. DELAURO. I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut for her kindness. As well, let me thank the chair and ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, because we know the work that they have done.

Mr. Speaker, let me just simply say that I am very disappointed that we are now settling for a CR that continues to have a sequester that cuts across and denies Border Patrol agents, Customs and Border Protection, Secret Service, and leaves the American people vulnerable.

So, the first order of business is that we are not doing what we are supposed to do in providing for the American people. Now we move to another unseemly legislative initiative that is attacking women's health. And what does that mean? We use it under the guise of Planned Parenthood.

Planned Parenthood has any number of clinics in almost 50 States that deal with women's health, contraception, sexually transmitted disease; places where women who are impoverished can go when they cannot go anywhere else.

In a hearing yesterday, someone was debating why they don't do mammograms. Women know that when we go to any doctor, the doctor refers mammograms.

So this is a bad bill. It is against women's health. The sequester is bad. Vote down both bills.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H. Con. Res. 79.

We are here again wasting valuable time on measures we know are having no real chance of survival beyond these debates.

I strongly oppose this continued effort to drag women's health issues and women's rights through this political circus.

At what point will the Majority step back and get regal about substantive and genuine legislation.

The amount of legislative time we have wasted on these offensive messaging bills is ridiculous and must end.

Our constituents deserve better.

Our legislative and public service roles demand more.

And as we approach yet another deadline for piecemeal fiscal fixes, we should be focused on passing a comprehensive and cost-savings budget.

Yet, we are here today debating another measure that threatens millions of Americans' access to preventative care and could end up costing taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

However, we know H. Con. Res. 79 is not a serious attempt at passing real legislation.

As such, it is simply being offered here today as a shameless political decoy to attack the legal rights of women.

Politicians are continuing to try to sneak around the Constitution and four decades of Supreme Court precedent with sham laws that do nothing to improve women's health care and only make it more difficult, if not impossible, to obtain safe and legal abortion.

Restricting all access to reproductive and women's health services only exacerbates a woman's risk of an unintended pregnancy and fails to accomplish any meaningful overthrow of Roe v. Wade.

In recent years, state policymakers have passed hundreds of restrictions on abortion care under the guise of protecting women's health and safety.

Fights here in Congress have been no different.

In my state of Texas a law that would have cut off access to 75 percent of reproductive healthcare clinics in the state was challenged before the U.S. Supreme Court in 2014 and 2015.

On October 2, 2014, the Supreme Court struck down as unconstitutional a Texas law that required that all reproductive healthcare clinics that provided the full range of services would be required to have a hospital-style surgery center building and staffing requirements.

This requirement meant that only 7 clinics would be allowed to continue to provide a full spectrum of reproductive healthcare to women.

Any woman facing an unintended pregnancy needs to be able to make her own decisions and weigh all her options—and these laws take those options away.

Texas has 268,580 square miles only second in size to the state of Alaska.

The impact of the law in implementation would have ended access to reproductive services for millions of women in my state.

In 2015, the State of Texas once again threatened women's access to reproductive health care when it attempted to shutter all but 10 healthcare providers in the state of Texas.

The Supreme Court once again intervened on the behalf of Texas women to block the move to close clinics in my state.

It seems every month we are faced with a new attack on women's access to reproductive health care, often couched in deceptive terms and concern for women's health and safety.

And in fact we are here today supposedly to talk about the safety of women—but we know that's not really the case.

If my colleagues were so concerned about women's health and safety, they would be promoting any one of the number of evidence-based proactive policies that improve women's health and well-being.

Instead, they are proposing yet another attempt to ban abortion.

That is their number one priority. This is certainly not about protecting women's health, it's about politics.

We must separate the personal views of abortion from the legal issues and fundamental constitutional rights.

Undisputable, every woman has the constitutional right to make personal health care decisions so basic that it must be equally protected for all.

Restricting access to women's reproductive health care providers makes it increasingly difficult—and sometimes impossible—for women who have decided to end a pregnancy to get the safe, legal, high-quality care they need.

The result is not the elimination of abortions, but higher costs, longer delays, and extra steps for women seeking abortion care, and in the process punish women for their decision to exercise their constitutional right to end a pregnancy.

History tells us that unsafe and late-term abortions did not cease to exist without adequate access to clinical service. Rather, the exact opposite—as we know limited and restricted access only leads to unsafe and dangerous practices.

Today, countless women in states like Texas and Mississippi, Wisconsin, Alabama, Tennessee, and Louisiana—where state laws are already gravely impacting women's access to health care providers—women are being forced to travel upwards of hundreds of miles or cross state lines to access their constitutional right to an abortion.

These restrictions create sharp disparities in access to care that are troublingly reminiscent of the time before Roe v. Wade, when access depended on a woman's social status, where she lived or her ability to travel to another state.

In an effort to undermine what they could not otherwise overturn, politicians are attempting to ''turn back the clock'' to the pre-Roe era

by shuttering reproductive health care clinics and cutting off women's access to safe and legal abortion care.

Yet, far too many women who cannot afford to travel elsewhere will face an impossible choice between carrying an unintended pregnancy to term or seeking drastic options outside the law.

A right that only exists on paper is no right at all.

Simply, restricting a women's right and access to legal abortion services discriminately endangers the lives of women.

Congress should be doing everything it can to ensure that women have access to preventive care, not eliminating it.

This is a legislative assault on all progressive health care, service, and advocacy organizations who aim to provide vital care and services to women and men across this country.

Hundreds of thousands have already spoken up, including leading groups and communities such as the growing voice of our millennial generation.

For instance, the nearly 60,000 OB-GYN physicians and partners in women's health warn that this bill would scare providers away from providing comprehensive, compassionate care to women, in a time where America desperately needs more ob-gyns participating in Medicaid programs.

Physicians and experts in the field have long argued that these damaging measures serve no medical purpose, interfere in the doctor/patient relationship, and do nothing to promote women's health.

My colleagues should not be closing the door to health care services.

Rather, my colleagues should be doing more to connect our youth and women to services that help them reduce their risk of unintended pregnancies and STD's, and improve their overall health through preventative screenings, education and planning, and not restricting their access to lawfully entitled family planning and private health services.

I urge all Members to vote against the continued attack on women's health and rights.

Ms. DELAURO. I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) for the purpose of a unanimous consent request.

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

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this measure.

Mr. DELAURO. May I inquire as to how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Connecticut has 1½ minutes remaining.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

What we are facing here today and what this is about, this so-called enrollment correction, is a procedural maneuver because the United States Senate sent over a continuing resolution that continues to fund Planned Parenthood. Because the majority is interested in defunding the opportunity for healthcare services for women, they have asked for this procedural maneuver to defund Planned Parenthood.

It is simply about taking funds away from American women. Think about it. Think about shutting the government down because of women's health. The lack of care and concern, first and foremost, about the 2.7 million men and women that Planned Parenthood serves every year is a grave consequence. But in addition, shutting down the Federal Government the last time cost $24 billion to American taxpayers, held up disability checks for veterans, and, in fact, held back people's IRS rebates.

Their preoccupation with denying women's health is cruel, it is spiteful, it is wrong, and it does great harm to this great Nation. Vote against this bad piece of legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1615

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

Mr. Speaker, not everyone, I recognize, in this country is pro-life, like I am. But those who are should not be forced to have their tax dollars fund an organization that aborts more than 350,000 unborn babies every year.

Federal law has long prohibited public funds from being used to actually perform abortions. However, Planned Parenthood gets millions in grants and reimbursements for other services that they provide, like pregnancy tests, birth control, Pap smears, STD tests, and other various treatments.

Of course, low-income women should have access to these critical services. But why is it necessary—why is it necessary—for those services to be funded at the Nation's largest abortion provider?

It isn't actually, but the abortion industry and its supporters—it is what they want you to think it is. And they talk about women's health because they don't want to talk about abortion.

They don't want to talk about how ugly it is and how painful it is not just to the mother having to make the decision, but to the unborn baby who doesn't have a voice, who doesn't have a say.

When it comes to funding, they like to pretend, Mr. Speaker, that abortion doesn't exist and that Planned Parenthood is the only place where low-income women can get health care.

Taking away Federal funding from Planned Parenthood means attacking women's health, they say. That is not true.

The truth is that there are more than 13,000 federally qualified and rural health centers throughout this country that offer low-cost health care to women. In fact, these centers outnumber Planned Parenthood clinics 20–1.

If those who defend Federal funding of Planned Parenthood truly just wanted to make sure that low-income women have access to health care and not abortion, then why not simply support these noncontroversial community health centers instead?

If this argument is really about making sure women have access to health care, then we would all agree right here, right now, to support these community health centers.

But you see, Mr. Speaker, that is not what this is about. You see, while federally qualified and rural health centers provide a wide range of medical services, they don't perform abortions. That is what they really want. They want to preserve the pipeline of funding to the Nation's largest abortion provider.

This talk of women's health is nothing but a charade, a false pretense, that I believe more and more Americans are realizing is phony.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this concurrent resolution.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 448, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the concurrent resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the order of the House of today, this 15-minute vote on adoption of the concurrent resolution will be followed by 5-minute votes on adoption of the motion to concur in the Senate amendment to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 719, and agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 241, nays 185, answered ''present'' 1, not voting 7, as follows:

[Roll No. 527]

YEAS—241

Abraham	Conaway	Graves (GA)
Aderholt	Cook	Graves (LA)
Allen	Costello (PA)	Graves (MO)
Amash	Cramer	Griffith
Amodei	Crawford	Grothman
Babin	Crenshaw	Guinta
Barletta	Cuellar	Guthrie
Barr	Curbelo (FL)	Hardy
Barton	Davis, Rodney	Harper
Benishek	Denham	Harris
Bilirakis	DeSantis	Hartzler
Bishop (MI)	DesJarlais	Heck (NV)
Bishop (UT)	Diaz-Balart	Hensarling
Black	Donovan	Herrera Beutler
Blackburn	Duffy	Hice, Jody B.
Blum	Duncan (SC)	Hill
Bost	Duncan (TN)	Holding
Boustany	Ellmers (NC)	Huelskamp
Brat	Emmer (MN)	Huizenga (MI)
Bridenstine	Farenthold	Hultgren
Brooks (AL)	Fincher	Hunter
Brooks (IN)	Fitzpatrick	Hurd (TX)
Buchanan	Fleischmann	Hurt (VA)
Buck	Fleming	Issa
Bucshon	Flores	Jenkins (KS)
Burgess	Forbes	Jenkins (WV)
Byrne	Fortenberry	Johnson (OH)
Calvert	Foxx	Johnson, Sam
Carter (GA)	Franks (AZ)	Jolly
Carter (TX)	Frelinghuysen	Jones
Chabot	Garrett	Jordan
Chaffetz	Gibbs	Joyce
Clawson (FL)	Gibson	Katko
Coffman	Gohmert	Kelly (MS)
Cole	Goodlatte	Kelly (PA)
Collins (GA)	Gosar	King (NY)
Collins (NY)	Gowdy	Kinzinger (IL)
Comstock	Granger	Kline

Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—185

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Dent
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

King (IA)

NOT VOTING—7

Brady (TX)
Culberson
Hudson
Kelly (IL)
Meeks
Pingree
Reichert

□ 1647

Mr. LOEBSACK changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Messrs. DUNCAN of South Carolina and PERRY changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

TSA OFFICE OF INSPECTION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to concur on the bill (H.R. 719) to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes, offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS), on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk will redesignate the motion.

The Clerk redesignated the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to concur.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 277, nays 151, not voting 6, as follows:

[Roll No. 528]

YEAS—277

Adams
Aguilar
Amodei
Ashford
Barletta
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bustos
Butterfield
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gibson
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Hurd (TX)
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Jolly
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
LaMalfa
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCarthy
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meehan
Meng
Miller (MI)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nunes
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pitts
Pocan
Poliquin
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Reed
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rigell
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Whitfield
Wilson (FL)
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—151

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Babin
Barr
Barton
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Boustany
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Collins (GA)
Conaway
Crawford
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt (VA)
Jenkins (KS)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
Labrador
LaHood
Lamborn
Latta
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCaul
McClintock
Meadows
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Moolenaar

Mooney (WV)
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Nugent
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Schweikert
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shuster
Smith (MO)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stewart
Stutzman
Wagner
Walberg
Walker
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Yoder
Yoho
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—6

Brady (TX)
Culberson
Hudson
Kelly (IL)
Meeks
Reichert

□ 1657

Mr. ROHRABACHER changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the motion to concur was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN). The unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, which the Chair will put de novo.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

□ 1700

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE ELEANOR H. NORTON, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YOUNG of Iowa) laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable Eleanor H. Norton, Member of Congress:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 30, 2015.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I have received a subpoena, issued by the Superior Court for the District of Columbia, in connection with a particular criminal case, that I produce certain official documents and appear to testify at trial on official matters.

After consultation with counsel, I will make the determination required by Rule VIII.

Sincerely,

ELEANOR H. NORTON,
Member of Congress.

INTENT TO TERMINATE SEYCHELLES, URUGUAY, AND VENEZUELA AS BENEFICIARY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES UNDER THE GENERALIZED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES PROGRAM—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 114–59)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 502(f)(2) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the ''1974 Act'') (19 U.S.C. 2462(f)(2)), I am providing notification of my intent to terminate the designations of Seychelles, Uruguay, and Venezuela as beneficiary developing countries under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program. Section 502(e) of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2462(e)) provides that if the President determines that a beneficiary developing country has become a ''high income'' country, as defined by the official statistics of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development of the World Bank (the ''World Bank''), the President shall terminate the designation of such country as a beneficiary developing country for purposes of the GSP program, effective on January 1 of the second year following the year in which such determination is made.

Pursuant to section 502(e) of the 1974 Act, I have determined that it is appropriate to terminate the designations of Seychelles, Uruguay, and Venezuela as beneficiary developing countries under the GSP program, because they have become high income countries as defined by the World Bank. Accordingly, their eligibility for trade benefits under the GSP program will end on January 1, 2017.

BARACK OBAMA.
THE WHITE HOUSE, *September 30, 2015.*

INTENT TO TERMINATE SEYCHELLES AS A BENEFICIARY SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN COUNTRY UNDER THE AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT PROGRAM—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 114–60)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

I am providing notification of my intent to terminate the designation of Seychelles as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) program.

Section 506A(a)(1) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the ''1974 Act'') (19 U.S.C. 2466a(a)(1)) authorizes the President to designate a country listed in section 107 of the AGOA (19 U.S.C. 3706) as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country eligible for the benefits described in section 506A(b) of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2466a(b)), if the President determines that the country meets the eligibility requirements in section 104 of the AGOA (19 U.S.C. 3703), subject to the authority granted to the President under subsections (a), (d), and (e) of section 502 of the 1974 Act.

Pursuant to section 502(e) of the 1974 Act, I have determined that Seychelles has become a ''high income'' country and its designation as a beneficiary sub-Saharan country is no longer within the authority granted to the President under section 502 of the 1974 Act. Accordingly, pursuant to section 506A(a)(1) of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2466a(a)(1)), I have determined that Seychelles is no longer eligible for benefits as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country for the purpose of section 506A of the 1974 Act, effective January 1, 2017.

BARACK OBAMA.
THE WHITE HOUSE, *September 30, 2015.*

PUNISHMENT FOR MILITARY WHISTLEBLOWER WAS WRONG

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I was shocked and outraged to learn recently that a decorated Green Beret was dismissed from the military for blowing the whistle on a child rapist who was a member of the Afghan forces.

When our forces are abroad, our military should strive to uphold American values, and that is exactly what Sergeant First Class Charles Martland did when he confronted Afghan officials engaging in perverse actions. However, instead of being commended, Sergeant Martland was punished for his actions and was taken out of the region, despite being a soldier that was critical to the mission.

As someone who has worked to protect children and keep them safe from sexual exploitation, it is disheartening to see the military look the other way when children are being assaulted by our allied forces. This has to change. Steps must be taken to ensure that our military uphold American values while overseas.

Mr. Speaker, our military should not be looking the other way when our allies are engaging in wrongful acts.

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I am honored once again today to serve as a Congressional co-chair of National Preparedness Month. National Preparedness Month reminds us that we cannot become complacent in our efforts to build and improve emergency preparedness capabilities.

Coming from the 10th Congressional District of the State of New Jersey, which had experienced Hurricane Sandy and the September 11 attacks, I know that disasters can strike at any time.

As the ranking member of the Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee, I have also observed a concerning gap in coordination between communication of emergency response plans for children and schools. Each day more than 65 million children are separated from their parents during work-hours, but roughly 42 percent of the parents do not know where to reunite with their children after a school evacuation.

Parents, teachers, and emergency responders should engage with community partners so that responsibilities and resources are in place when disasters strike.

PRESIDENT MUST IMMEDIATELY SUSPEND ALL ASSISTANCE TO PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, if we didn't already have enough proof that the Palestinian Authority is not an honest partner for peace with Israel, Abu Mazen's speech at the U.N. General Assembly today confirmed it and showed that he is a self-serving autocrat who is more interested in delegitimizing Israel, the Jewish state, than in building up a future Palestinian state.

Abu Mazen's message was clear. He intends to scuttle any prospects for peace, pursue Israel at the International Criminal Court, and continue his ploy for achieving unilateral statehood at the U.N.

President Obama must immediately suspend all assistance to the Palestinian Authority.

If the Palestinians do move to join additional international conventions and organizations, the U.S. law is unambiguous. We must suspend all funding to any of these bodies that accept a nonexistent state of Palestine to its membership.

Mr. Speaker, the President has been seeking ways to circumvent and waive these provisions for years, but we must see to it that the President implements the full intent and letter of the law. Suspend all aid now.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a responsible Member of Congress concerned for the American people, today I voted for a continuing resolution that will take us to December 11, but that is not the responsible way to handle the business of this Nation.

It is time now for this Congress to put aside partisanship and to begin to have the Republican leadership and Republicans to sit down with members of the Democratic Caucus and talk about a real funding bill.

Yes, we have kept the doors open and provided for our employees, but we have undermined defense and the preparedness of our men and women. We have cut $1.7 billion from the Children's Health Insurance Program, and we are barely hanging on for other necessary items.

Yes, we have allowed for wildfire funding and disaster funding. Other items dealing with law enforcement and provisions for transportation and the environment are all cut by something called the sequester.

Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve better, and we need to get busy starting next week and put forward an appropriations process that funds this government, responds to those who are in need, prepares our young men and women in the military, and as well restores that children's health insurance money. Shame on us. We need to do it now.

HONORING COACH TONY NAPOLET

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

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of Coach Tony Napolet, who was a great man, a person of God, and a great coach.

We sent him off this morning at his funeral mass at St. Mary's, and I wanted to take a few moments here on the House floor to say thank you on behalf of all of those who coached with him, played for him, and in some way he helped shape so many lives.

To Natalie and Harold and Mario—his children—Aunt Norma, Aunt Marie, Manlio, Christopher, the entire crew, we want to say that we sent a great man to heaven today who embodied John F. Kennedy High School, Kennedy football.

The one lesson he always taught, Mr. Speaker, was to have a strong faith in God, make God your best friend, and treat others the way you would like to be treated. He left a major, major impression in the Mahoning Valley in Trumbull County in the State of Ohio.

God bless you, Coach Napolet. You will be missed.

□ 1715

NATIONAL MANUFACTURING DAY

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, before I begin this evening, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, joined this evening with colleagues on both sides of the aisle, to celebrate the upcoming October 2 National Manufacturing Day.

Manufacturing in the U.S. is something that I support fully. U.S. manufacturing is something that, I think, shares bipartisan support across the country, coast to coast, north to south, east to west, because it is about real, family-sustaining jobs where we build things in America, where we can actually manufacture our products here to sell not only to the American economy, but to the world economy.

Mr. Speaker, as I co-chair the U.S. Manufacturing Caucus here in Congress, I wanted to ask my colleague on the U.S. Manufacturing Caucus to rise and open us up on this Special Order this evening to celebrate U.S. manufacturing.

I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), a good friend and my co-chair on the Manufacturing Caucus.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York. This is a great opportunity for us to share, I think, as Democrats and Republicans.

My friend from New York represents upstate New York, and that area of our country and the State of New York have a long history of manufacturing. I represent northeast Ohio, which also has a long history of manufacturing.

I think we recognize the importance of manufacturing jobs and how to create policies that will further allow for investment in manufacturing and for workforce development within the context of manufacturing.

Also, I think we recognize, as we have seen the transition over the last 20 or 30 years in our country, how much we miss these manufacturing jobs. They pay a higher wage, more of a solid pension for most manufacturers, better benefits, and are where people can learn a craft, learn a skill, get into a good company, and make a good, honest living; and that is what we are celebrating here today.

Through our Manufacturing Caucus, Congressman REED and I try to stimulate some conversations and bring real people from our congressional districts to help educate us on what the best process, what the best issues, what the best approaches would be for the United States Congress to try to

incentivize manufacturing here in the United States.

I know I will be doing an event on Friday back in Youngstown, Ohio, and further celebrating in my community. I know you will, as well.

So I just want to say thank you to my friend. I look forward to us continuing—not just the old-line manufacturing that we know a lot about and have lost of lot of those jobs, not just the advanced manufacturing either—to work on the issue of making sure that we create more of these institutes to try to nurture new ways of manufacturing, but also the additive manufacturing piece, which is happening in Youngstown, Ohio, at America Makes, where the 3–D printing movement, the Maker Movement is happening and burgeoning in an old warehouse in downtown Youngstown. I mean, it doesn't get better than that, to have millions of dollars of equipment in the downtown of an iconic city that is really leading our community forward in this new line of manufacturing.

I want to thank you for your leadership. I appreciate your friendship, and I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words here tonight.

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio. He truly is a friend, and he is just as committed to U.S. manufacturing as I am. I have seen it firsthand. I have seen him in his district in action supporting U.S. manufacturers.

The 3–D printing hub, the advanced manufacturing center that you reference and that we are so supportive of—working with JOE KENNEDY here in the House and ROY BLUNT and SHERROD BROWN on a bipartisan, bicameral basis, getting that legislation signed, which was a priority of the administration—and having that type of advanced manufacturing center in Ohio, in your home State, obviously has demonstrated his commitment and his belief in U.S. manufacturing.

As the gentlemen indicated, it is not just advanced manufacturing. It is the traditional manufacturing. It is the manufacturing that we believe in where the American spirit is alive and well, where the American Dream can be reached and obtained.

I mean, as my good friend from Ohio indicated, these are good, solid, family-sustaining, middle class jobs to a large extent that put food on the table for our fellow Americans and put roofs over their heads and allow families to maybe pass on to the next generation a little bit better lifestyle or a little bit better American Dream than they enjoyed by having a little bit of money to invest in a college education for their kids and to try to enjoy and live that American Dream that I know my friend from Ohio believes in.

So I applaud my friend, and I appreciate my friend for all the work you do on U.S. manufacturing. This is what gives me continued optimism here in the United States Congress that we can get things done, because we have come across the aisle and we have joined together to promote U.S. manufacturing.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It is hard not to get a little bit nostalgic. I think a lot of times those of us who advocate for manufacturing spend a little too much time in the nostalgia phase and not enough time, I think, working in the space where we are trying to enhance, grow, and create new opportunities in manufacturing.

And I am not going to get political, but to go back to all of the elections, whether Republicans won or Democrats won, if you go back 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, I think the economic insecurity, in my analysis, was at the heart of each of those elections.

As we have seen the decline in manufacturing, we have seen the increase in anxiety for families to be able to make ends meet. So I am thankful that we can try to promote this together and try to find an issue like manufacturing that garners 60 to 70 percent support from regions, demographics all over the United States.

I think there is an inherent understanding of making something. I start it, and then I pass it to your company. You add value to it, and then you pass it to someone else. They add value to it, and it goes through that supply chain, tier 1, tier 2, and tier 3, and everybody benefits.

Back in the day, you know, we had a manufacturing facility for General Motors that had 15,000 or 16,000 people that now has 3,000 or 4,000. We had a supplier to General Motors, Packard Electric and then Delphi, that had 13,000 employees, and now it is down to 2,000 or 3,000. Those were all solid, middle class jobs. I know you could probably give similar examples in Corning and other places.

So I think, if we have an industrial policy, if we continue through the Tax Code and other ways to make sure that we incentivize investment in these areas, that we can help regrow those new-age manufacturing jobs that everybody, I think, is looking for, as you said, to make a good living, have a solid retirement, have good benefits, and not have to work so hard that you miss the soccer match, you miss the baseball game, or you can't go on a vacation. We can help regrow those middle class jobs where you can still have time with your family, which ultimately is the most important thing anyway.

So I appreciate the opportunity to be here and continue to work with you.

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman points out, you know, what manufacturing represents is opportunity, an opportunity to so many Americans, so many people.

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague from Ohio will agree with me that U.S. manufacturing is positioned on a precipice of rebirth here in America.

Now, my friend points out some areas that we need to continue to work on to make U.S. manufacturing even more competitive than what we are finding today.

When we see the energy rebirth here in America with the shale revolution for oil and natural gas coming online and the feedstock and the utility costs going down and going lower and lower, it is positioning U.S. manufacturing to be in a competitive position on the world economic stage. To me, that is such a hopeful, optimistic position of time for the United States of America to be in.

I can tell you story after story, Mr. Speaker. When I talk to U.S. manufacturers, they talk about the lessons that they have learned over the years of maybe chasing that cheap labor dollar, maybe chasing that overseas market, the whole issue of outsourcing.

What I hear from U.S. manufacturers today is that they want to come back to America, because in America we have the best workforce and we have the best work ethic across the world.

What we have in America, also, is the rule of law. So many of these manufacturers that have looked overseas and relocated overseas, they are finding that their intellectual property is disregarded. Those innovative ideas, those new ideas, those inventions that are going to spur that next product growth of tomorrow, they just get ripped off.

They have no recourse to enforce what we in America, as the cornerstone of our philosophy, respect, and that is property rights and that is the rule of law and saying that, if you invent it, you own it. That is something that is critical for us as we go forward is to recognize the opportunity—and I know my good friend shares this—that U.S. manufacturing has right now with the competitive nature of the American marketplace.

There are some things we can do. Serving on the Ways and Means Committee here in the House of Representatives, in charge of tax policy, trade policy, and health care, to a large degree, one of the things I think we have a shared commitment to is fixing our broken Tax Code. I don't know of anyone across America that will stand up and take that 70,000 pages of Tax Code and say this is working and this is putting our manufacturers in a competitive position on the world stage.

I hear it time and time again that we need to fix that Tax Code. Because if we do that, that is another piece to advance U.S. manufacturing to that rebirth, that renaissance that I know—and I know my good friend from Ohio shares—can happen and will happen, because this is America where that opportunity can rise again.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, we all know that there are the larger manufacturers who can hire accountants and all the rest to figure it out, but it is the small- and medium-sized tier 3, tier 4 suppliers, you know, that maybe have 50 or 100 people and it is a family business and people aren't making a ton of dough, and to have to deal with the increased complexity of a Tax Code

for the small business, I think it is appropriate for us to try to simplify that and make it a little bit easier for them.

I am glad you mentioned natural gas. Especially in our region, in western New York, western Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio, it is a huge opportunity for us. We should all be beating on the doors of the European companies to try to say, you know, move your manufacturing base into our region because of what the opportunities are going to be into the future.

We have talked about this, and I think we have had a hearing about it through our caucus, is how do we get young people and their parents to recognize and see manufacturing as a real opportunity for them. A lot of people think, parents think: Well, I don't want my kids going into manufacturing. You know, they picture the steel mill in Youngstown where there were 20,000 people coming out dirty, in hard hats with a metal lunch bucket. Now, today, you walk into a manufacturing facility, it is about metrology and it is about precision manufacturing. You could eat off the floor because it is so clean. It is a whole different idea of what manufacturing is.

We have got to figure out how to work with guidance counselors and teachers in the STEM areas about how to get kids engaged in this area earlier, because kids are naturally inclined—I think of my 12-year-old son, Mason. He is always building, creating, trying to use his hands the best he can, or even if he is on the computer, how he is organizing, you know, his troop alignments in some of the war games that he plays. But it is all about constructing something and putting something together, building things, and how do you create that.

These young kids just naturally gravitate toward that. So the more we can get them engaged at a very, very young age about designing and building, the more we are going to unleash the creative potential of that generation to further build out the manufacturing base here in the United States.

□ 1730

Mr. REED. Reclaiming my time, I couldn't have said it better. I know the gentleman has shared stories that I have experienced myself.

When we look at the present state of U.S. manufacturing, these are not the days of smoke-filled rooms where safety wasn't a concern and that it was a dirty, drudgery type of environment that they existed in. This is cutting-edge. This is a safe workplace. This is where safety is paramount and where skills are so necessary.

One of the things that I still see today that we have to fight—and I think the gentleman will share this position with me—is I do a lot of work back in the district going to local high schools, standing in front of juniors and seniors and having conversations with those kids about what they want to be when they get older.

I remember vividly one story. It was the first time when I asked the question, ''What do you want to be when you get older?'' The kids' hands went up. You have got the lawyers. You have got the doctors. You have got the people that want to be like the Al Rokers. They want to be the weatherman or on the broadcast TV, that type of thing.

I said, ''That is all fine and good. That is great.'' Then one young man, who was a senior, said, ''Congressman, I am going to be a welder.'' I went over the Moon with that young man.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You are going to have a job.

Mr. REED. I said, ''Do you understand''—to the rest of his class—''I just left a steel facility in this district where they are going to start welders at $60,000 a year starting pay?''

I said, ''This young man is going to be able to have a career. This is a career. He is going to be able to have a little extra money in his pocket. He is going to be able to maybe get married and raise a family.'' He got it, as a senior. I was so excited.

As I walked out of that room and I was walking and exiting the building, I had one of the school officials, a guidance counselor, say, ''Oh, Congressman, that was great. You made that young man's day. There is no doubt about it. He is going to remember that day for the rest of his life.'' ''But,'' she said, ''we really don't try to promote those types of careers, though.''

I went almost through the roof, Mr. Speaker. I said, ''That is the problem. We have to change that concept, that stigma, that manufacturing historically carries with it.'' I know we are doing it. I know the gentleman from Ohio is working with us, Mr. Speaker, to get that done.

What I see is, when you explain the opportunities to that next generation, when you talk to mothers and fathers and say this is really what is out there, their eyes light up. The burden is lifted from their shoulders to see that their kids are choosing to go into a career that they want to and that they recognize is rewarding, safe, and productive.

I will tell you I am going to continue the efforts to promote U.S. manufacturing because it is not just the manufacturers. As my good friend from Ohio indicated, it is all those supply chains, all those mom-and-pops, those small businesses, that are not only supplying the pieces or the raw material to the manufacturers, but you think about the restaurants, you think about the service folks that are cleaning the facilities, you think about all that it takes to put that together. That is a vibrant, growing economy, Mr. Speaker.

That is what we are promoting here with U.S. manufacturing. That is why I am so glad that October 2 is National Manufacturing Day, so that we, as a nation, could maybe take a moment on Friday and say, ''You know what. We are going to believe in American manufacturing again. We are going to make it here to sell it around the world, make it with our hands, create wealth, create something.'' I know that my friend from Ohio shares that passion.

One of the things that I am so committed to when we talk about this is the STEM, the science, technology, engineering, mathematics need of education policy going forward. That is what our advanced manufacturing bill with JOE KENNEDY was all about.

And working with the Senate in a bicameral and getting it signed into law was to take these public-private partnerships, to take our schools, our universities, our colleges, work with our manufacturers to develop those skills that are necessary to do this manufacturing.

Because, as my good friend who has been in many of the manufacturing facilities, just as I have—when you go and you look at these machines, you look at how these operations and assembly lines occur, you need high education. This is highly skilled stuff. You can just see the pride in the workers when they explain to me how they learned that computer program or they learned how to do that assembly line work. I will tell you, it is inspiring.

I yield to the gentleman if he has got any stories.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Yes. It is not like it is a 4-year degree either. It is something that can be learned in a year or two because you are focused on exactly where you are going to be.

And you talk about a welder maybe starting at $60,000-plus. You think about, if you could do that, start making $60,000 a year at 20—it takes a lot of people, schoolteachers, for example—how long does it take in Corning, New York, or Youngstown, Ohio, to get to $60,000? It is a little while.

So that is money you can begin to save, invest, put in your retirement, whatever, your kids' college. I mean, you have that money not starting at $30,000, but starting at $60,000 or $70,000. And that can go vertical, too.

The more skills you get and if you are in the right position in the right company, you can start making upwards of $100,000 as a welder. That is a lot of money that, if you plan your finances properly, you can have a lot of savings.

To that point as well, I was at Stark State Community College, which is just outside of Canton, a few weeks ago, and there were kids there from Barberton High School and Norton High School, about 10 or 15 of them. They just started a program where these kids in high school were earning credits for the welding certificate.

With this program, those kids can earn 13 credit hours for a 30-hour certificate. So by the time you graduate from high school, if you get in as a junior and you do it your junior and senior year, you will have 13 of 30 credits. So you don't need much longer. You are over a third of the way to your certificate, and you just graduated from high school.

Those are the kind of innovative things I think we need to continue to figure out how to incentivize and create. Part of it is the awareness that we were talking about, that it is okay for your kid to be a welder because of what we have already talked about.

But how do we create incentives to streamline the education process, to get kids on a track so, when they are 18, 19, 20 years old, they have a job and they are not sleeping in our basements?

Mr. REED. Reclaiming my time, yeah, think about this. As we see the cost of colleges and your college degree, kids coming out of school—I came out of law school at the end of the day owing over $110,000. I was raised by a single mother. I am the youngest of 12. I have 8 older sisters and 3 older brothers. To start life after school with a $110,000 mortgage on my head was a very difficult thing.

You talk to these young men and women who are going into these programs—it is not just welding. It is manufacturing. It is HVAC. It is plumbing. It is all of the things that go into U.S. manufacturing—and they are getting through school with these guaranteed programs or these community college programs.

We have got a couple manufacturers in the district that have a certification process system that they put together where they guarantee 100 percent hiring at the end of the certificate program for these kids after—I think it is 24 weeks, if I remember correctly.

They are getting into that job, making that type of salary, and have no debt to pay for that college degree. That is a win-win-win. And they enjoy it. And they enjoy it. I am sure the gentleman knows these stories and has seen those people firsthand.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This has been great. Let's keep it rolling and figure out what we can do moving forward in a bipartisan way like you and Congressman KENNEDY did.

I think that is essential with growing the ecosystem around different kinds of manufacturing in auto and additive and all the rest. We stand ready to work with you on the Democratic side to make that happen.

Mr. REED. From this side of the aisle, on behalf of the people that we represent in western New York, you have that commitment, that I will continue to fight with you, stand with you to fight for U.S. manufacturing. I will not fight against you, but fight together so that we can advance U.S. manufacturing.

It has been a pleasure to call you a friend. It has been a pleasure to be part of this caucus. Our caucus is strong, Mr. Speaker. We have bipartisan representation across the country.

As we started this conversation tonight, in celebrating National Manufacturing Day this Friday, this is not a partisan issue. I go across the entire country, and people always tell me they appreciate the work we do in the caucus, in the Congress, when it comes to U.S. manufacturing.

I again commit to you that we will continue to make this a priority so that we can make it here to sell it around the world again, bring those jobs back to American soil and create these middle class jobs to a large extent so that families, men and women, sons and daughters, can enjoy the American Dream. I appreciate the gentleman for joining us this evening.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Thank you, sir.

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I just want to summarize some of the numbers that are associated with U.S. manufacturing.

Manufacturing supports an estimated 17.6 million jobs in the United States. That is about 1 in 6 private sector jobs. More than 12 million Americans are employed directly in manufacturing. They earn almost $15,000 more annually than the average worker.

This is what U.S. manufacturing is all about. It is about creating wealth. It is about creating opportunity for generations to come.

I will tell you, as we continue our career here in Washington, D.C., I will be a voice for U.S. manufacturing every day. We will break down barriers across the world so that we can have an even playing field, so that we can make those products, build those products here, access those markets where 95 percent of the world's consumers live outside of America's borders so that we have a vibrant economy not only servicing the American demand, but the world demand.

I think, if we get our policies right here, if we get that trade policy done correctly, if we get that tax policy done where we have a Tax Code that is simple, fair, and is competitive for the 21st century—I am very confident, Mr. Speaker, that what we will create is an opportunity not just for U.S. manufacturing, but all American citizens, but, in particular, U.S. manufacturing to prosper and grow for generations to come.

I am excited to be here this evening, Mr. Speaker. I am excited to share with such a good man from the State of Ohio a passion and commitment to a priority issue of U.S. manufacturing.

Mr. Speaker, I just ask all of my fellow American citizens to take a moment this Friday, October 2, and celebrate National Manufacturing Day. Let's come together to have a great opportunity for the future generations of America to come.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CULBERSON (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of illness.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 3614. An act to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, and for other purposes.

SENATE ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to enrolled bills of the Senate of the following titles:

S. 136. An act to amend chapter 21 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that fathers of certain permanently disabled or deceased veterans shall be included with mothers of such veterans as preference eligibles for treatment in the civil service.

S. 139. An act to permanently allow an exclusion under the Supplemental Security Income program and the Medicaid program for compensation provided to individuals who participate in clinical trials for rare diseases or conditions.

S. 565. An act to reduce the operation and maintenance costs associated with the Federal fleet by encouraging the use of remanufactured parts, and for other purposes.

S. 2082. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain expiring provisions of law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on September 29, 2015, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill:

H.R. 2051. To amend the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to extend the livestock mandatory price reporting requirements, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 42 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, October 1, 2015, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

2966. A letter from the Acting Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's interim rule — Rural Broadband Access Loans and Loan Guarantees (RIN: 0572-AC34) received September 29, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Agriculture.

2967. A letter from the Comptroller, Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter reporting a violation of the Antideficiency Act, Navy case number 14-02, as required by 31 U.S.C. 1351; to the Committee on Appropriations.

2968. A letter from the Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, OUSD(AT&L), Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Electronic Copies of Contractual Documents (DFARS Case 2012-D056) [Docket No.: DARS 2015-0009] (RIN: 0750-AI29) received September 28, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Armed Services.

2969. A letter from the Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, OSUD(AT&L), Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Contract Debts-Conform to FAR Section Designations (DFARS Case 2015-D029) [Docket No.: DARS 2015-0047] (RIN: 0750-AI70) received September 28, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Armed Services.

2970. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter authorizing Rear Admiral John N. Christenson, United States Navy, to wear the insignia of the grade of vice admiral, in accordance with 10 U.S.C. 777a; to the Committee on Armed Services.

2971. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Patricia D. Horoho, United States Army, and her advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list in accordance with 10 U.S.C. 777a; to the Committee on Armed Services.

2972. A letter from the Comptroller, Under Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's semiannual Defense Cooperation Account report, period ending March 31, 2015, and semiannual Coalition Contributions: Personal Property report period ending March 31, 2015, as required by 10 U.S.C. 2608; to the Committee on Armed Services.

2973. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Suspension of Community Eligibility (Providence County, RI, et al.) [Docket ID: FEMA-2015-0001] [Internal Agency Docket No.: FEMA-8399] received September 29, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Financial Services.

2974. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a Memorandum of Justification for the use of Secs. 506(A)(1) and 552 (C)(2) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide commodities and services for immediate assistance to Ukraine; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

2975. A letter from the Director, International Cooperation, Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Office of the Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting Transmittal No. 03-15, informing of an intent to sign the Memorandum of Understanding Among the Department of National Defence of Canada, the Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Department of Defense of the United States of America for Standard Missile In-Service Support, pursuant to Sec. 27(f) of the Arms Export Control Act and Executive Order 13637; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

2976. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's Waiver and Certification of Statutory Provisions of Sec. 1003 of Pub. L. 100-204 regarding the Palestine Liberation Organization Office; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

2977. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the situation in or in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo that was declared in Executive Order 13413 of October 27, 2006, as required by Sec. 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and Sec. 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

2978. A letter from the Assistant Director for Regulatory Affairs, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Cuban Assets Control Regulations received September 29, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

2979. A letter from the Chief Administrative Officer, transmitting Statement Of Disbursements For The Period July 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015, pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 104a; Public Law 88-454; (H. Doc. No. 114—61); to the Committee on House Administration and ordered to be printed.

2980. A letter from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final specifications — Pacific Island Fisheries; 2015 Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures [Docket No.: 141009847-5746-02] (RIN: 0648-XD558) received September 29, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

2981. A letter from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary final rule — Revisions to Framework Adjustment 53 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan and Sector Annual Catch Entitlements; Updated Annual Catch Limits for Sectors and the Common Pool for Fishing Year 2015 [Docket No.: 150623545-5545-01] (RIN: 0648-XE015) received September 29, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

2982. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Dusky Rockfish in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No.: 140918791-4999-02] (RIN: 0648-XE169) received September 29, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

2983. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Several Groundfish Species in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No.: 141021887-5172-02] (RIN: 0648-XE144) received September 29, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

2984. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a letter from the Secretary of the Treasury providing an update regarding the Treasury's ability to continue to finance the government and the extraordinary measures taken to avoid default; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

2985. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's report entitled ''Report to Congress: Evaluations of Hospitals' Ambulance Data on Medicare Cost Reports and Feasibility of Obtaining Cost Data from All Ambulance Providers and Suppliers'', in accordance to Sec. 604(d)(3)(A) of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012; jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 1880. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to take into trust 4 parcels of Federal land for the benefit of certain Indian Pueblos in the State of New Mexico (Rept. 114–271). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. COLE: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 448. Resolution providing for consideration of the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 79) directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make corrections in the enrollment of H.R. 719, and providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 719) to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes (Rept. 114–272). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. BYRNE: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 449. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3457) to prohibit the lifting of sanctions on Iran until the Government of Iran pays the judgments against it for acts of terrorism, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1735) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; and providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules (Rept. 114–273). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 2168. A bill to make the current Dungeness crab fishery management regime permanent and for other purposes (Rept. 114–274). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 1541. A bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to make Hispanic-serving institutions eligible for technical and financial assistance for the establishment of preservation training and degree programs; with an amendment (Rept. 114–275). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. SHUSTER (for himself, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. DENHAM, and Mr. CAPUANO):

H.R. 3651. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to provide for the extension of certain deadlines related to positive train

control, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. BONAMICI (for herself, Ms. LEE, and Ms. DEGETTE):

H.R. 3652. A bill to expand programs with respect to women's health; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. POE of Texas (for himself and Ms. ESTY):

H.R. 3653. A bill to authorize funding for, and increase accessibility to, the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, to facilitate data sharing between such system and the National Crime Information Center database of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to provide incentive grants to help facilitate reporting to such systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. POE of Texas (for himself, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. ROYCE):

H.R. 3654. A bill to require a report on United States strategy to combat terrorist use of social media, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and Intelligence (Permanent Select), for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. WESTMORELAND (for himself, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. ZINKE, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. BABIN, and Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia):

H.R. 3655. A bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 with respect to Federal Government liability and to require reimbursement to the Judgement Fund for certain claims, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. DEGETTE (for herself and Mr. TAKAI):

H.R. 3656. A bill to prohibit the sale or distribution of tobacco products to individuals under the age of 21; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. DEUTCH:

H.R. 3657. A bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to require that supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits be calculated with reference to the cost of the low-cost food plan as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. ENGEL (for himself and Mr. BURGESS):

H.R. 3658. A bill to provide grants to better understand and reduce gestational diabetes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GUTIÉRREZ (for himself and Ms. JUDY CHU of California):

H.R. 3659. A bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to remove citizenship and immigration barriers to access the Exchanges under such Act; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. ADAMS (for herself, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. NORTON, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. NADLER, and Mr. MCGOVERN):

H. Con. Res. 80. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress on Hunger in our Communities; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Agriculture, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. FINCHER:

H. Res. 450. A resolution providing for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 597) to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules.

By Mr. BUCHANAN (for himself and Mr. HUNTER):

H. Res. 451. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Sergeant Charles Martland, a decorated member of the Special Forces, should be reinstated in the United States Army; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. ASHFORD:

H. Res. 452. A resolution amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to require the Clerk of the House to conduct the election of the Speaker of the House by secret ballot; to the Committee on Rules.

By Ms. PLASKETT (for herself, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. ENGEL, and Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California):

H. Res. 453. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Government should provide additional relief and assistance to the island of Dominica; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. SHUSTER:

H.R. 3651.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically Clause 3 (related to regulation of Commerce among the several States).

By Ms. BONAMICI:

H.R. 3652.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. POE of Texas:

H.R. 3653.

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

Article 1 Section 8

By Mr. POE of Texas:

H.R. 3654.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. WESTMORELAND:

H.R. 3655.

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

Article I, Section 8, of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. DEGETTE:

H.R. 3656.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. DEUTCH:

H.R. 3657.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 18 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. ENGEL:

H.R. 3658.

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

Article 1, Section 1 of the Constitution.

By Mr. GUTIÉRREZ:

H.R. 3659.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

Article I, Section 8, Clause 4

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 167: Ms. STEFANIK, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. POCAN, and Mr. DOLD.

H.R. 213: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 241: Mr. BURGESS.

H.R. 343: Mrs. COMSTOCK.

H.R. 546: Mr. ENGEL.

H.R. 649: Mr. GROTHMAN.

H.R. 662: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi and Mr. RANGEL.

H.R. 699: Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. LAMBORN, and Mr. HARPER.

H.R. 814: Mr. CLAWSON of Florida and Mr. FINCHER.

H.R. 840: Mr. PETERS.

H.R. 868: Mr. HARRIS.

H.R. 879: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.

H.R. 921: Mr. HURD of Texas and Mr. CRENSHAW.

H.R. 969: Mr. RICHMOND and Mr. LAMALFA.

H.R. 997: Mr. WEBER of Texas.

H.R. 1062: Mr. JORDAN.

H.R. 1089: Mr. ROKITA.

H.R. 1124: Mr. BEYER.

H.R. 1197: Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.

H.R. 1221: Mrs. WALORSKI and Mr. GARAMENDI.

H.R. 1232: Ms. BASS.

H.R. 1258: Mr. DELANEY.

H.R. 1266: Mr. JOLLY and Mr. MESSER.

H.R. 1272: Mr. O'ROURKE.

H.R. 1399: Ms. MATSUI and Mr. JOYCE.

H.R. 1401: Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 1441: Mr. KEATING.

H.R. 1447: Mr. CUELLAR.

H.R. 1475: Mr. TAKANO, Mr. HECK of Nevada, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, and Mr. KILMER.

H.R. 1550: Mr. MULVANEY and Mr. POLIQUIN.

H.R. 1571: Mr. HUFFMAN and Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.

H.R. 1600: Mr. LYNCH and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois.

H.R. 1603: Mr. MOULTON, Mr. BYRNE, and Mr. HECK of Nevada.

H.R. 1610: Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, and Mr. UPTON.

H.R. 1644: Mr. JOYCE and Mr. JORDAN.

H.R. 1666: Mr. YOHO.

H.R. 1671: Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. HANNA, Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. BUCK, Mr. HUELSKAMP, and Mrs. BLACK.

H.R. 1683: Mr. LARSEN of Washington.

H.R. 1716: Mr. BURGESS.

H.R. 1752: Mrs. WALORSKI.

H.R. 1786: Ms. TITUS and Mr. PETERS.

H.R. 1877: Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H.R. 1948: Ms. JUDY CHU of California.

H.R. 2016: Ms. GABBARD.

H.R. 2025: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 2050: Mr. SMITH of Washington.

H.R. 2090: Mr. GARAMENDI.

H.R. 2156: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.

H.R. 2241: Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. STIVERS, and Mr. TED LIEU of California.

H.R. 2254: Mr. KILMER and Mr. CONNOLLY.
H.R. 2257: Mr. PETERS.
H.R. 2290: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.
H.R. 2408: Mr. HUFFMAN and Ms. TITUS.
H.R. 2441: Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas.
H.R. 2463: Mr. PETERS.
H.R. 2494: Mr. CONNOLLY, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. MARINO, and Mr. HASTINGS.
H.R. 2515: Ms. JUDY CHU of California.
H.R. 2521: Mr. HUFFMAN.
H.R. 2567: Mr. JORDAN.
H.R. 2597: Mr. ASHFORD.
H.R. 2602: Mr. MOULTON.
H.R. 2622: Mr. TAKANO and Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.
H.R. 2624: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 2646: Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. SCALISE, and Mr. ISRAEL.
H.R. 2669: Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 2671: Mr. BARR.
H.R. 2672: Mr. BARR.
H.R. 2673: Mr. BARR.
H.R. 2674: Mr. BARR.
H.R. 2698: Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina and Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.
H.R. 2726: Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 2739: Mr. TROTT and Mr. RANGEL.
H.R. 2759: Mr. WALZ, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, and Ms. MATSUI.
H.R. 2855: Mr. KILMER.
H.R. 2858: Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, and Mr. POLIS.
H.R. 2866: Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. CARNEY, and Mr. GALLEGO.
H.R. 2896: Mr. WALBERG, Mr. BUCHANAN, and Mr. ROSS.
H.R. 2903: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California.
H.R. 2944: Ms. ESTY, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. CRENSHAW, and Mr. SMITH of Washington.
H.R. 3016: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 3094: Ms. BORDALLO and Mr. COLLINS of Georgia.
H.R. 3119: Mr. GIBBS and Mr. TONKO.
H.R. 3129: Mr. ROUZER.
H.R. 3137: Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 3150: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.
H.R. 3151: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.
H.R. 3177: Mr. DOLD.
H.R. 3180: Mr. KATKO.
H.R. 3183: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri.
H.R. 3225: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.
H.R. 3268: Mr. WALBERG, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. POMPEO, Ms. GABBARD, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. AGUILAR, and Ms. EDWARDS.
H.R. 3309: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.
H.R. 3381: Mr. FARENTHOLD and Mr. LANGEVIN.
H.R. 3412: Mr. POCAN and Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H.R. 3423: Mr. JOLLY.
H.R. 3429: Mr. BRADY of Texas.
H.R. 3457: Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, and Mr. POSEY.
H.R. 3473: Mr. ROTHFUS.
H.R. 3475: Mr. CONYERS, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. CLAY, Ms. ADAMS, Ms. FUDGE, and Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
H.R. 3515: Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. HUELSKAMP, and Mr. ROUZER.
H.R. 3516: Mr. MCCAUL and Mr. WEBER of Texas.
H.R. 3518: Mr. POLIS.
H.R. 3523: Mr. RANGEL.
H.R. 3532: Mr. ROUZER, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, and Mr. CRAMER.
H.R. 3542: Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. NORTON, Ms. BROWN of Florida, and Mr. ELLISON.
H.R. 3555: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
H.R. 3573: Mr. NEWHOUSE.
H.R. 3579: Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 3590: Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER.
H.R. 3611: Mr. CRENSHAW, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, and Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.
H.R. 3635: Mr. FORBES.
H.R. 3641: Mr. CARSON of Indiana and Ms. LEE.
H.J. Res. 51: Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois.
H. Con. Res. 65: Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. Michael F. Doyle of Pennsylvania, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. MCNERNEY, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. TSONGAS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, and Mr. JEFFRIES.
H. Con. Res. 75: Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. DOLD, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, and Mr. FORBES.
H. Res. 394: Mr. PETERS and Ms. BASS.
H. Res. 416: Mr. RIGELL, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, and Mr. KIND.
H. Res. 428: Mr. GRIJALVA and Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H. Res. 438: Miss RICE of New York and Mr. TAKANO.
H. Res. 443: Mr. HONDA and Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H. Res. 445: Ms. MATSUI.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2015 No. 142

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.

Lord, through all the generations, You have been our refuge. We live our lives sheltered by Your love.

Enable our Senators to find hope in the knowledge that You are indeed in such control of our world that no weapon formed against us will prosper. Deliver our lawmakers from judgmental attitudes that prompt them to think about others in any way contrary to Your love.

Lord, transform us all by the power of Your Grace. We praise You and give You thanks because nothing can separate us from Your love.

We pray in Your compassionate 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.

TRIBUTE TO ED WHITFIELD

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday Representative ED WHITFIELD announced that he will retire at the end of this term. ED has served the First District of Kentucky for more than 20 years. He will be missed in the Capitol when he retires. It is clear that his leadership will be missed in Kentucky too. Our troops at Fort Campbell will miss it. The workers at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant will miss it. Kentucky's countless coal families—hard-working Kentuckians he never failed to stand up for—will certainly miss it as well.

ED was rightly considered a western Kentucky trailblazer. He became the first Republican elected to represent that district in 1994. Our party, the Republican Party, never held that district going back to the Civil War. It was an enormous breakthrough. ED has worked hard and delivered for the Commonwealth in the two decades since. He will leave behind a record of service and accomplishment.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the Senate will complete its work on the continuing resolution today.

We remember watching our Democratic colleagues swerve from crisis to crisis when they ran the Senate. Perhaps that is just all Democrats have known, but it is not right for them to again force America into another short-term funding situation such as this.

We are working to change the culture around here. Our determination remains to get the Senate back to normal, with a functional appropriations process. That is why for the first time in 6 years the Senate actually passed a budget. That is why for the first time in 6 years the Senate actually passed through committee the dozen appropriations bills necessary to properly fund the government.

Now that the CR appears to be on track, we can turn back to the last step in the Senate's normal appropriations process; that is, getting the funding bills passed on the floor. Democrats have blocked them all this year as part of some arbitrary strategy to force our Nation to the brink. They certainly succeeded in doing that, but I think the American people are ready for our colleagues to finally get serious and get back to work. Americans are ready to see Democrats start supporting, not blocking, the very bipartisan funding legislation Democrats previously voted for and bragged about in press releases. Our colleagues will have that opportunity this week when we turn back to the regular appropriations process.

It is true that moving forward will require Democrats to definitively turn the page on years of bad habits and dysfunction, but it is the right thing to do for our country. We will see if they are ready to do so later this week.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

GRIDLOCK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, my friend the Republican leader is reciting facts that are not real. Everyone knows what has happened in this body and in the House of Representatives the last few years—gridlock. Republicans in the House cannot agree with Republicans in the Senate, and it appears Republicans in the Senate cannot agree among themselves. So for my friend to talk about how great things are going is not reality.

We need to start working together, not apart. And, working with Republicans, we find it is very difficult to develop any kind of partnerships, as we always did in the past until Republican leaders took over the Congress.

I would hope my friends the Republicans would understand we have to start doing things to help the country. We are in the situation we are in. It is September 30. The country will be out of money in just a few hours. Why do we wait until the last minute and then only provide enough money to get us to the first part of December?

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

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We have received word that the House Speaker is going to resign. Why? He is resigning because everyone knows he cannot deal with the people he has to deal with in the House. He has tried very hard, and it hasn't worked.

I would hope my friend the Republican leader would start talking reality, not come in and boast about how great the country is doing under Republican leadership. We have gotten nothing done under the Republican leadership.

I am reminded of what Albert Einstein said when he defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. That is what we have been doing here. We have votes on everything, everyone knowing what the results are going to be. The latest episode was—what a waste of our time—we had a vote here to defund Planned Parenthood. It didn't even get a majority of the Republicans—well, it got a majority of the Republicans; it certainly didn't get a majority of the Senate. It didn't get a majority of the Senate and certainly didn't get 60 votes, which they were trying to do—revoting on things, always knowing the results are going to be the same. It appears that Albert Einstein had a few organizations in mind when he gave this definition of ''insanity,'' and one of them, as he looked forward, would be this Republican Senate we have.

TRIBUTE TO DR. JAMES BILLINGTON

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in the original Hall of Representatives, which is now called National Statuary Hall, there is a beautiful clock that stands over the Chamber's doorway. The clock and its adjoining sculpture depict Clio, the Greek muse of history, watching over the House of Representatives. The meaning of the clock and statue are clear: History will bear witness to all we do in Congress.

For the last 28 years—almost three decades—James Billington has served as the Librarian of Congress. He has been our Clio, ensuring that the annals of American history are complete and available to everyone.

Dr. Billington came to the Library of Congress in 1987. What a remarkable résumé—valedictorian at Princeton University, a Rhodes Scholar, and he earned his doctorate from Oxford College. Following his graduation from Oxford, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. After his service in the Army, he taught history—first at Harvard and then at Princeton—for 16 years. During that time Dr. Billington became one of the foremost scholars of Russia.

I had the good fortune of being able to travel with Dr. Billington to the Soviet Union. It was like having an encyclopedia with you. It was wonderful to travel to this country with which we had been involved in a Cold War for so many years and to have a scholar with us to give us insight everyplace we went and on everybody we talked to. He has written a number of important scholarly works on Russian history, culture, and politics.

In 1973 James Billington came to Washington, DC, to lead the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, a prestigious organization. As director, he founded the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies. He served as their director for 14 years before coming over here to become the director of the Library of Congress.

Dr. Billington has done extraordinary work during his tenure at the Library of Congress. He has brought the Library into the 21st century. Dr. Billington doubled the size of the Library's analog collections from 85 million to 160 million. He oversaw the creation of the Library of Congress's online portal, making hundreds of millions of documents, books, and material available to the American public.

Using his relationship with Russian scholars, Dr. Billington founded the Open World Leadership Forum. This important forum creates dialogue and cultural exchanges between U.S. and Russian leaders. James Billington has accompanied 10 congressional delegations to Russia. I was fortunate to be on one of them, as I just said. In June 1988, he accompanied the President and Mrs. Reagan to the Soviet summit in Moscow, and I am confident President Reagan and his staff depended on James Billington's outstanding mind.

Dr. Billington helped establish the congressionally mandated Veterans History Project, which collects and preserves first-person accounts from U.S. veterans dating back to World War I. Dr. Billington helped create the National Book Festival, which brings thousands of authors and readers to the National Mall every year.

In every way imaginable, Dr. James Billington has made the Library of Congress and, by extension, the United States better—a better library, a better country. As he embarks on a well-deserved retirement after 28 years of exemplary service, I wish him the very best. I have no doubt Dr. Billington will enjoy time with his wife Marjorie—a lovely woman I have come to know and admire greatly—and their 4 children and 12 grandchildren.

James Billington, thank you for a job well done. We will all miss you.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have never been a sentimental person—I have never tried to be one—but today I can't help but think back to a time when keeping the government open and funded wasn't a last-minute exercise. Looking at the clock now, we are almost 14 hours away from what could have been another Republican shutdown of the Federal Government. This kind of brinkmanship is totally unnecessary. Although we will likely avert a shutdown tonight, Republicans brought us dangerously close to a shutdown.

This continuing resolution only funds our government through December 11, as I said earlier. That means that within the coming weeks, we need to negotiate with Republicans to keep our government open.

Yesterday Senator MCCONNELL finally took Democrats up on our call to begin budget negotiations. I welcome that, and I welcome Senator MCCONNELL to the table. We should have started this process months ago, but better late than never, so I am pleased he has come around.

Lifting the sequester has been one of my top priorities for years, and I am hopeful that we can finally achieve this key Democratic goal. Just take what it has done in the past—just take one entity. The National Institutes of Health lost almost $2 billion and they have never gotten it back. It has been devastating to the most prestigious, important medical research facility in the world. That is what sequestration did.

This time around, we have to do better than just keeping the Federal Government operating by a continuing resolution. We have to stop devastating sequester cuts from hitting our military and our middle class. Even the Republican leader agrees, it appears, because a week or 10 days ago he said: ''We are inevitably going to end up in negotiations that will crack the Budget Control Act once again.'' And I say hallelujah.

Here we are, ready to negotiate months before the December 11 deadline. After all, that was the original intent of sequestration—to force Democrats and Republicans to the negotiating table. That should be easy to do. We hate sequestration, and I know there are a significant number of Republicans who don't like it. I have heard Senator GRAHAM, and I have heard Senator MCCAIN give speeches in committees and publicly about how terrible it is. So let's get rid of it for the good of the country. This is a so-called no-brainer.

Let's work together—not in December—to repeal the sequester caps, but let's work now to repeal the caps and build a long-term, bipartisan funding bill. Then we can turn our attention to the other matters that deserve our immediate attention, such as the debt ceiling.

We can't put off the debt ceiling much longer. I don't know the exact date when we are going to run out of money, but I am sure it is going to be sometime before Thanksgiving. We all know that in a matter of weeks, unless we act, the United States will lose its ability to pay its bills. And if you think shutting the government down is bad, which I do, that pales in comparison to the government of the United States defaulting on all of our debts. The consequences would be dire and the fallout would be felt around the world.

We also need to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank. It is closed. Republicans made a terrible mistake by allowing the Bank's charter to expire, jeopardizing hundreds of thousands of American jobs. Congress must also craft a long-term highway bill to ensure the highway trust fund will be solvent for years to come.

We have a lot to do in the coming weeks and months, and we certainly don't have time for any more manufactured crises. So I sincerely hope the Republican leadership will instead choose to do what is right to meet our country's obligations.

Would the Chair tell us what we are going to do the rest of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

TSA OFFICE OF INSPECTION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 719, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 719, an act to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with McConnell (for Cochran) amendment No. 2689, making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016.

McConnell amendment No. 2690 (to amendment No. 2689), to change the enactment date.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. will be equally divided between the two managers or their designees.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to speak to the vote we are about to cast this morning at 10 o'clock. This is a vote to basically extend the authority and budget of the Federal Government until December 11. This September 30 is the end of our fiscal year, and at least legally, the authority to continue the government depends on budget and appropriations bills being passed by the House and Senate. That has not happened. So what we are doing is a continuing resolution. It basically extends last year's budget until December 11.

Now, that will keep the lights on at Federal agencies, and it will avoid the catastrophic outcome of a government shutdown, but it is not good policy. We have done it on our side—on the Democratic side—and now the Republicans, in control of the Congress, are doing it on their side. It buys time to reach some sort of agreement that is longer lasting and more thoughtful.

We know the notion of a government shutdown is a disaster, but it is not a unanimous opinion in the Senate or in the House of Representatives. There are actually Members of the Senate and the House who are applauding the possibility of a government shutdown. Some of them were the same people who inspired the shutdown several years ago—a shutdown which cost us 800,000 jobs in America because of the uncertainty created by it and which created real hardship for people around our country. A shutdown, if it happened again in this context, would be even more serious in terms of its impact on the American economy.

So we have a chance. And I would just say to those who follow this debate—and there is no reason why people would follow the minutia—that in June of this year we asked on the Democratic side for the Republican leader to sit down and avoid this actual confrontation we are having today. We asked Senator MCCONNELL and Speaker BOEHNER to negotiate with the President a new budget—a budget that is realistic and will not harm innocent people.

I am troubled by the notion that Republicans have that we should find war funds to continue funding the Department of Defense and ignore the nondefense parts of the budget. Senator REID made reference to one. National Institutes of Health medical research, which is critical to America and its future, is now facing the uncertainty of no budget, and that is unfair.

Last night we had a meeting with some of the major medical researchers in the United States, and they said it is hard to convince the next generation of researchers that we as a nation are seriously committed, and it is because of this uncertainty in budgeting. It is a political problem, and one that should be solved by politicians, namely, Members of the House and Senate working with the President.

So we will likely vote—and I certainly will vote in the next few minutes—to extend the operations of the government until December 11. But if it is only for more speechifying and breast-beating by those who want to shut down the government to prove some political point, I have to say they are seriously mistaken. It is the wrong thing for America to shut down the government. It is the wrong thing for job creation to shut down the government. It is the wrong thing for our future, when it comes to medical research, education, and critical programs, to shut down the government. Those who are preaching that gospel should be reminded that 3 out of 4 Americans think they are not very thoughtful—I will clean up my words a little bit—not very thoughtful in using this approach.

So I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this continuing resolution but really to light a fire under the leadership in the Democratic and Republican precincts and to come together in the House and Senate in the next few weeks of this continuing resolution. Let's make sure we have a budget and one that is befitting a great nation.

I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, today we are voting on a clean, short-term continuous funding resolution, CR. Passing this legislation means no government shutdown. There may be some drama, but we intend to keep the government open and avoid shutdown, slamdown politics.

Shutdowns are bad for everyone. Shutdowns create uncertainty which slows economic growth, hurts the health and well-being of the entire Nation, and causes the loss of private sector jobs. Shutdowns make it impossible for Federal agencies to meet missions that serve the American people.

Let's show the American people we can work across the aisle and across the dome to get the job done.

Avoiding a shutdown is just the first step. Next, we need a budget deal to cancel sequester. Right now, our budget caps spending, but doesn't cap tax breaks for billionaires and corporations that send jobs overseas.

Americans are angry. They feel like the rules are rigged against them and that those who write the rules don't care.

Let's show them this Congress cares. The people deserve a government on their side.

That is why I am fighting to make sure they have a government that works as hard as they do. After we pass the bill to fund the government, we can move on to a new budget deal that cancels sequester, raising the caps equally for defense and nondefense domestic spending.

The budget deal will give us a framework for an omnibus funding bill that invests in America, protecting national security, rebuilding our physical infrastructure, creating jobs for today and jobs for tomorrow, and meeting our compelling human needs. The Appropriations Committee needs 30 days to get the job done after a new budget deal is passed.

I challenge leadership to work with Speaker BOEHNER to enact a new topline budget deal by the end of October. We can't let October brinksmanship become a Christmas crisis.

It is clear we need to cancel sequester. And it is clear that the 2013 shutdown was a disaster for everyone—not to be repeated.

This bill provides the resources to keep our government open so agencies can continue to serve the American people, keeping us safe, healthy, educated, moving, and thriving.

The bottom line is we need a new topline. With a new budget deal we get a new topline to invest in America's safety and future.

But we need to pass this short-term CR to get to a deal and not to another shutdown.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 2690 WITHDRAWN

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw amendment No. 2690.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

VOTE ON MOTION TO CONCUR

The question occurs on agreeing to the motion to concur with amendment No. 2689 in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 719.

The yeas and nays have been ordered.

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 South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

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

The result was announced—yeas 78, nays 20, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 272 Leg.]

YEAS—78

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

NAYS—20

Blunt	Heller	Sasse
Boozman	Inhofe	Scott
Burr	Lankford	Sessions
Coats	Lee	Shelby
Cotton	Moran	Toomey
Crapo	Paul	Vitter
Cruz	Risch	

NOT VOTING—2

Graham	Rubio

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 98, H.R. 2029.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 98, H.R. 2029, a bill making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

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

The 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 proceed to Calendar No. 98, H.R. 2029, an act making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, Orrin G. Hatch, Thom Tillis, Tom Cotton, James Lankford, Shelley Moore Capito, Deb Fischer, Thad Cochran, John Barrasso, John Cornyn, Richard C. Shelby, Cory Gardner, Richard Burr, Jerry Moran, Jeff Flake, Steve Daines.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call for this cloture motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this morning I said the American people are ready to see Democrats start supporting, not blocking, the very bipartisan funding legislation they previously voted for and actually bragged about. I also said we would give our colleagues a chance to do so this week. So I have just set up a vote that will give them that opportunity.

The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs bill is one of the 12 pieces of appropriations legislation we must pass to properly fund our government. It is a bipartisan bill that does a lot of important things for our country, but here is the headline: It supports our veterans.

This bipartisan bill passed committee with support from both Democrats and Republicans. Democrats have said nice things about it in press releases that were sent out to their various States. Now it is time to cooperate across the aisle to finally pass it and support our veterans.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

PTC EXTENSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I rise on a subject of urgency and importance to our Nation's economy. The looming deadline for implementing a new railroad safety technology known as positive train control, or PTC, could soon wreak havoc on our Nation's transportation system. This havoc would not just affect the millions of Americans who board commuter trains every day but also Americans who depend on critical freight rail deliveries. These services could be interrupted because—despite years of warning—implementation of PTC has not kept pace with an overly ambitious schedule set by Congress.

Let me explain how we got here. Seven years ago, following a deadly Metrolink passenger train collision in California caused by an engineer who was texting and failed to react to track signals, this body passed legislation mandating the installation of PTC, an innovative safety technology on over 60,000 miles of rail lines. Though a meaningful and important safety upgrade, PTC is not a panacea. It will not make a difference when rail tracks are damaged or in situations when people trespass on tracks or at highway rail crossings where the most accidents occur, but PTC can and will have an impact in preventing three specific accident scenarios; first, the technology will prevent train-on-train collisions when both trains and the track they are traveling on have fully functioning PTC systems installed; second, the system will prevent accidents or derailments caused by excessive train speeds like the deadly Amtrak derailment in Philadelphia earlier this year; and, third, the technology will help protect individuals working on railroad tracks from being hit by a train accidently routed onto the wrong track.

PTC systems operate by relying on ground-based computer systems, equipment installed on train locomotives, satellites and wireless radio spectrum-based communications coming from a network of thousands of towers being built along rail tracks. A PTC system can help certain trains automatically communicate with one another and sense if operator instructions—namely speed—are appropriate for where the train is operating. Because it isn't effective unless all trains are linked together on a network, PTC will be required on all passenger and freight trains that travel on rail tracks that carry passengers or certain hazardous materials regardless of what an individual train might be hauling.

Our colleague, the senior Senator from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, championed the legislative provision that put this requirement in place back in 2008. The legislative mandate was forward-looking and set an aggressive schedule for fully implementing the technology.

Seven years later, both freight and commuter railroads have made substantial progress in implementing positive train control, but there have been some unexpected delays in implementing the technology.

The Federal Communications Commission halted the construction of necessary communications towers for over a year in 2013 over concerns about historic preservation and potential impacts on tribal lands. There have also been delays in regulatory approvals, problems in obtaining necessary communications spectrum, and many difficulties that come with building a new technology.

The complexity of a positive train control system falls somewhere in between a new version of computer operating software and driverless cars. Any of us who have had a just-released version of software installed on our computer know about bugs that have to be worked out, and like driverless cars, when lives are at stake, you have to get the technology right before relying on a system as advanced as PTC.

Over $5.5 billion in private funding has already been spent on implementing PTC. The debate on the need, costs, and benefits is long over. When this body voted in 2008 to mandate full and certified implementation of PTC by December 31, 2015, there were concerns that the timeline was too aggressive. Those concerns have steadily grown. Both the independent Government Accountability Office and the Federal Railroad Administration, which regulates railroad safety, have warned for years that the deadline set by Congress was unrealistic.

Some saw great value in keeping this overly aggressive deadline in place. It was a way of maintaining pressure on freight and commuter railroads to move aggressively. At the end of the day, the thinking went that if railroads did not meet the deadline, they would be subject to financial fines, and these penalties would motivate to quickly finish work on PTC. If the pressure didn't work, these individuals assumed things could go on much as if the law hadn't been put in place at all, and freight railroads could just continue to haul critical shipments of products like chlorine and fertilizer, which would pose greater public hazard if hauled on highways.

There was even a naive belief that commuter railroads run by State and local governments could get exempted from fines mandated under the law. Some believed commuter railroads could continue to move passengers instead of adding to the congestion and safety risks on our Nation's roads, but over the past month, these myths have been put to rest as the real consequences of failing to meet the legal deadline for positive train control implementation have come into focus.

Both freight and commuter railroads have informed Congress, regulators, and even stockholders that an inability to comply with the PTC mandate could halt some freight and passenger services by January 1, 2016. In fact, the effects would be felt weeks earlier when it comes to the shipment of hazardous materials such as anhydrous ammonia, a critical fertilizer for our Nation's crops, because it takes time to move tank car traffic off the rail network.

The Obama administration—in testimony before the commerce committee this month—noted that the law leaves no possibility of exempting publicly owned commuter railroads that do not meet the PTC deadline from fines, but the threat of Federal fines is only one worry for railroads among other much larger consequences of missing the PTC deadline. Remember, the vast majority of passenger rail service relies on track owned by freight railroads. To run commuter rail service on freight lines in compliance with the PTC mandate, not only must commuter rail trains and tracks be fully equipped but all freight tracks and freight trains that run on them must also be properly equipped.

There are approximately 40 railroads, mostly commuter railroads in the United States, that will be affected by the December 31, 2015, deadline for certified implementation of positive train control. I asked them to tell us about their situations in dealing with the upcoming mandate.

I will tell you what we heard. Not one railroad said they have met the legal obligation for implementing PTC. I will repeat that. Not one railroad, commuter or freight, told us that after 7 years of work, and with 3 months to go before the legal deadline for full implementation of positive train control, that they have been certified by the Federal Railroad Administration as compliant with the requirement.

We had one railroad, Metrolink in California, that would go so far as to express that they were ''cautiously optimistic'' that they could meet the end-of-the year deadline for implementing PTC, but neither Metrolink nor any other railroad advised us against the legal deadline for positive train control. Some commuter railroads bluntly told us they saw no option for continuing passenger service after December 31 without action by Congress to extend the deadline.

Last week, the board of directors of Metra in Chicago, with over 70 million riders annually, voted in favor of a resolution to shut down on January 1, 2016, if the deadline is not extended.

Our Nation does not have the transit bus capacity to move these displaced riders. This will dramatically increase the number of people who are stuck in traffic each day and decrease the safety of our transportation system.

Sarah Feinberg, the Acting Administrator for the Federal Railroad Administration, testified last week that she had not recently spoken to a railroad that planned to continue operating on January 1, 2016.

Why are railroads so concerned about running over the legal deadline for PTC? Railroads point out that, regardless of fines, their insurance would not cover an incident if the railroad had knowingly violated a safety law regulation like operating in noncompliance with the PTC mandate. They also point out that Federal law provides individual workers with the right to refuse instructions that are counter to Federal safety laws or regulations. In effect, railroad workers across the country would have an individual right, and protection from consequence, to refuse to participate in the operation of trains in noncompliance with the PTC mandate.

Different railroads have different concerns. Freight railroads have expressed some varying ideas about how they interpret the law. But, remember, railroads are interconnected. Let me explain a common view we have heard and how it will affect the Nation's interconnected rail system and economy more broadly.

The PTC mandate applies only to routes where there is passenger travel or shipment of certain hazardous materials, such as chlorine used for water reservoir purification. Under normal circumstances, freight railroads are bound by something called the common carrier requirement. This means that freight railroads can't refuse to haul a specific cargo such as chlorine simply because it is unprofitable or inconvenient, but railroads argue that this common carrier requirement cannot be reasonably interpreted as requiring them to haul cargo on tracks if doing so would violate Federal law.

Dan Elliott, the Chairman of the Federal Surface Transportation Board, which regulates railroad business practices, added weight to these concerns. In a letter to me this month about the situation, Mr. Elliott stated to me that the ''common carrier obligation is not absolute.'' He informed us that he ''cannot predict'' how regulators would rule on specific railroad decisions to exclude cargo or passenger traffic in order to comply with the PTC mandate.

So how do we avert this safety and economic disaster? The independent experts at the Government Accountability Office who studied this issue and released a report told us that the railroads would need an additional 1 to 5 years to meet the requirements of the implementation. They documented the immensely complex technological challenges associated with new PTC components. This report and the letters I received from both railroads and regulators about the positive train control deadline are posted on the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee Web site: commerce.senate.gov/ptc.

The Senate acted in July by passing a provision on the multiyear highway reauthorization bill that would extend the deadline on a case-by-case basis. The Senate's bill, which passed by a vote of 60 to 34, took the best parts of legislation to extend the deadline that

had been put forward by the Obama administration, by Senator FEINSTEIN, who championed the PTC requirement, and by Senators ROY BLUNT and CLAIRE MCCASKILL of Missouri, who saw this problem coming some time ago and have worked with me to prevent it.

Under the bipartisan Senate plan, the Secretary of Transportation gets the legal authority to approve or disapprove requests for extensions submitted in plans where railroads show how and when they will meet the full requirements of PTC implementation. If approved, this essentially becomes a contract, and railroads will face consequences if they do not adhere to it, including fines. Under no circumstance could the Secretary approve a date for full PTC installation that is later than 2018. The Secretary also has the authority to identify and require changes to deficient schedules that do not show safe and successful implementation as soon as practicable.

The proposal is specifically designed to maintain pressure on railroads to install and implement PTC systems without undue delay. It also recognizes that review by regulators after installation, which is necessary to achieve legal certification of full PTC implementation, may take additional time. Of serious concern to the many commuters and shippers who rely on railroad transportation, the deadline for congressional action on the PTC mandate is actually well before December 31 of 2015. Without a legal extension, railroads will have to begin preparations weeks in advance to operate under the assumption that no change would be made. This will mean railroads will be contacting customers such as water treatment facilities by Thanksgiving to cancel critical shipments. It will mean contacting passenger and commuter rail customers to have tickets refunded because passenger railcars will have to be cleared off the rail system before January 1.

To avoid this calamity, not to mention the other backups that such changes could have on a vast rail network, we need to pass an extension into law before these cancellations begin. Working on a bipartisan basis, we can help our constituents avert a transportation calamity that would have a much more serious impact on our economy than last year's west coast ports slowdown.

This is about helping millions of Americans who are dependent on railroads for their livelihood and essential deliveries. We have a responsibility to act.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD letters that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation have received from railroads and officials that I have with me here today, which I think explain very clearly what the consequences are if this body fails to act before these deadlines are upon us.

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

METRA,
Chicago, IL, September 10, 2015.

Hon. JOHN THUNE,
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THUNE, Thank you for your letter requesting information about Metra's positive train control (PTC) installation and the impact on our system if Congress does not extend the December 31, 2015 implementation deadline. As the commuter rail service provider for the northeastern Illinois region, our primary goal is the safe operation of more than 750 trains that run daily throughout our system, providing about 300,000 passenger trips each day and 83.4 million passenger trips per year. We remain committed to the implementation of PTC in a safe and prudent manner. However, many significant challenges prohibit our ability to meet the federally-mandated deadline.

METRA OVERVIEW

Metra is one of the largest and most complex commuter rail systems in North America, serving Cook, DuPage, Will, Lake, Kane and McHenry counties in Northeastern Illinois. The agency provides service to and from downtown Chicago with 241 stations over 11 routes totaling nearly 500 route miles and approximately 1,200 miles of track.

Metra owns and operates four of its 11 lines, has trackage-rights or lease agreements to operate Metra trains over freight railroads on three lines, and has purchase of service agreements with two freight railroads which operate commuter service on four other Metra lines.

Metra's core business is to serve people traveling to downtown Chicago to work. Approximately half of all work trips made from suburban Chicago to downtown are made on Metra. Our customers come from all parts of our region's 3,700 square miles.

METRA PTC IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Metra faces unique challenges implementing PTC as a result of Chicago's complex railroad infrastructure and role as the nation's busiest transportation hub. In fact, Chicago handles one-fourth of the nation's freight rail traffic each day, handling 37,500 rail cars.

More than 1,300 trains operate in the Chicago area each weekday, including 750 Metra trains, 500 freight trains and the remainder Amtrak trains. Metra must interact and coordinate its railroad operations on a daily basis with all railroads operating in Chicago—including six of the seven Class 1 railroads. PTC implementation must be closely and carefully coordinated with each of them. As a result, Metra has directed much of its initial resources toward our contract carriers, Union Pacific Railroad (UP) and BNSF Railway (BNSF).

Despite these challenges, we have made steady and consistent progress in implementing PTC. We currently expect to have on-board equipment completely installed on BNSF by the end of this year and on UP by the second quarter of 2016. After those systems are tested and become operational, more than 40 percent of Metra's train fleet will be PTC-compliant.

Metra has also made significant progress toward implementing PTC on the lines we own. To date, that includes:

Allocating $153 million in capital funding from federal formula funds and state sources toward PTC.

Installing PTC equipment on half of our 530 locomotives and cab cars.

Continuing signal upgrades at 12 interlocking locations—half the all signal locations on our system.

Installing 118 wayside interface units.

Hiring a system integration team to design Metra's PTC system.

Awarding contracts to engineering firms to design necessary upgrades to our signal system and to draft specifications for other tasks.

Filling key leadership positions on the PTC project, as well as hiring more than 50 full-time employees to install PTC in the field and on our trains.

CONTINUING PTC CHALLENGES

However, despite our progress, many significant challenges remain, including cost and funding. PTC implementation is an unfunded mandate and expected to cost Metra more than $350 million. Our agency receives approximately $150 million each year in federal formula funding for all of our capital needs, such as bridges, track and signals. Thus, to fully fund PTC, Metra would need to spend 100 percent of its federal funding for two and one-half years. Nationwide, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) estimates that it will cost more than $3.48 billion to fully implement PTC on all commuter railroads.

In addition, Metra, like all other railroads, has been constrained by the limited number of firms that can provide signal design services and the limited expertise available to accelerate design and deployment. Those firms and expertise are needed by most railroads to help redesign and renew existing signals and install trackside components—a tough job made even more so by the sheer volume and complexity of the task. We have also been limited by the availability of the needed equipment.

Another challenge has been the deployment of a national 220MHz communications network for PTC among U.S. railroads. The network is critical. The onboard, trackside and back office components of every railroad's PTC system have to be able to communicate via a radio network. In Chicago, it is undetermined if we have enough spectrum available for the PTC needs of the region's railroads until a spectrum study is completed by Transportation Technology Center, Inc.

Another challenge is that the initial technology continues to be revised. A major prerequisite for the PTC system is the creation of a detailed database of every route on the system—a time-consuming and extremely labor-intensive process. A process will be needed to document and update GPS coordinates every time a critical PTC asset is moved more than one foot. These processes are dependent upon the final onboard software. A final production release date is not known at this time.

Other challenges include expected issues with components and software as full system testing continues this year. So far, only partial testing of individual segments of the system has taken place. And, the fear of component failure is driving designs with more redundancy, which is further lengthening the design process. In addition, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) must review and certify every railroad's plans.

Metra's current timeline for full PTC implementation is 2019, although we expect several lines to be completed before then.

CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE TO EXTEND THE PTC DEADLINE

Metra has been tirelessly advocating for an extension of the PTC deadline due to numerous technical, regulatory and operational challenges. The railroad industry and the FRA have also known that the 2015 deadline is unattainable. In our view, the time has come to adjust the implementation schedule to reflect reality.

Working with the American Public Transportation Association and the American Association of Railroads, we have asked Congress to allow the FRA to give waivers to agencies that have made a good faith effort to meet the 2015 deadline. We remain hopeful that we can work with Congress and the FRA on a solution that will allow us to safely implement PTC on our system and continue to provide 300,000 daily passenger trips.

Time is now running out. It is with great concern and trepidation that we must begin to prepare contingency plans in the event that the December 31, 2015 PTC implementation deadline passes. In addition, our plan is to fully brief our Board of Directors at its September 21st meeting to discuss the path forward.

In addition, we are currently working with the FRA to obtain further clarification on the legality of our ability to operate past the December 31, 2015 deadline. Metra along with other APTA members will be meeting with the FRA to discuss these concerns at the end of the month.

In the absence of an extension, there is a strong possibility that Metra will not be able to operate our trains beginning January 1, 2016. Additionally, the two railroads with which we have purchase of service agreements—UP and BNSF—have stated that they do not plan to operate passenger rail until PTC is fully implemented and operational. Both have stated that they will not have PTC fully operational by the December 31, 2015 deadline. These lines are our busiest and carry more than 50 percent of our customers.

While it will be a limited option, we have already reached out to our transit partners at CTA and Pace to learn if any operational changes can be made to accommodate an increase in passengers on their systems. However, we recognize that there is no way our transit partners can accommodate any but a small fraction of our 300,000 riders. We are also developing communication plans to alert our customers of a decision before October 31 so that they can begin to consider and prepare for alternate transportation.

As background, under federal regulations all qualified maintenance personnel must ensure locomotive and cab cars have the required safety systems and that they are functioning properly. After December 31, 2015, procedures for pre-service inspections will include PTC as a legal requirement. To be clear, Metra does not and will not support any action that would cause our employees to operate our trains in violation of any regulation.

This is not a decision we plan to make without thoughtful consideration of all of our options and the impact this would have on our customers and our employees. Operating in violation of regulations poses serious consequences. Our employees could face a personal civil fine of $25,000 per violation as well as loss of their certifications. We place a tremendous value on our employees and will not put them at risk in this way. If these fines were to be paid by Metra, we anticipate they could cost our agency nearly $19 million per day.

The potential impacts of a shutdown of Metra service on our customers, employees, Chicago area residents and others are severe and far-reaching.

First, if Metra is unable to operate past the deadline and we shut down our operations, our 300,000 weekday passenger trips will have to be made by alternate means.

The great majority of our riders will likely be forced onto our region's already congested roads and highways. In fact, a report by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute found that five of the 20 most congested roads in the nation are in the Chicago area. This resulted in 61 extra hours behind the wheel on average in 2014 because of delays caused by gridlock.

A shutdown would result in an increase of vehicles on our local roadways. Such action would be forcing our customers to move from one of the safest modes of transportation to one that is less safe, which was not the intent of the 2008 Rail Safety Act. If Metra service did not exist, it would take 29 extra lanes of expressways to accommodate our riders. As you know, mass transit also reduces the carbon footprint in an already congested and polluted region.

The shutdown would put many of our customers—those with little or no other transit options—at risk at the beginning of one of the historically coldest months in Chicago. This includes seniors, students and low-income riders who depend on Metra to get to work, school and doctors' appointments. Metra is a lifeline for many in our region.

The shutdown would impact our local economy by contributing to roadway congestion that already costs our region $7.2 billion annually and by impacting communities whose residents may not be able to go to work and collect their paychecks.

In 2014, Metra experienced the second-highest ridership in history. Clearly, at a time when customers and their families need us the most, a shutdown would be devastating. At a time when funding sources are scarce, now more than ever we depend upon growing our ridership revenue.

Further, if Metra shut down it could take several months to restart our operations as a result of furloughs of train crews and maintenance forces. This would place an enormous financial burden on our employees, who would cease to collect the wages they need to support their families. I want to assure you that we take these matters seriously. We will do all we can to prevent this crisis from happening within the confines of the law as it exists today.

I would like to thank you for your support for legislation that would responsibly extend the PTC deadline. As always, Metra remains committed to implementing PTC as quickly and as safely as we can, but like most of the rest of the U.S. railroad industry, we simply need more time. We remain hopeful that with your leadership, Congress will take appropriate action. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Sincerely,

DON ORSENO,
Executive Director/CEO, Metra.

UNION PACIFIC CORPORATION,
Omaha, NE, September 9, 2015.

Hon. JOHN THUNE,
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THUNE: Thank you for your letter requesting information on positive train control (PTC) installation, and the impacts if Congress does not extend the December 31, 2015, implementation deadline. This is an incredibly important issue for the nation's rail shippers and passengers, and I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

Union Pacific is implementing PTC, and since the mandate in 2008, we have worked tirelessly to design, install, and test the system. However, despite our best efforts, we will not make the installation deadline. This is because PTC isn't a simple and established off-the-shelf technology. Rather, PTC is a complex new system comprised of several independent technologies. Installing PTC requires integrating thousands of components across the telecommunications spectrum along tens of thousands of miles of track. The software must continuously relay critical information such as speed limits, train movement authorization, switch positions, work zone locations, and other operational data. It must also factor in locomotive and rail car mix, train length, weight, speed, track conditions and terrain to determine safe stopping distances. Based on this data, the system must calculate, multiple times a second, all of these measurements to allow the train to move safely. Finally, PTC must also be interoperable, meaning that the Union Pacific system must work with the systems of other railroads. Beyond these formidable technical elements, we also face regulatory obstacles to obtain the necessary spectrum and permits to install wayside communication towers.

While we will not make the deadline, I want you to know we take our responsibilities seriously, and we have made monumental efforts to implement PTC. These include:

Investing $1.8 billion through June with another $200 million for the rest of this year.

Hiring nearly a thousand workers to implement the technology.

Acquiring spectrum and developing custom radio equipment.

Developing the software necessary to create an interoperable PTC system.

Working with more than 50 vendors to develop or acquire components.

We have made enormous strides toward implementation, and I am very proud of the Union Pacific people who have gotten us to this point.

We have installed PTC hardware and software on 13,480 miles out of approximately 20,000 miles. The 20,000 miles we need to equip represents roughly two thirds of our network.

We have installed 6,275 out of 10,000 wayside antennas.

We have partially installed (phases one and two) PTC hardware on 4,500 locomotives, out of 6,500. (Locomotive hardware installations must be done in three phases due to the need to design and build the necessary components. The first phase takes the locomotive out of service for one week. The second phase takes the locomotive out of service for a couple of days, and the third phase will take the locomotive out of service for several hours.)

We expect to have PTC fully installed throughout our network by the end of 2018. Then we will need time to test the system before the FRA can certify it as implemented. PTC is the largest and most complex technological undertaking ever attempted by the freight rail industry. Without a period to test the system to ensure that it works properly across the estimated 63,000 miles of freight rail lines where it will be installed, gridlock could occur as trains will simply stop when they shouldn't. This could cause the entire national rail network to meltdown, and the thousands of customers and communities we serve would be significantly impacted.

What will happen if Congress does not extend the deadline? As you know, we have been contemplating that question for several months now. Because we would be operating in violation of federal law, and because we would be potentially subject to hundreds of millions of dollars in fines and expose ourselves to untold liability should a toxic by inhalation gas (TIH) or passenger accident occur on a line that was supposed to be equipped with PTC, it is our plan to embargo all TIH traffic as well as passenger traffic on our railroad. TIH traffic would be embargoed several weeks prior to January 1, 2016, to ensure an orderly shutdown and clear our system of TIH carloads prior to the end of the year. We expect to issue the TIH embargo notice prior to Thanksgiving. Commuter operations would cease before midnight on December 31, 2015, and long distance passenger

trains will stop originating several days earlier to ensure that all passengers reach their destinations before the deadline.

I want you to know these decisions are not made lightly or in haste. We carefully reviewed our options, which are limited. Embargoing this traffic, which is the traffic that necessitates PTC installation, is in the best interest of our employees and shareholders. We simply don't see another option.

This will cause significant economic disruption for our country. Chlorine and anhydrous ammonia (fertilizer) are the two largest TIH commodities we carry. Chlorine is not only a feedstock for many products, it is also critical for many cities to purify their drinking water. The suspension of anhydrous ammonia shipments will mean farmers will be unable to get the fertilizer they need to ensure healthy crops. Finally, millions of commuters will be forced onto already congested highways and roads. Again, we did not make this decision lightly. We are in the process of notifying our customers of this decision, and within the next month, we will be letting them (and you) know of the exact date we will have to start embargoing TIH to clear the network by the end of the year.

Our decision to stop only the traffic that led to the requirement to install PTC will be revisited if the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) imposes fines on freight trains without TIH, as they are authorized to do. Should the FRA take such a broad action, we will have to consider an embargo on virtually all rail freight that we handle on lines that are to be equipped with PTC despite its untold consequences for the U.S. economy.

Finally, you asked how this decision could impact safety. Extending the deadline would not diminish safety in the rail industry. We are a safe industry. In fact, last year was the safest year on record as was the year before that. PTC, when ready and fully implemented, will be another mechanism to continue that improvement, but it is not the only one we employ and are pursuing. Rail inspections, wheel testing, innovative technologies that predict when something will fail so that it can be repaired or replaced before failure, and employee engagement are just some of the other tools we use to ensure a safe and efficient rail system.

However, failure to extend the deadline will increase safety risks, not for the rail industry, but for the public at large. Rail is the safest way to transport hazardous chemicals. Overall 99.997% of all hazardous material shipments by rail reach their destination without release caused by train accident. However, if services cease, TIH traffic will be forced to move by trucks on our nation's highways. Union Pacific carries 27,000 carloads of TIH traffic a year. If this commodity were to still move in commerce, it would need to be carried by about 100,000 trucks. Moreover, people who currently use commuter trains would be forced onto the highways, creating an even more congested mixture in some of our country's most dense urban environments.

Chairman Thune, I thank you for your letter and your leadership on this issue. We are committed to install PTC as rapidly and safely as we can. I think our actions have shown that. However, we will not make the end of the year deadline. If Congress does not extend the deadline, we will embargo TIH and passenger traffic on our network. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

LANCE M. FRITZ,
President and CEO.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD,
Washington, DC, September 3, 2015.

Hon. JOHN THUNE,
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THUNE: Thank you for your letter dated August 28, 2015, concerning the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (RSIA). RSIA requires rail common carriers to install positive train control (PTC) on lines that carry passengers and toxic-by-inhalation hazardous materials by December 31, 2015. In your letter, you observe that railroads are not likely to meet that deadline, and you note that some railroads have indicated that they may curtail service absent an extension of the deadline. Given the likely disruptive effect that a curtailment of service could have on the economy, you requested that I respond to three questions. I will answer each in turn.

First, you ask what information we have sought or received from freight and passenger railroads on the actions they might take absent an extension. On July 13, I sent the Nation's largest freight railroads, as well as short line carriers, a ''fall peak letter'' requesting information about their ability to meet forecasted freight rail demand and any challenges they see for the upcoming season. Two carriers, CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT) and BNSF Railway Company (BNSF), stated in their response letters that they foresaw PTC compliance as a significant challenge. CSXT stated that the industry would not make the current year-end PTC installation deadline but indicated that it was ''premature to anticipate what decisions might be necessary should an extension not pass.'' BNSF confirmed that it would not meet the deadline and offered the possibility that ''neither passenger nor freight traffic would operate on BNSF lines that are required by federal law and regulation to have an interoperable PTC system'' after the current deadline. Additionally, we have received information about the railroad industry's concern with the potential repercussions of the deadline from reviewing recent testimony before Congress.

The Board has also obtained information about the status of PTC compliance through informal meetings. These include discussions at Railroad-Shipper Transportation Advisory Council meetings and conversations that the Board's Office of Public Assistance, Government Affairs and Compliance has had with rail and shipper stakeholders. Based on these informal channels, it appears that some railroads are considering suspending all freight and passenger service on lines that are required to be RSIA-compliant if an extension is not authorized.

Second, you ask what would be the primary legal or economic factors that could cause freight and passenger railroads to consider suspending or reducing service. I understand that railroads are considering a broad array of legal and economic factors in deciding whether to suspend or curtail service if the PTC deadline is not extended. Without commenting on the merits of any particular concern, it would seem that the railroads would be considering how noncompliance would affect them in matters such as: insurance coverage; exposure to tort or other commercial liability; labor-relations issues; and potential civil penalty assessments by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)/USDOT. And I assume that railroads are also considering whether a railroad that has not implemented PTC may suspend or curtail service (in the event the PTC deadline is not extended) without violating its common carrier obligation and without incurring liability to its shippers. Additionally, railroads would likely consider competitive and commercial factors, such as relative market share and the likelihood of permanent loss of traffic, revenue, and goodwill.

While many of the legal and economic factors identified above are not directly within the Board's jurisdiction, freight rail carriers do have a common carrier obligation to provide service pursuant to a reasonable request. The common carrier obligation includes service for hazardous materials such as the toxic-by-inhalation commodities that partly motivated RSIA's PTC requirement. At the same time, the common carrier obligation is not absolute, and railroads can lawfully suspend service for various reasons, including safety. Prior agency cases assessing the reasonableness of service embargos have been very fact-specific, examining the reasons for the service suspension, the length of the suspension, and the impacted traffic (among other factors). Sometimes the Board has found that a railroad's actions in initiating and maintaining an embargo were reasonable, but other times the agency has concluded that a carrier acted improperly by refusing to serve. Because prior safety-related curtailment-of-service cases often involved services that complied with comprehensive safety regimes administered by FRA (and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration), a carrier-initiated curtailment of service due to a failure to comply with RSIA would present a case of first impression before the Board. I cannot predict the outcome of such a case. My expectation is that the views of the FRA, which has primary jurisdiction over rail safety in general and over implementing RSIA in particular, would be a critical consideration.

Third, you ask how the Board plans to proactively monitor and analyze potential service issues that could arise if the current statutory deadline is not extended. As I noted during my confirmation hearings, I will continue to ensure that service quality for all shippers remains a primary focus of the Board. I have been reaching out to railroads and to shippers, and I have directed our Office of Public Assistance, Government Affairs and Compliance (OPAGAC) to continue its outreach to freight and passenger railroads, shippers, and other stakeholders affected by issues related to PTC compliance. OPAGAC has held informal conversations with our stakeholders and will continue to do so in order to keep the Board abreast of developments and informed on the perspectives of the public. Indeed, the rail service problems that occurred in 2013–14 made clear that obtaining timely information is one of the keys to managing service issues. The STB has continued to collect and analyze rail service data, including Amtrak passenger service data, as part of the interim initiative we began in 2014. We also continue to make progress on a permanent data collection rulemaking. My staff speaks regularly with railroads and shippers to hear about any potential service issues in real time. We will continue these efforts with regard to the impact of RSIA and other service issues, using a fair and balanced approach.

I recognize that PTC is an important tool to enhance the safety of the Nation's freight and passenger rail network, and that it needs to be deployed in a timely way. Following up on our success in working closely with your Committee to help resolve the service issues shippers faced in 2013–2014, I look forward to the important dialogue about the issues raised in your letter. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to express my views. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

DANIEL R. ELLIOTT III,
Chairman.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REMEMBERING WALTER DALE MILLER

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday South Dakotans were saddened to learn that former South Dakota Gov. Walter Dale Miller passed away on Monday evening.

Governor Miller served as South Dakota Governor for just 20 months—from April 1993 to January 1995—but during his brief tenure, he steered South Dakota through a number of challenges and provided a sense of stability and calm during a period of upheaval.

In the wake of Governor Mickelson's tragic death, Governor Miller led the State in grieving and secured funding for a memorial to the Governor and the seven other South Dakotans who died when their plane crashed as it was returning to our State.

When inmates at the State penitentiary rioted less than a month into his tenure, Governor Miller succeeded in ending the standoff without loss of life.

When the Great Flood of 1993 struck the Midwest, he led South Dakota's response and worked tirelessly to help those who were affected.

And when a Supreme Court decision shut down South Dakota's video lottery, resulting in a sudden revenue loss, Governor Miller ensured that South Dakota's most important needs were met.

In all, Governor Miller spent nearly 30 years serving South Dakota in State government—first in the State legislature, then as Lieutenant Governor, and finally as Governor. In every office he held, he served with a commitment and integrity that were recognized by South Dakotans of all political persuasions.

I always felt a particular kinship with Governor Miller since we both hailed from western South Dakota, which we in our State like to call West River. The Governor was from Meade County, and I grew up in a little town called Murdo.

I think for many South Dakotans, Governor Miller embodied the West River cowboy: independent, self-reliant, and courageous, with a deep and abiding love of the wide open spaces that still characterize South Dakota's landscape. I know that is how I, along with many other South Dakotans, will remember him.

I want to offer my deepest condolences to Governor Miller's wife Pat and to the Governor's children. You are all in South Dakotans' thoughts and prayers.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may speak as in morning business for such time as I may consume.

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

The Senator is recognized.

RUSSIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, we now have information that the Russians have now launched airstrikes in Syria, ostensibly against ISIS. In reality, it is not clear. In fact, there is information that some of those strikes were at Homs, and the latest information is that the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reports that at least 27 people were killed, and that 6 children were among the dead.

These strikes near the city of Homs, which is not under control of ISIS, of the Islamic State—so already we are seeing the true intentions of Vladimir Putin, which are to maintain a strong position in Syria, his foothold in the Middle East, and his propping up of Bashar Assad—Bashar Assad, who has killed at least 250,000 of his own citizens through the horrible process of barrel bombing and has driven millions into refugee status with the full and complete support of Iran and Vladimir Putin.

I say to my colleagues, over the past 6½ years President Obama has sounded retreat across the Middle East. In fact, it was 1 year ago at this time when the President of the United States said: Our strategy is to degrade and destroy ISIS. A report yesterday said some 28,000 Europeans and some Americans have come into the fight on the side of ISIS. Mosul and Ramadi remain in the hands of ISIS. Of course, the continued advances of ISIS in Syria are well known.

In short, a year after the President made that statement, there is no strategy, and there is no success. In fact, we now see the results of this failure, which is a flood of refugees out of Syria and Iraq because they have given up hope of ever returning to their homeland. Our hearts go out to those who are victims and have had to flee their homeland. We see these refugees. It breaks our hearts when we see a little baby's body washed up on the beach.

It did not have to happen. It did not have to happen. Everybody knows that when the President of the United States said that we have drawn a redline in Syria and did not do it, it had a profound effect on the Middle East, including Sunni Arab States, as well as Shia. Everybody knows that when the President turned down the recommendations of his Secretary of Defense, his Secretary of State, which happened to be Secretary Clinton at the time, and his Secretary of Defense, to arm the Free Syrian Army—and he turned it down—that was another seminal moment.

This is a series of decisions or nondecisions which has led to the situation we see today, where Vladimir Putin may have inserted Russia into the Middle East in a way that Russia has not enjoyed since 1973 when Anwar Sadat threw the Russians out of Egypt. He is still on course to repeat this nightmare by withdrawing nearly all U.S. forces from Afghanistan as well.

As we see in the last couple of days, the Taliban is capturing the strategic city of Kunduz. That is terrible in the respect that Kunduz is in the northern part of Afghanistan, where it was believed it was fairly stable, showing the ability of the Taliban and the effects of our withdrawal.

But I come back to Syria and the Russian activities today. After 4 years in Syria, the United States has stood by as Bashar Assad with his war on the Syrian people goes on and on and on.

It is this slaughter that has been the single greatest contributor to the rise and continued success of ISIL. Have no doubt, it was Bashar Assad that gave birth to ISIL. The President has said for years—for years—that Assad must go. But he has done nothing that has brought us any closer to achieving that outcome. My friends, it is not that we have done nothing, but we have not done anything that would reverse the trend and in any way further the goal that the President articulated a year ago—that we would degrade and destroy ISIL.

In short, this administration has confused our friends, encouraged our enemies, mistaken an excess of caution for prudence, and replaced the risks of action with the perils of inaction. Into the wreckage—into the wreckage of this administration's Middle East policy—has now stepped Vladimir Putin. As in Ukraine, as elsewhere, he perceives the administration's inaction and caution as weakness, and he is taking full advantage.

Over the past few weeks, Vladimir Putin has been engaged in a significant military buildup in western Syria, deploying strike aircraft—by the way, he is also deploying aircraft that are air-to-air, not air-to-ground; my friends, ISIS has no air force—significant buildup of bombers, tanks, artillery, Russian military personnel.

Meanwhile, our Secretary of State calls Lavrov frantically and asks him what is going on—not once, not twice, three times. My friends, it is obvious what Vladimir Putin is doing. These airstrikes are a logical follow-on to his ambition, which he is realizing to, one, play a major role in Syria, preserve the port of Latakia, prop up Bashar Assad, and play a major role in the Middle East.

All of this is not lost on countries in the region. Today Vladimir Putin escalated his involvement as Russian pilots carried out their first airstrikes in

Syria. Initial reports, as I mentioned, are that they are hitting targets that are not controlled by ISIL. That should fool no one because Vladimir Putin's primary authority and responsibility and ambition are to prop up Bashar Assad against all of his enemies.

The White House has said: ''It's unclear exactly what Russia's intentions are.'' My friends, I am not making that up. The White House has said: ''It's unclear exactly what Russia's intentions are.'' If the White House is confused about Putin's intentions and plans in Syria, then the United States is in even worse trouble than many fear because it is not hard to discern what Vladimir Putin wants.

In fact, from Russia's military buildup in Syria to its recently announced military and intelligence coalition with Syria, Iran, and Iraq—remember, Iraq is the country where we lost thousands of American lives. Now, the Iraqi Government announces sharing intelligence with Syria and Iran—amazing, amazing. Putin's ambitions are blindingly obvious, my friends. He wants to prop up Assad, play kingmaker in any transition, undermine U.S. policy and operations, and ultimately expand Russian power in the Middle East to a degree, as I mentioned, unseen since 1973.

This week at the United Nations, President Obama said: ''The United States is prepared to work with any nation, including Russia and Iran,'' to resolve the Syrian conflict. It requires self-delusion of tremendous scale to believe that Russia and Iran have any interest in resolving the Syrian conflict. They seek only to keep the murderous Assad regime in power. Russia's intervention in Syria will prolong and complicate this horrific war. The main beneficiary will be ISIL, which has fed off the ethnic and sectarian divisions fostered by the Assad regime.

It is tragic. It is tragic, my fellow Americans, that we have reached this point. It is a Syrian conflict that has killed more than 200,000 people, created the worst refugee crisis in Europe since World War II, spawned a terrorist army of tens of thousands, and now created a platform for a Russian autocrat to join with an Iranian theocrat to prop up a Syrian dictator. It did not have to be this way. But this is the inevitable consequence of hollow words, redlines crossed, tarnished moral influence, leading from behind, and a total lack of American leadership.

My friends, today in the Washington Post there is an article by David Ignatius, who quotes Ryan Crocker, one of the greatest diplomats I have ever had the honor and privilege to know.

The article says:

> ''Russia has played a horrible hand brilliantly. We folded what could have been a pretty good hand,'' argues Ryan Crocker, a retired U.S. diplomat who has served in nearly every hot spot in the Middle East and is among the nation's wisest analysts of the region. ''The Russians were able to turn a defensive position into an offensive one because we were so completely absent.''

Ryan Crocker is right.

I would also remind my friends that because of American inaction, the countries in the region are making their own accommodations. Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar have all been to Russia for arms deals. The Saudi Arabians have bought $17 billion worth of weapons from Russia; UAE, $7 billion; Qatar, $5 billion. Would that have ever happened 10 years ago? Of course not. But they see America leaving, and they are accommodating. And we have, of course, refused in many respects to give the kinds of weapons particularly that the Kurds need.

I won't go on too much longer. I will summarize by saying that this is a very sad day for America and the world. The world is watching. It is not confined to the Middle East. We see Vladimir Putin continue to dismember Ukraine, and now some phony separatist elections are going to be held in the area he now controls. The Chinese leader made some nice comments about how they would stop the hacking that allowed them to compromise our most important industrial, military, and other secrets. We will see if that happens, but they are also continuing their expansion in the islands in the South China Sea.

An absence of American leadership is very visible and very understood by nations throughout the world.

Today we see Vladimir Putin attacking with his airplanes not just ISIS but others who are enemies of Bashar al-Assad. I would like to add that these airstrikes are indiscriminate in nature, and there has been no attempt whatsoever to stop the horrible barrel bombing, as GEN David Petraeus recommended before the Armed Services Committee just a few days ago.

So this is a bad day, and it is time for American leadership. It is time that President Obama woke up to the realities in the world and reassert American leadership. That does not mean we are going to send thousands of ground troops back into Iraq or Syria, but it does mean that we develop a policy.

I am told that these bombings—that the American Government had said that American planes should not fly and that we have somehow approved of these airstrikes. I do not know if that is true. I hope that is not true. What we should be saying to Vladimir Putin is ''You fly, but we fly anywhere we want to when and how we want to, and you had better stay out of the way.'' That is the message that should be sent to Vladimir Putin.

So I hope the American people understand how serious this is and that this rogue dictator named Vladimir Putin, who is a thug and a bully, can only understand a steadfast and strong American policy that brings America's strength back to bear. We are still the strongest Nation in the world. Now it is time for us to act like it.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

GOVERNMENT FUNDING AND ABORTION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the Senate has now passed a continuing resolution to keep the lights on, to keep the government employees paid, to pay our military and make sure our veterans get the benefits they are entitled to from now until December 11.

I think it is important to reflect on why it is we had to do this in this way, with all of the attendant drama and the suggestion that we were going to somehow shut down the government, which was never a likelihood. The main reason we find ourselves in this posture is because for the first time since 2009, the Senate has actually passed a budget. This new majority that was elected last November saw that one of the most important things we could do in terms of the basic fundamentals of good governance was to pass a budget—something that hadn't happened since 2009.

There are many benefits, of course, of passing a budget, but one of the benefits was to allow the Appropriations Committee to begin to go to work and take up and pass 12 different appropriations bills that would keep the whole of the Federal Government funded.

As the Presiding Officer knows, there is a lot of policy written in those Appropriations Committees. You can make a decision not to fund something because it is not working or maybe it is obsolete or outdated or perhaps to fund something else; say perhaps we need to reform the way this particular service is delivered and consolidate it in a way that it is cost-effective and more efficient.

So it is important to pass a budget and to pass appropriations bills. Unfortunately, our Democratic colleagues are trying to use the appropriations process to hold it hostage in order to force us to increase government spending. The way they try to do that is to filibuster the appropriations bills and to say: We are not even going to take up a defense appropriations bill, the one that actually pays our troops and takes care of their families. Well, they are going to have a chance to vote on a veterans appropriations bill very soon, and we will see whether they keep up this tactic of holding hostage our appropriations process, creating all this unnecessary drama associated with whether there is going to be a shutdown here or a shutdown there. It is very important that we get back to work and we do the basic work of governance—passing a budget, passing appropriations bills. I know the Presiding Officer agrees with that.

I think lost in all of this debate over government shutdowns and over appropriations bills has been the shocking

videos we saw of Planned Parenthood, these Planned Parenthood videos that showed Planned Parenthood executives speaking callously about the unborn. These are late-term abortions. These are unborn babies who could well be viable outside of the womb, because after 20 weeks, give or take 2 weeks, it is amazing what neonatologists and what medical science can do. I know we have all seen babies as small as 1 pound or less who actually grow into thriving adults later on, and it is amazing what can be done even with these young babies as young as 20 weeks or more. But of course these videos I think have served one important role; that is, to be a wake-up call, to try to wake up the moral conscience of our Nation. Somehow we have trivialized this whole process and talked about choice and talked about the convenience of adults, when in fact there is another competing interest involved; that is, the potential life of a human being that is being overlooked.

At different times in our Nation's history I think we have seen that somehow we became so desensitized, we became so self-focused on ourselves that we forgot the fact that this speaks about our humanity and who we are as a people. So I think these sorts of wake-up calls that these videos have provided have been useful if we make the most of them.

I know that as we have talked about the continuing resolution and the so-called shutdown scenario—which is not going to happen—there has been concern that this might be the only way that we stop this horrific practice of late-term abortions and harvesting of fetal body parts for sale that were depicted in these videos. But I am thankful there are a number of pro-life groups in Texas and nationally who understand that we need to make sure this is a long-term agenda and not just a one-vote situation. As I mentioned yesterday, earlier this week two groups involved in the pro-life mission in my home State announced their support for efforts in Congress to hold Planned Parenthood accountable and to work toward long-term, meaningful change on the pro-life agenda. One of those groups, the Texas Alliance for Life, released a statement that affirmed actions taken last week—a vote to defund Planned Parenthood and to redirect funding to other providers of women's health services that are not involved in the abortion industry. If we are truly concerned about women's access to health care—and we all are—then why can't we take the money that goes to pay the No. 1 abortion provider in America and redirect it to community health centers that actually do provide women's health services?

The statement of the Texas Alliance for Life went on to say that the group was ''not asking for a government shutdown over the issue'' and that ''better options exist for achieving success.''

I want to spend a moment or two focusing on ''better options [than a shutdown] exist for achieving success'' because the Senate continues to work on several measures, including key pieces of legislation that would advance the culture of life in this country—legislation such as the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. This would do what Texas has already done, which is to say there can be no elective abortions after 5 months of gestation. It is at this stage in development—just 20 weeks—that many experts believe an unborn child can feel pain. I am still unclear why our Democratic friends across the aisle would block such a simple, moral imperative like protecting these young lives as they did last week, but I would like to also remind our friends across the aisle that this legislation is not going away, and we will not stop raising the visibility of this issue and making the point that a child at 5 months—a child with fingerprints and taste buds—deserves protection under the law.

Our country also needs another piece of legislation that I cosponsored and that actually passed in the House. This is called the Born-Alive Survivors Protection Act, which the Presiding Officer is the lead sponsor of. Quite simply, this bill would mandate that doctors provide infant care to newborns who survive an abortion procedure. This is different, I think, in kind from the defund Planned Parenthood debate. This is about the delivery of a born child and whether a physician or the abortion provider has any duty—which they should—to make sure that child gets the care they need so they can survive or whether they can, at their option, simply end that life as part of an abortion practice. It is a sad commentary on the conscience of America when we need a law like this to spell out the fact that doctors should care for babies once they are born.

This legislation was introduced last week, and I hope we are successful—as I said, the Presiding Officer is the lead cosponsor—in getting broad support of cosponsors on this bill. Then we can go to Senator MCCONNELL, the Senate majority leader, and ask him to schedule this legislation for a vote.

So this bill, along with the pain-capable bill, will not only save thousands of unborn lives a year, but if enacted would be the biggest step forward for the pro-life movement since the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act was signed into law a decade ago.

Both of these bills are part of a long-term, proactive strategy to fight for the lives of the unborn and to make this country one that truly prizes the life of the unborn as a young life with limitless potential. It took time for the enactment of the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act. I was in the Senate when we passed that legislation. It is incredible to me it took as long as it did for that to pass, but it also took a commitment from leaders to stand up, time and time again, not to just have one vote and then call it quits, to say we tried and we were unsuccessful, but to stay after it until we actually achieved passage of the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act. I believe, with the same sort of long-term commitment on the Pain-Capable bill and on the Born-Alive bill, we can continue to make progress in this House, as well as the House of Representatives, and to be able to tell our constituents back home we have changed the culture of Washington, DC, and on a national level and shown the respect for unborn life it deserves.

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

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

SEA LEVEL RISE IN SOUTH FLORIDA

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I want to talk about what is happening to our environment in South Florida as a result of sea level rise. We can put this into political terms of climate change, but that seems to be an issue some want to deny. So I want to talk about what you can't deny, and that is that the sea is rising, particularly as shown in South Florida.

A year and a half ago, I brought the commerce committee to Miami Beach and brought a whole series of witnesses, one of whom was a NASA scientist who testified that measurements—now, this is not a forecast and this is not a projection; these are measurements of the level of the sea over the course of the last four decades—that the sea has risen in South Florida between 5 and 8 inches.

The reason I am bringing this to the attention of the Senate today is that I just returned from Miami, where the latter part of September, the first part of October is the seasonal high tide, and the streets of Miami Beach are flooded. As a matter of fact, 2 years ago the mayor of Miami Beach, when he was campaigning for that position, did a campaign commercial in a kayak on Alton Road, which is on the westerly side of the barrier island, away from the ocean, and it was flooded. In the intervening 2 years, the city of Miami Beach, in cooperation with the local governments of all of the southeast Florida governments, has spent millions of dollars on big pumps so that when the tides come, they can get the water out of the streets.

A year ago, Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE and I went down there at this time of year—the seasonal high tide—and lo and behold the pumps worked and the pumps got the water back into Biscayne Bay so that the roads stayed dry.

But look what happened 2 days ago, as shown in this picture. This is downtown Miami Beach. Do you see the fellow? It is above his ankles, and he is up on the curb. Right here is the curb. He steps down, and it comes up to just

below his knees. You see the cars. You see the water. That is downtown Miami Beach. This is not just the phenomenon of the full Moon; this is the phenomenon of sea level rise.

Let's take another view. Here is a lady who is trying to keep her feet dry, up on a wall. You can see that here is the sidewalk. Here is the curb. Here is the street. As you can see, this is a middle part of the barrier island of Miami Beach. This isn't right next to the beach. This isn't right next to Biscayne Bay, on either side, the east and the west, of the barrier island. This is in the middle where you have all of these—in this case, it is condominiums where people live.

What is causing this? What is causing it is that planet Earth is heating up. The measurements are there. Why is it heating up? It is simply this: As the Sun's rays come in and hit the Earth, they reflect off of the Earth, and that heat radiates back out into space.

It is the same principle, for example, on the space shuttle. When I participated in the space program 30 years ago, when we were in orbit—in the early part of the space shuttle program, on the space shuttle *Columbia*, once we got in orbit, we opened those payload bay doors—and they served as radiators of all the heat that is generated onboard the spacecraft. We radiated it back out into space so that the spacecraft does not overheat. So, too, planet Earth.

The natural phenomenon is that the Sun's rays hit the Earth and reflect back out. Some of the heat is retained, but most of that heat is radiated back out into space, until you start to create the effect of a ceiling high in the atmosphere of the greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and sulfur dioxide. Those gases start to create a ceiling effect, so that as the heat is radiating back towards space, it is trapped, and therefore the whole planet starts to heat up. What is most of the Earth covered with? The oceans. That is where most of that additional heat is absorbed. Ninety percent of the heat that is trapped in the Earth's greenhouse effect is absorbed into the oceans of the planet. As a result, when water is heated, water expands, and thus one of the phenomena of seeing the seas begin to rise. The melting of the glaciers, the melting of the polar ice caps, adding more—instead of frozen glaciers, that is going into the sea, displacing water. And those glaciers are melting. That adds to it as well, but it is the trapping of the heat that is causing this phenomenon.

We have made projections as to what the heat is that we are trapping, but now we have an instrument out in space that can precisely measure because there is a spacecraft that was launched earlier this year, *Discover*, that has several instruments on it. One of the instruments, by the way—you can go to the NASA Web site and you can see in real time, every hour and a half, another picture of the entire Earth on the daylight side of the Earth. The spacecraft is placed 1 million miles away from planet Earth, between the Earth and the Sun. So the spacecraft, looking back at Earth, is always looking at the daylight side of the Earth as it revolves about its axis 365 days a year, as it revolves around the Sun. That is one instrument.

There is another instrument, and that is the instrument which measures the amount of the Sun's heat that goes into the Earth and the amount of heat that is radiated back out. If you subtract the amount radiated back out into space from the amount of heat that goes into the Earth, you get a precise measurement of how much of the heat sent by the Sun is trapped in the Earth's atmosphere. Now we have a precise instrument that will tell us exactly what that is instead of the scientific projections that we have used, and that is as a result of this new satellite spacecraft called *Discover* that we just put up earlier this year.

We can't keep denying what in fact is happening. The proof is in the pudding. The proof is right here. There is no other way you can explain this seasonal high tide when for the last two centuries this barrier island has basically been dry during the seasonal high tide but now we are seeing this.

The consequences of this are quite severe. First of all, 75 percent of Florida's population is along the coast. Florida is now the third largest State. We have surpassed New York. We have 20 million people now, and 75 percent of that population is along the coast. As the sea level rises and people have to start dealing with this, what do you think is going to happen to the value of their property? What about their freshwater? Florida sits on a honeycomb of limestone that is filled with freshwater. Saltwater is heavier than freshwater. As the sea level rises, it starts to penetrate that honeycomb of freshwater. That is the substructure of the peninsula of Florida. That then causes saltwater intrusion into our drinking water, into the water we have to use to sustain life.

There are no good results as a consequence of sea level rise.

I once again bring up to the Senate that we have some who say this is not real. In fact, here is the proof. The proof is in the pudding. There is something we can do about it. What we can do about it is start adopting policies that will put less carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, and that means we have to be diligent in making sure we enact policies to do it.

There are several different ways you can do that. One, of course, is the regulatory way, which is going on right now, which a lot of our colleagues don't like. You regulate smokestacks. You regulate the amount of pollutants that can be put out and so forth. There is another way, and that is to use the private marketplace of supply and demand by putting a price or a fee on the use of carbon, and therefore the market will dictate whether a person puts more CO_2 into the air as a result of burning carbon. That will drive the marketplace to find alternative fuels that are a lot cleaner so that we can show the rest of the world what we are going to have to do.

I think it was rather prophetic that last week the Pope continuously talked about climate change in all of his speeches. I think it was also prophetic that the Chinese President, in his visit to the United States—apparently they are so choked because of the pollutants in the air in major cities in China that they are finally coming to the altar, so to speak, and realizing that they have to do something about it. Otherwise, they are threatening the complete health of their people in China.

With this newfound attention to this problem, let's do something about it by building bipartisan support for a solution. That is the right thing to do. And this is just another reminder that what is happening in Miami Beach right now is the wave of the future unless we change our policies.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DAINES. 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. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with Senators AYOTTE, ALEXANDER, BURR, COLLINS, and GARDNER.

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

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, Montana's national forests and public lands have been a pleasure and a part of our State's heritage for generations.

As a fifth-generation Montanan and as someone who loves the outdoors, I recognize how valuable our public lands are and the importance of ensuring access for generations to come to hunting, backpacking and fishing—traditions that I, like many Montanans, have been thankful to pass along to my kids. I know firsthand the important role that the Land and Water Conservation Fund holds in protecting and increasing Montanans' access to our public lands.

That is why since coming to Congress I have been actively working to secure funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund every year. In fact, through the appropriations process this summer, Senator SUSAN COLLINS and I successfully passed an amendment to increase the funding for the LWCF program by nearly $14 million. This brought the overall funding for LWCF to $306 million and ensured that LWCF did not lose out on work for permanent authorization.

In Montana and throughout the country, the Land and Water Conservation

Fund plays a critical role in achieving the goal of increased access. Despite the tireless efforts and the work of Senators BURR, COLLINS, AYOTTE, ALEXANDER, and GARDNER to move reauthorization forward, yet again today, the authorization for LWCF will expire tonight. The Continuing Resolution did not include a reauthorization for LWCF.

Because LWCF is funded through royalties generated from offshore energy development, it is a fundamental tool to help preserve and protect Montanans' opportunity to enjoy hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. In fact, during the August recess while I was back home in Montana, this is where I was: On the public lands of Montana. This is the Beartooth Wilderness area. This is my wife Cindy and our dog Ruby. I have my fly rod on my back. This is, in fact, up near Granite Peak, Montana's highest peak. That is over 10,000 feet where that picture was taken. It was a chance to enjoy our public lands—something that is an absolute treasure for the people of Montana and the people of our great country.

LWCF keeps family ranches in the family and working. It is a fundamental tool that preserves and protects our opportunities to enjoy hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. It keeps forests in productive use through the Forest Legacy Program, as in the Haskill Basin where my good friend Chuck Roady of Stoltz Land and Lumber works.

That is why it is so disappointing that reauthorization was not included in the CR we voted on today.

Under the current CR, LWCF will be funded, as will the rest of the Federal Government, through December 11. LWCF will be funded at fiscal year 2015 levels and all projects will continue as planned. However, any new deposits into the fund will stop tomorrow, on October 1.

I have heard from many Montana businesses, outfitters, and guides who love the outdoors and are very concerned about the program's lapse in authorization. These small businesses rely on it for public access to Montana's treasured public lands for outdoor recreation which supports millions of dollars of revenue and hundreds of jobs for our State.

Like Eric Grove of Great Divide Cyclery in Helena who has built his mountain bike business around the South Hills Trail System outside of Helena which was facilitated by LWCF. There are many other small businesses such as Eric's in Montana.

Before being elected to the Senate, before coming to Congress, I spent more than 12 years growing a technology company in Bozeman. We were able to attract quality employees not only because we offered good-paying salaries, but also because of Montana's unparalleled quality of life. In fact, our slogan was ''work where you also like to play.'' The LWCF is a critical tool that facilitates recreation on our public lands, allowing Montana businesses to attract world class employees. We can't let it slip away.

I remind the Members of the Senate, we passed the reauthorization of LWCF. We have that in the bipartisan energy bill that passed the Energy and Natural Resources Committee this year. I hope for cooperation from our friends across the aisle to bring that to the floor for a vote and move it forward in regular order, which is the way the Senate should operate.

Now I wish to pause and yield to my distinguished colleague from the great State of New Hampshire, Senator KELLY AYOTTE, who is also a big supporter of LWCF. I am glad she has come to the floor today and is joining me in our fight to make sure we keep LWCF reauthorized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Montana for his incredible support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I love the picture showing the Senator from Montana and his wife because, just like Montana, in my home State of New Hampshire, there are so many beautiful places to hike. We have the White Mountain National Forest and places where the Land and Water Conservation Fund has made such a difference in giving anyone an opportunity to ensure the use of our public lands. In fact, having been born in New Hampshire and having grown up there, I have so many fond memories of my childhood of hikes in our beautiful forests in New Hampshire.

Without the Land and Water Conservation Fund, we would not have been able to do—at this point there have been 650 individual acquisition projects in the State of New Hampshire that have been supported by this incredible fund. In fact, one of my favorite things to do—as we think about the important work that the Land and Water Conservation Fund does, it is in our forests such as the White Mountain National Forest, but it is also in our cities. I live in Nashua, NH. It is our second largest city. We have Mines Falls Park, which is a real jewel right in the middle of the city. In the mornings, when I am in New Hampshire, my favorite thing to do is get up early and go for a run through these parks that are beautiful with forested areas in the middle of the city that so many people in Nashua enjoy every single day, including myself and my children. As I am running along, I see so many Granite Staters who are taking a beautiful walk in the morning in the beautiful woods in the second largest city in New Hampshire.

So as Senator DAINES has said, I am very disappointed that we did not include the reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund in the continuing resolution. Within hours, the authorization for LWCF expires, so I believe we should act immediately to reauthorize this program. We should be permanently reauthorizing this program. That is what I have supported in legislation so that we are not in this position and in this situation again in the future.

It is important to understand that the funds that go to LWCF under the law were supposed to be there from leasing revenues from oil and gas leasing that were supposed to be specially dedicated for this purpose of giving the American people more access to public lands and preserving our natural beauty. Yet, historically, unfortunately, this money has been diverted, and not all of it has gone to the purpose for which it was collected, which is a classic Washington move. That is why I would like to see the funds go to where they were designated. I would like to see reauthorization of this important program because there is bipartisan support for reauthorizing it and for preserving our great outdoors for everyone to enjoy.

There have been thousands and thousands of acres in New Hampshire that have been preserved and protected for people to be able to use for all kinds of outdoor recreation in our State. In New Hampshire, as in Montana, the outdoor industry is important to the economy and to who we are in the ''live free or die'' State. In fact, if we look at what the outdoor recreation industry generates, it is $4.2 billion in consumer spending in our State annually, which directly supports 49,000 New Hampshire jobs. In addition to that, the Outdoor Industry Association estimates that at least 76 percent of Granite Staters participate in outdoor recreation each year, but that doesn't surprise me. Having been born in New Hampshire, having grown up there, I love our State, and the great outdoors is such an important part of our State. People in New Hampshire love to go hiking, fishing, hunting, and use all types of recreation in enjoying the beauty of our great State.

Protecting our outdoor spaces is not a partisan issue. We need to work together to ensure the preservation of our environment for future generations to enjoy. As the mother of a second grader and a fifth grader, a big part of my kids' life too is enjoying the beauty of New Hampshire. I know that if we reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund, not only in New Hampshire but across this country, we will continue to preserve the beauty of our country and the open spaces so that everyone can enjoy them and get the exercise and be healthy and enjoy the clean, fresh air they have an opportunity to breathe, as well as our beautiful forests and beautiful lands in this country.

LWCF also has funds granted to the Forest Legacy Program, which has helped conserve New Hampshire's forests, supporting our forest products industry, and aiding wildlife preservation, to make sure we have healthy, working forests, which is so important to our forest industry.

I call on my colleagues to act immediately to reauthorize this essential program, which has helped preserve the beauty of New Hampshire and our Nation. This is one that I hope, with pending legislation we bring to the floor, we will include a vote on reauthorizing the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Our country is beautiful, and this money was specially designated for this purpose. We should stop diverting it. We should continue to use it for this very purpose so that everyone can enjoy the great outdoors and the beauty of the United States of America.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I wish to thank Senator AYOTTE for her great comments and for speaking as well about her heritage that has been passed down in New Hampshire.

In this picture, this is not a selfie that was taken with a selfie stick. The reason we happened to have this picture is that we had our son along. Our son took that picture of my wife Cindy, our dog Ruby, and me.

These are lands that I hiked in when I was a little boy, when my parents introduced me to the public lands of Montana wilderness areas. Outdoor heritage is an important part of who we are as Americans, as is the importance of preserving and protecting our clean water and our clean air.

I know our States' Governors don't want this program to lapse either. In fact, in a letter sent yesterday from the National Governors Association, they stated that a lapse in authorization would create uncertainties for our States.

We can still do the right thing. We can still reauthorize this important program.

There was an appropriations bill that was passed which gave us funding at the same level we had from last year, at $306 million. It is short of where I would like to have it, and I know it is short of where Senator AYOTTE would like to see it funded, but at least we held our funding consistent with where we were at last year.

The energy committee, through the Energy Modernization Act, had the reauthorization provisions in it. That would permanently reauthorize the program.

So there are a lot of options on the table to get this done. We can still do the right thing. We need to double down our efforts and reauthorize this most important program. I am a proud cosponsor of the multiple-piece legislation to make the LWCF permanent and the fight to reauthorize this program. In fact, I am the only Republican member on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to cosponsor S. 338, Senator BURR's legislation, that will secure a permanent solution for LWCF.

Permanent reauthorization of LWCF is also included in the Senate Energy Policy Modernization Act that we just talked about. It passed the committee on a large bipartisan vote. In the coming days I think the momentum behind reauthorization is only going to grow stronger. We have that evidenced here today as I am joined by a number of my colleagues who support the LWCF, and we are not going to let this conversation die. We are going to continue to fight for the permanent reauthorization of LWCF. It is a tool for public access. It is a tool to ensure that Montanans and the American people can have access to the public lands.

I am hopeful the momentum will lead the House to prioritize reauthorization in the near future. It is vital that we permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund and not allow reauthorization to lapse. We need to get this reauthorization passed and on the President's desk.

I see that another supporter of LWCF, the Senator from Tennessee, Mr. LAMAR ALEXANDER, has joined us in this colloquy. I am glad to have Senator ALEXANDER here and look forward to his comments on LWCF.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I salute Senator DAINES. Since his arrival in the Senate, he has been a strong fighter for the great American outdoors, which he enjoys so much in the beautiful State of Montana.

He and I were talking not long ago about his next hunting trip. One thing that unites us on both sides of the aisle and unites Americans is the great American outdoors. I often say that Egypt has its pyramids and Italy has its art; England has its history and we have the great American outdoors.

One of the best ideas we have had in the government to support, protect, and conserve the great American outdoors for the benefit of all Americans is the Land and Water Conservation Fund. It was first proposed in the 1960s by the Commission headed by Laurance Rockefeller. The Commission recommended a number of conservation issues. The idea was very simple. It was to say that when we have an environmental burden, we should have an environmental benefit. If we are going to drill for oil offshore, for example, that is an environmental burden. Let's take some of those revenues and use it for an environmental benefit. So we have, since that time in the 1960s, money for the Federal Government and for State and local governments to conserve important parts of America.

I know in our State of Tennessee we celebrated just in the last few weeks the final acquisition of the Rocky Fork tract, about 10,000 acres in Unicoi and Greene Counties, which was a national priority of the Forest Service. It provides great opportunities for Tennesseans to go hiking, to go hunting, and to go fishing. Those are the kinds of things we like to do in our State. We don't have a lot of protected land like they do in the Western States, and this was something the Land and Water Conservation Fund helped us to do.

In the 1980s President Reagan asked me to chair the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors. I worked with Gil Grosvenor, Chairman of the National Geographic Society; Patrick Noonan, the founder of The Conservation Fund; and others. Our recommendation included full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and continuing to tie it to some of the proceeds from offshore oil drilling.

In the Energy bill 9 years ago, when Senator Domenici was chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, we actually made mandatory a little bit of funding from the offshore drilling in the Gulf of Mexico into the State side of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. But, we need to recognize the broad support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, pass Senator BURR's bill, the Senator from North Carolina who has fought tirelessly to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and then we need to appropriate $900 million for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and gradually set aside those special areas of our country that deserve to be protected.

I am here to say that even though it expires today, I am very hopeful we can take some action very quickly to extend it at least temporarily and that soon we will have a chance to do what Senator BURR and Senator DAINES proposed and something I proposed—and have supported during my entire adult life.

I see the Senator from Maine. I know of her interest in conservation and the outdoors. We need to get this done. The American people expect us to do it, and I fully support it.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

Mr. DAINES. I want to thank the Senator from Tennessee for his leadership and unwavering commitment to the LWCF through the many years.

We are also joined by the Senator from Maine, Ms. COLLINS. Senator COLLINS comes from the beautiful State of Maine and shares a passion for the outdoors. I am grateful to have Senator COLLINS speak on behalf of the LWCF.

Senator COLLINS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. President.

It is such a pleasure to join my colleagues in supporting legislation that would provide a short-term extension for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and I think you can see by the breadth of the number of Senators on the floor on the Republican side of the aisle supporting this extension that this program has widespread support from Montana to North Carolina, to Tennessee, to New Hampshire, to the great State of Maine. All of us have come together to urge the Senate not to allow this important conservation and recreational program to expire.

It was 50 years ago that the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act established America's most successful conservation and recreation program. The fund was designed to assure that outdoor recreation lands would be secured on a pay-as-you-go basis for future generations. As we mark this anniversary, it is inconceivable to me that we would allow this successful and valuable program to expire.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is arguably our most important and successful program of this type. There is nothing else like it, and it has widespread bipartisan support. While the funding for this program could continue to be appropriated beyond the September 30 expiration date, the authority to collect new revenue into the fund would expire. So we must act quickly today to reauthorize the LWCF so we do not lose the important connection between the funding stores for this conservation program and the program itself.

Investments in this landmark conservation program expand assets to the outdoors to all Americans. We are living in a time where so many children and so many teenagers are spending all of their time inside before computer screens and tablets and iPhones. This is the program that helps ensure that they have access to recreational activities outside—the great American outdoors. The Land and Water Conservation Fund has created numerous outdoor recreational opportunities in every single State in the Nation and 98 percent of the counties across our great country. It is funding that will open key areas for hunting, fishing, and other recreational access to support our working forests and ranches, to acquire inholdings and protect critical lands in national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, Civil War battlefields, and other Federal areas that are so special to our heritage, and to support State and local projects from ball parks to recreational trails.

If you have a bike trail, a ball park or a hiking path in your community, it may well have been constructed with funds from the Land and Water Conservation Program. I support the permanent reauthorization of the program that has been introduced by Senator BURR and believe that Congress has an obligation to make good on the promise that was made to the American people back in 1964 to take the proceeds from natural resource development and invest a portion in conservation and outdoor recreation.

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee has favorably reported a bipartisan bill that would permanently extend the program. A short-term extension is needed now to provide the time over the next few weeks for us to work together to achieve that permanent authorization and consistent funding for this program and to help ensure that the fund plays the strongest possible role in helping to revitalize local communities for another 50 years.

I remain committed to working with Senator DAINES, Senator BURR, and the other leaders in this area, along with the bipartisan coalition that truly spans the country to support creating a more stable long-term plan for the LWCF that allows landowners, States, local communities, and conservation partners to plan for the future recreational and conservation opportunities for our country. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this 60-day extension.

Thank you, Mr. President. Again, I thank the Senator from Montana for organizing this colloquy and the Senator from North Carolina for his leadership in this area.

Mr. DAINES. I thank the Senator from Maine for those great remarks.

It is important to get our young people outside—outdoors. In fact, this picture was taken about 5 weeks ago by my son with his smartphone. The good news is that the smartphone wasn't working because it was so far away from cell phone towers, but the camera did work, so he took the picture.

It is important to get out and pass it on to the next generation to get our children out on the public lands. The LWCF has an important role in ensuring that access and preserving it for generations to come.

We heard from the Senator from New Hampshire, Ms. AYOTTE; from the Senator from Tennessee, Mr. ALEXANDER; and the Senator from Maine, Ms. COLLINS. I spoke from Montana. You can see the geographic diversity across our entire country to support this program.

It is only fitting that the Senator from North Carolina is here now, Mr. BURR. He has been the leader in permanent reauthorization for LWCF. That is why both Senator COLLINS and I are proud cosponsors of S. 338, which would permanently reauthorize the LWCF. I thank the Senator from North Carolina, Mr. BURR, for his leadership and what he is doing to remove this uncertainty we have today in the LWCF and get it permanently reauthorized.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I thank Senator DAINES and my colleagues who have come to the floor and spoken.

It was my intention to come and ask unanimous consent for the Senate to consider a 60-day extension of the Land and Water Conservation Fund in terms of its configuration. I will not be doing that. I think we are making progress toward unanimous consent in the Senate, which is the best way to get things done. So I will refrain from asking for that UC at this time.

If we don't act now, this program which has been successful for over 50 years will expire today—tonight at midnight. This program has delivered on its promise to conserve and enhance our natural landscape.

LWCF was set up for three reasons; No. 1, to protect areas within our national parks' and national forests' existing boundaries. Let me emphasize that—the existing boundaries. There are some who claim the Land and Water Conservation Fund is only to create new national parks or to expand our current national parks. In many cases we have in-parcels that have been owned by individuals and we have waited for generational change for the opportunity to complete that footprint of our historic treasures. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is that seed money to go in and match it with private dollars to get that in-parcel and buy it from a generation that also believes it should be protected.

No. 2, it provides the buffers for national trails and parkways, wildlife refuges and military battlefield parks—and I would also add military bases, such as Fort Bragg.

Fort Bragg—I call it the ''Pentagon of the Army''—in Fayetteville, NC, actually received conservation awards for the last several years for how they have treated the buffer zone around active military bases. Everybody is in conservation to some degree. It also was designed to provide matching grants to States and local governments for working forests, State and local parks, as well as recreation projects, what Senator COLLINS talked about.

A lot of my colleagues on the other side of the Capitol have said: We don't want to reauthorize this because it does not do anything. This ought to all go to State and local. Boy, I don't know how to do it any fairer than to let those who are really involved in conservation every day decide where the most valuable leverage of those dollars can go. As you notice, I am tongue-twisted because we always have a tendency here to say Federal dollars. These are not Federal dollars. These are dollars that were designed as royalties of the exploration of the Outer Continental Shelf. They should come to about $900 million a year. But the Land and Water Conservation Fund, when they go through this gauntlet of appropriations in Washington, seems to only get somewhere between $300 and $400 million a year.

On a continual basis, they have been cheated from what the American people embraced and said: We want you to have this. Imagine, what they could have done if they had the money. But that gets thrown into the general fund and dissipates. Some have said: You don't need to reauthorize this today. There is $20 billion in the Land and Water Conservation Fund. No, I hate to tell you, America. It is sort of like Social Security. We have used that money for something else. There is an IOU in there, but it has been designated for general funding reasons.

So, it is important that we not decouple the funding mechanism, which is the royalty, from the authorized program. Now, some have said: This is a land grab. Let me suggest to my colleagues that this is a land solution. This is actually one of the Federal Government programs that I can honestly say works. LWCF has supported

41,000 projects across the country in its life.

In my State alone, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has protected over 900 sites, from the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge to Mount Mitchell State Park, the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Pisgah National Forest. In North Carolina, outdoor recreation contributes $7.5 billion to our State's economy and supports 95,000 jobs. This is not just about conservation. It is about the economy.

It is hard for me to say to somebody from the West that the most visited national park in America is the Great Smokies, in Tennessee and North Carolina, where most Americans would think it is out where you are. The most traveled national treasure, the Blue Ridge Parkway, is the entry point to North Carolinas from Virginia. More Americans travel that road than any road in our Federal park system.

Now, let me just suggest that Senator DAINES is not the only one that has pictures. This is from the Pisgah National Forest, where we have many spectacular sites. But without the LWCF, we would not have protected this piece—an unbelievable environmental component. Now, they get better. This is a recent one—Catawba Falls. It is an LWCF success story. It was acquired in 2010 through LWCF money. It made this fall open to the public. So for my detractors who say LWCF shuts it down, it becomes part of the Federal Government, and nobody can use it, no, LWCF's mission is to open up treasures such as this for the use of the American people.

In the case that we put it to States, hopefully States convert that to access for hunters and to recreational use. As to the last one, I don't think Senator DAINES has one that looks like this—Chimney Rock. How do you not protect something like this? Chimney Rock is in North Carolina. The site is a good example of a project that will be suspended if LWCF is not renewed. It is probably one of North Carolina's most loved monuments, but expansion of the site will halt eventually if LWCF does not receive support.

You see, the Land and Water Conservation Fund is dollar-for-dollar the most effective government program that has ever existed. It is hard for me to believe, with as much support on both sides of the aisle as this fund has, that it would be so difficult to get a unanimous consent request. But I am committed to work with my colleagues who still have reservations for some reasons to try to work through those reservations and then to shorten our differences with our brethren on the House side who might not see this in the same light as I do.

But I think when most Americans see a picture like this, they see something to save, something to protect, something that is enjoyed not by Federal bureaucrats but by average folks who travel there over the Blue Ridge Parkway and end up at Chimney Rock, who go on the Blue Ridge Parkway and end up at the Great Smokies. They were not acquired because of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, but they are protected, in many ways, because of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

So I urge my colleagues, let's have a unanimous consent request. Let's pass this and send it to the House, and let's at some point in the not-too-distant future talk about a permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This should not be an exercise that we have every predetermined number of years. It should last as long as the revenue source, which is our ability to explore our natural resources. Those natural resources fund the preservation of these historic and significant landmarks of America.

I thank the Senator for his time.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DAINES. I want to thank the Senator from North Carolina, Mr. BURR. I thank you for your leadership on the LWCF. Senator BURR has been truly out in front, working first to get the temporary reauthorization here as a bridge until we get the permanent reauthorization. I appreciate the comments. See, this is not about a land grab. This is about a land solution, as Senator BURR said. It allows us, in many cases, to provide access to public lands that we currently do not have access to because they might be landlocked through private holdings.

So thank you, Senator BURR. In conclusion, I am hopeful that the momentum that we are seeing here in the Senate will lead the House to prioritize the LWCF reauthorization in the near future. It is vital that we permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund and do not allow authorization to lapse. We have less than 11 hours and this program will lapse. We need to get reauthorization passed, and get it on the President's desk, and get this signed.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I wish to join several Senators who have come to the floor to talk about the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I know Senator BURR and Senator DAINES have spoken, and I think there were several others who spoke about this very worthwhile program that has been on the books for a very long time. I come to the floor to say I support their effort. I support the idea that we should be able to get a unanimous consent request so that we can extend the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

I thought I would talk first a little bit about the history because my father, Stewart Udall, was one of the people who actually worked with Congress to create the Land and Water Conservation Fund in the 1960s. He worked with Wilbur Mills in the House of Representatives and a number of other Members of Congress. The idea at the time was, here we had this resource—offshore oil—and we were taking a resource that was irreplaceable—the idea that once you use it, it is gone—and we were saying: Why don't we dedicate some of those resources to the permanent protection of land, of parks, for the American people? So that was the idea behind it, and it was endorsed by a nationwide commission of very distinguished Americans who said: We aren't keeping up with the amount of parks and other public lands that our growing population needs. We all knew that the American people loved their parks, and the same is true today.

So this outdoor commission recommended something along this line of, how do we make sure we are able to create these great national parks and create parks at the State and the city level? So the fund was designed in such a way that there was a State-fund side of the program, and on the State-fund side of the program, you could take dollars that were dedicated to the State program, which would be Federal dollars, and match them at the State and local level and create a Federal park. So in most of your communities today, if you drive around and you see a beautiful park, if you go and look at the plaque, most of the time that plaque will say: Done in cooperation with the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

What local people have told me many times is that in the planning they do to try to create a new park—they have an area that is growing or they have a housing development that has gone in—they say: How do we get the money? Well, if they know there is going to be a Federal match and they are able to get the Federal money, they can do the planning. They can go to their local taxpayers, raise some funds, and then pool the money together and get a city park or a State park, that kind of thing.

As everybody knows well, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has funded Federal purchases of land, from our national parks, to national wildlife refuges, to many other public lands. For example, in my home State of New Mexico, we have 14 national parks. We have a brandnew national park that was just put into place within the last year called the Valles Caldera National Preserve, which is one of the newest parks in the country. Here you have about 89,000 acres which is a collapsed volcano that has been used in many different ways in the past but now is available for hunting, fishing, camping, and all sorts of outdoor recreation. So this is something the people of New Mexico know.

I think the crucial point to make here is the economic one. We don't have any doubt that investments in parks, wildlife refuges, and other Federal lands create many jobs outside those parks. They create jobs in the gateway communities, but they also create jobs in the outdoor industry. We have seen, with two new national

monuments that were just created in New Mexico, big economic growth 6 months and a year after the creation of those monuments. So this is about the economic integrity of our communities.

In less than 11 hours right now on the clock, the Land and Water Conservation Fund could expire. It has been in place for decades, and we could let it expire because of the gridlock here. Well, we aren't going to do that. And why aren't we going to do that? Because we have Members on both sides of the aisle who care about this.

I would like to say a word about Senator BURR. I have worked with him very well. He is a member of the International Conservation Caucus in the Senate, and he has taken a real interest in conservation around the world and has been a real leader. Senator BURR has been out front on this land and water conservation issue. He has led a letter to various officials that 53 Senators signed that said: We want the Land and Water Conservation Fund reauthorized before it expires. He has shown real leadership to make sure that as we approach this deadline, this doesn't happen.

Senator BURR was on the floor just a few minutes ago. I want to say to him and the other Senators who worked with him that I think it is very important that we continue to work in these last 11 hours to make sure the Land and Water Conservation Fund is continued. Obviously, what we are trying to do right now is a 60-day period, but, as Senator BURR mentioned, the important thing is permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Then the big task we need to get these Presidential candidates to face is we have to have the funding for it. It always had a funding level that was reasonable and rational and supported, but unfortunately we don't ever meet the funding level. The money is there. The money is in the fund. It comes out every year from the offshore oil resources into the fund; it is just taken for other purposes. So we have to make sure we get a permanent Land and Water Conservation Fund reauthorization and the funds in that are going to really make a difference.

Mr. President, I see my good friend Senator CASEY from Pennsylvania. I know he is waiting in line, and I am sure you are going to hear some wise words from him.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

OBAMACARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, the American people have gotten used to hearing bad news about their health care ever since the Democrats passed ObamaCare. It seems that each and every day there is another headline about another way that the health care law is hurting people. Last Wednesday there was a remarkable amount of bad news in just 1 day. The Wall Street Journal on Wednesday, September 23, had this headline: ''Health Insurers Defend Deals.''

If you flip the page over, the bottom half of that page has ''Cost of a family health plan tops $17,000'' with a chart of rising costs. The annual cost of an employer family health coverage, the portion paid by workers, continues to go up—1 day, one page. The top article is about a wave of health insurance company mergers which we have been seeing recently.

Now, the President said that his health care law would actually increase competition among insurance companies. But just like a lot of the other predictions that President Obama made, this one has not come true. You know, back in June, the insurance company Aetna announced plans to buy Humana. Then the company Anthem decided to buy Cigna.

Now, if these mergers are approved and continue to go through, it means that the five largest insurance companies in the United States will now be down to three. The President said there would be more competition. Well, Americans are about to have much less competition. It is not only because of the giant insurance company mergers. You know, ObamaCare also set up health co-ops in 24 States. Now, these co-ops were supposed to add competition to help keep prices down.

Taxpayers put up almost $2.5 billion to help these companies get started. Over the past few months, what has happened? These co-ops have been dropping like flies. Just the other day, regulators in New York shut down the largest ObamaCare co-op in the country. Why? Because it lost so much money. Now 215,000 New Yorkers have fewer options for where they can go to buy Washington-mandated insurance. This is the fourth co-op to fail in the past few months. Another one failed right before it. It had not even enrolled a single person. Think of that: Government loans set up a co-op that doesn't enroll anyone and closes shop. There is only one co-op of the original 24 that is actually making any money so it can stay in business.

Look, the American people know they are not getting the increased competition the President has promised. They also know they are not getting the lower prices the President has promised.

Another article came out last Wednesday that talked about how much more Americans are paying for their health care. This was a September 23 New York Times headline: ''Health insurance deductibles rising faster than wages.'' ''Health insurance deductibles rising faster than wages.'' Here it is—unaffordable care. This is from 2010 to 2015. Wages are up 10 percent, premiums up 24 percent, deductibles up 67 percent. The article describes a recent study by the Kaiser Family Foundation. According to Kaiser, health insurance premiums for a single person have gone up more than twice as fast as people's earnings since ObamaCare became law.

We are talking about all of the people that get their health insurance through work, which is about 150 million Americans. This is not just a small group of people. This is all of the people that get their insurance through work. Deductibles have gone up almost seven times as much as earnings. It is an enormous hit to the finances of American families. The article talked about how these high deductibles are hurting a woman named Beth Landrum. She is 52. She is a teacher.

The articles says that about 2 years ago, ''Beth saw the deductible on her family's plan increase to $3,300 a year.'' She is a teacher. She is 52—$3,300 a year for the deductible under Obama's health care law.

So a couple years ago was when a lot of these ObamaCare mandates were really starting to bite. The woman survived a brain tumor 10 years ago. So here she is. She has insurance. She had a brain tumor 10 years ago, successfully treated, but she is putting off having the MRI that has been recommended by her doctor. She says: ''My doctor's mad at me because I haven't had the MRI.''

They want to see if there is any recurrence of the tumor. She said that she and her husband need to save up money to pay for the test, to pay for the deductible—the $3,300 deductible. She has health insurance under ObamaCare, and she can no longer afford to get care—coverage without care. The President continues to ignore this fact about his unaffordable health care law. You cannot afford to get care, not under ObamaCare.

Now, President Obama promised that people would save $2,500 per family per year under the health care law. But average premiums are up nearly $4,000 since the law passed. Does the President really believe it is affordable? The new study by Kaiser only looked at insurance that people get, as I say, through their jobs. It did not look at the deductibles people are paying when they buy their own insurance through the ObamaCare exchanges.

President Obama said that these plans would be cheaper than a cell phone bill. That is what he said—cheaper than a cell phone—easier to use than Amazon for shopping on the web and cheaper than a cell phone. Well, let's take a look at the article in the New York Times. That is not how it has worked out for Rebecca Bullard.

Now, Rebecca is 27. She purchased her plan through her State exchange for $129 a month. To get that plan, she had to accept a deductible of $6,000. But she has ObamaCare. Oh yeah, the President can say: I did her a favor—a $6,000 deductible.

The article says that when she was worried that she had a cracked rib—do you know how she chose to take care of it? She chose to ask friends on social media about what to do rather than go to a doctor because of the ObamaCare that was actually not worth very much to her. That is how concerned she was

about paying the out-of-pocket costs that ObamaCare brought her. She said, ''Now I don't even want to go to the doctor.''

Is that what the President promised the American people—deductibles so high that people don't even want to go to their doctor?

People may have coverage, but they cannot afford care. It is unaffordable under the President's plan and mandates. People are paying more and they are getting less. So it is not surprising that this administration is starting to worry. They have to figure out how to convince people that it is worth signing up for this outrageously expensive ObamaCare insurance. That is what the Wall Street Journal said in another article on September 23. There is a picture of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Sylvia Burwell. There is a picture of her right here on this page. It says: ''Insuring More People Seen as Tough.'' According to this article, the Secretary of Health and Human Services says that ''this open enrollment is going to be tougher than last year.''

We know it is going to be tough for families who are getting hit with higher premiums and other costs. Now, the Obama administration isn't worried about these people; what the Obama administration is now worried about is how tough it is going to be to sign up enough customers for this awful law. You know, by now they were supposed to have 21 million people signed up for ObamaCare by next year. Right now they have fewer than 10 million. They are not even halfway to where they need to be and where they said they would be. What this means is if they don't get more young, healthy customers to sign up, this whole system is likely to collapse. That is why the Obama administration is worried. They are worried about the impacts of their ability to sustain this law.

There is a reason that people haven't signed up. The people who haven't signed up yet know this insurance is not a good deal for them. It is not good for them personally; it is not worth it. About half of the people who still don't have insurance have less than $100 in savings. How is someone with less than $100 in savings supposed to pay a $6,000 deductible?

Why won't the President answer these questions? Why won't the Democrats come to this floor and answer these questions? I haven't seen a Democrat come to address these issues or any of these headlines.

Look, President Obama promised the American people that his health care law would produce lower costs and produce more choice. Instead, he has given people fewer choices, more powerful insurance companies, higher deductibles, and higher premiums.

We have had too many of these alarming headlines—and that is in just 1 day alone—and too much bad news about ObamaCare. The American people get it. It is a bad deal for them personally.

President Obama is a lameduck. He forced a terrible program through Congress. It is time for Democrats in Congress to sit down with Republicans and start talking about the kinds of health care reforms that the American people need, that the American people want, and that the American people deserve.

I yield the floor.

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

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

FEDERAL PERKINS LOAN PROGRAM

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to speak today about the Perkins Loan Program, which we spent some time on yesterday and over the last couple of weeks. Senator BALDWIN from Wisconsin, who is with us now on the floor, has worked so hard on this, as have many others. We have more than a quarter of the Senate working together to try and get an extension of the Perkins Loan Program.

Many Americans are familiar with this program. It is one of the best ways to guarantee access to higher education for young people across the country. We have always said, and I have always said—and we will say it again—if young people can learn more now, they will earn more later. It is not just a rhyme. There is a direct connection between learning and earning in the context of early education as well as higher education.

We need to make sure all students, regardless of their income or the circumstances of their birth, have a fair shot to go to college and have the opportunity to reach their full potential. Perkins allows those students to do just that. These are fixed-rate, low-interest loans meant for students with exceptional financial needs. Because these loans are part of a revolving fund, as one student pays them off, another student can use the dollars to receive a loan.

By way of example in one State, in Pennsylvania, in the academic year 2013–2014, some 40,000 students at some 100 colleges and universities were able to go to school because of these loans. That 40,000 student number in Pennsylvania is a much bigger number nationwide, of course—almost 540,000. The actual number is 539,000 students.

So for many students this is the choice between going to college and not going at all. It is that stark. For example, the Coalition of Higher Education Assistance Organizations tells us that one quarter of all loan recipients are from families with incomes less than $30,000 a year. Unfortunately, because of inaction here in the Congress, these students will be left high and dry if we don't take action.

I shared a story yesterday of Nikki Ezzolo, who is going to school and is a recent graduate of Edinboro University in Northwestern Pennsylvania. I mentioned yesterday also Kayla McBride—she is from Temple—and I will refer back to her story in a moment. But when we consider Nikki's story or Kayla's or so many other young people in Pennsylvania or across the country, we have to focus on what our priorities are here in the Senate.

We do have a bipartisan opportunity here. Democrats and Republicans are coming together to extend the Perkins Loan Program. By way of example, when you consider those students in Pennsylvania, here is what it breaks down to when you go institution by institution. This will not be a full recitation of all the institutions in Pennsylvania, but here are a few. In Pennsylvania, this is what this program could mean for individual students and schools: At Temple University, 6,200-some students; at Penn State, 3,100; at the University of Pittsburgh, 2,800; and at West Chester University, 1,000. So those are the kind of numbers just to give a few examples of the impact.

We know Perkins has been part of our law and part of the life of our colleges and universities for decades. Some 30 million Americans have benefited. We have to consider what this means for those students, what this means for our States and, of course, what it means for the rest of the country.

I know we are going to be having more of a discussion here and offering a consent request, so at this time I will yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, while it appears we will avert a government shutdown, another serious deadline with serious consequences looms over this body. Tonight, unless the Senate acts by midnight, the Federal Perkins Loan Program will expire, impacting the education of over one-half million students across America. I am here now to call on all of my colleagues to join me in supporting the extension of this critical investment in our Nation's students.

I am not alone in my desire to see us take action instead of creating what I would consider another manufactured crisis—a crisis of our own making. In fact, we have already seen strong bipartisan support for this investment in our future. Senators PORTMAN, COLLINS, KIRK, AYOTTE, and THUNE have joined with more than 20 Senate Democrats on a resolution urging the continuation of the Federal Perkins Loan Program supporting low-income students in their pursuit of a higher education.

Yesterday Senators COLLINS, PORTMAN, and AYOTTE joined me and Senator CASEY and Senator MURRAY here on the Senate floor in support of saving this program. I am pleased the junior Senator from New Hampshire and Senator CASEY are here with me now, once again calling to protect this incredibly important investment.

On Monday, our colleagues in the House of Representatives unanimously passed a measure that would extend this student loan program for 1 year, and I am here to call on my colleagues in the Senate to do the same.

While I look forward to a much broader conversation about improving Federal support for students as we look to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, we can't sit idly by and watch it expire as America's students are left with such uncertainty.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 3594

Therefore, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 3594, which is at the desk; that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Reserving the right to object, rather than making a statement, I hope it will be suitable to the Senator from Wisconsin for me to make my explanation of why I am objecting after I object. And I will object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, the goal here is to help students. The goal here is to find ways to help college students find easier ways to apply to a college and to avoid overborrowing. The goal would be to give them a year-round Pell grant. The goal would be to simplify the application form they have to complete. The goal would be to keep the interest rates as low as we can. The goal would be to make it easier to repay student loans. That is our goal.

Our education committee, in which the Senator from Wisconsin and the Senator from Pennsylvania are very valuable members, is completing work on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act with just those goals. We have had eight hearings. We are considering a number of bipartisan proposals to, as I said, simplify the grants and loans for college, to provide for year-round Pell Grants, to make it easier to repay student loans and to discourage overborrowing, which is weighing down these students.

One of the most important of those proposals, which was recommended to us by witnesses, is that we should simplify the process so there is one grant and one loan. That would be a Pell grant and a loan. In the last reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 2008, Congress agreed to sunset the Perkins Loan Program, and that is what is happening now. I support sunsetting this program, although students who currently receive a Perkins loan would continue to do so.

As I said, our committee is hopefully finishing by the end of the year our work on reviewing our student loan programs, including Perkins loans. The Perkins loan has a higher interest rate than other undergraduate loans. It does not give students the advantage of participating in income-based repayment programs—this is available in the law for all students receiving Direct Loans which are not affected by this discussion—which allow students to pay back their student loans at no more than 10 to 15 percent of their disposable income every year, and if after 20 to 25 years it is not repaid, it is forgiven. You can't get that with a Perkins loan.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, reauthorizing the Perkins loan will cost nearly $5 billion over 10 years. Many witnesses before our committee have said that $5 billion would be better spent paying for more Pell grants, which will be necessary for simplifying the student aid application, from authorizing a year-round Pell grant and from simplifying the repayment process.

So the question is, Do you spend the $5 billion for that or do you spend it for a program with a higher interest rate and without an income based repayment program, and which many of our witnesses said it is time for this program to expire? I am one of a bipartisan group of Senators who propose we replace the Perkins Loan program with student loans that are simpler, have a lower interest rate and more generous repayment opportunities.

We will finish our review of higher education by the end of the year. It will be ready for the full Senate. We can look at all the various loan programs. We loan more than $100 billion a year. The Perkins Loan program is a very small part of that. All those other loan programs are still available at a lower rate with a better income based repayment program. In the meantime, as I said, students who currently have Perkins loans will continue to have them while we continue our work.

So our goal is to simplify the system, make it easier for students to apply for grants and loans, allow them to have year-round Pell grants, allow them to not overborrow so much, and to allow them to repay their loans back easier. The Perkins loan is not as effective a loan in meeting those goals as the other loans that we have.

So I object at least until we have a chance to further continue our review in the Senate education committee.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I am very disappointed that my offer to extend the Federal Perkins Loan Program was just blocked by my Republican colleague from Tennessee. While I understand and, frankly, I share his desire to have a broader conversation about Federal student aid as part of the Higher Education Act's reauthorization effort, I do not think it is right or fair to end this program today with nothing to replace it to the detriment of thousands of students in need.

I want to mention briefly the issue of the cost of its reauthorization because when the decision was made to sunset the program, a clawback provision was included that basically collects the loan funds back from the institutions that loan it out. It is actually a revolving fund—which I will return to later—which makes it such a fiscally responsible loan program.

When I travel around my home State of Wisconsin, one of the things I hear the most about these days from my constituents is their frustration that Congress isn't doing enough to make higher education more affordable and more accessible. Yet, today, the fact that we just saw a single Senator stand up and reject a bipartisan and commonsense measure to do just that is, frankly, a perfect example of why my constituents and the American people are so upset with Washington.

Since 1958 the Federal Perkins Loan Program has been successful in helping Americans access affordable higher education with low-interest loans for students who cannot borrow or afford more expensive private student loans. In Wisconsin, the program provides more than 20,000 low-income students with more than $41 million in aid. But the impacts of this program aren't just isolated to the Badger State. In fact, the Federal Perkins Loan Program aids over half a million students with financial need each year, and it does that across 1,500 institutions of higher education.

Schools originate, service, and collect the fixed-interest-rate loans. And what is more, institutions maintain loans available for future students because it is managed within a revolving fund. Since the program's creation, institutions have invested millions of their own dollars, their own funds, into the program. And in addition to making higher education accessible for low-income students, the program serves as an incentive for people who wish to go into public service by offering targeted loan cancellations for specific professions in areas of national need, such as teaching, nursing, and law enforcement.

As a Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and as a Senator representing a State with such a rich history of higher education, it is one of my top priorities to fight to ensure that the Federal Perkins Loan Program continues for generations to come. But, unfortunately, as we just saw, a single Senator stood up today and said no to students across America who ask for nothing more than an opportunity to pursue their dreams—students such as Benjamin Wooten, a 2004 UW-Madison graduate and small business owner from Genoa City. His family fell on really hard times when he was attending school. Ben told me:

> The fact that I didn't have to pay interest while I was in school was a huge help to me.
>
> I was attending school full time, working and trying to live on a meager budget. . . . I am a grateful and successful small business owner.

I paid my loan off in full about a year ago with pride and excitement.

I know that when I repaid my loan it was returned to a revolving fund and will be lent back out to other students in need.

Today this body has stood up and said no to students such as Brittany McAdams, a medical school student with a passion for pediatrics and a passion for helping the most vulnerable among us—something that doesn't always yield a significant paycheck. Brittany said to me:

I want to be able to treat patients from all socioeconomic levels, despite their ability to pay.

In other words, I want to do important work for less money than most other physicians. . . . The Perkins Loan is so valuable because it does not collect interest while we are in school.

To me, that says the government believes that what I am doing with my life is important.

That our country needs more doctors willing to tackle primary care.

That while we need to pay for our graduate degrees, that they are going to do their part to make it just a bit easier.

The Perkins Loan makes me feel valued and respected and even more passionate about my work.

Finally, I am disappointed that, because of this body's inaction here today, we are letting down students such as Nayeli Spahr. Nayeli was raised by a single immigrant mother who worked two full-time jobs. She attended ten different schools in three different States before she finished high school. Without the Federal Perkins Loan Program, Nayeli said her opportunity to get a college education would have been ''an illusionary dream.'' Today Nayeli is the first in her family to finish college and is now in her last year of medical school and is planning to work with those in underserved urban communities. She finished by telling me:

The Perkins loan program helped me reach this point.

And, its existence is essential to provide that opportunity for other young adults wanting to believe in themselves and to empower their communities to be better.

Please save it!

We don't have to look very far to find the very significant impact this investment has on American students. There are thousands of stories like the few I just shared, representing thousands of students who are still benefiting from the opportunities provided to them by this hugely successful program.

I am disappointed that the bipartisan effort I have led has been obstructed. I will continue to fight to extend this support for America's students, and I hope the senior Senator from Tennessee will change his mind so we can find a way to show the half million students who depend on the Federal Perkins Loans that we stand with them and are committed to helping them build a stronger future for themselves and our country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT). The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I come today to the floor first to thank the Senator from Tennessee for taking my call last night as we discussed his objection to extending this, which, from my standpoint, for the many reasons my college from Wisconsin stated, I think is a reasonable proposal to extend the Perkins Loan Program for a 1-year time period. But I certainly understand some of the concerns my colleague from Tennessee has with this particular loan program—and, quite honestly, all the loan programs—often in terms of the affordability of college loans.

But as the Senator from Tennessee stated, we share the same goal here. Everyone in this body really does want every American to have the opportunity to get a good education, to get the tools so they can lead a productive life and build a good life for themselves and their families. That is a goal we all share, and we understand the importance of education and the affordability of it—making it accessible to every American. But that is the point I want to make here.

We held a pretty interesting hearing in our Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and we really took a look at these student loan programs and the potential effect on the affordability of college. In testimony today, we certainly found out that the student loan program has exploded over the last 20 years, from a level of about $100 billion in 1994 to now $1.3 trillion. On average, students graduating with a 4-year degree are about $29,000 in debt. That is a concern. One of the reasons we are concerned about affordability is that the cost of college—again, in testimony—has increased somewhere between 2.5 and 2.8 times the rate of inflation over the last few number of decades. I think it is a legitimate question to ask: Why? What is so different about what colleges and universities spend their money on that the cost would increase 2.5 to 2.8 times the rate of inflation?

We had some explanation provided to our committee today, and it does involve Federal Government involvement, for example, in the accreditation process. We had one witness state that the supply of colleges since the mid-1970s has increased about 14 percent, and yet, because we want to have more access for college, the demand for college education has increased 111 percent. Part of the problem, in terms of the increasing cost of college, is the fact that we are creating barriers to entry through the accreditation process. So I think we have to take a very serious look at that.

Another thing that was quite troubling during our hearing is that there have been a number of studies, including one from the Federal Reserve Bank in New York, one from Northeastern University, that show that 40 to 50 percent of recent college graduates are either unemployed or underemployed, which means they are getting these college degrees and are not being able to put them to good use. That is something we should really be taking a look at.

Again, I think it was a reasonable proposal to extend the Perkins Loan Program for another year for many of the reasons my colleague from Wisconsin stated. A lot of people are counting on these. But I fully respect what the Senator from Tennessee is trying to do—to consolidate these programs, to make them more streamlined, to address the affordability issue—which really is something that we are really ignoring far too often in this body as we take the Federal Government and we involve it more and more in higher education. We really have to take a serious look at what the Federal Government's involvement has actually been in terms of the unintended consequence of making college less accessible because we have made it so much more unaffordable.

Again, I thank the Senator from Tennessee for taking my phone call and listening to my viewpoint. And I certainly appreciate his dedication to trying to achieve that same goal that we all share—providing the accessibility for every American to have a good quality education so they can build a good life for themselves and their family.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I have great respect for the senior Senator from Tennessee, but I disagree with him on his objection to extending the Perkins Loan Program for 1 year. This is why I disagree. I very much appreciate the work he has laid out and the goals he has laid out in reauthorizing the Higher Education Act. Certainly, I think we all want to make sure it is easier for students to repay their loans, and I share the goal of also making college more affordable and more accessible for everyone.

But as I look at this timeframe of where we are with the work that will be done by the HELP Committee, which the Senator from Tennessee chairs, by the end of the year, this is, unfortunately, what happens too often in Washington. With the Perkins Loan Program, 5,000 of our students in New Hampshire receive a loan from this program. So it is important to 5,000 Granite Staters.

If we wait until the end of the year and let it lapse, and then the Committee does its work, there are so many other pressing things that need to be addressed in the Senate—this is pressing too—and if we don't get to it, we are in the position where the Perkins loans lapse.

I appreciate the work done by the HELP Committee—which I hope is bipartisan—to address this important issue of making it easier for students. But I don't think we should let this program lapse in the interim. I think there is a very reasonable position here

to say, let's extend this program and not leave people hanging out there.

Apparently, the House of Representatives agreed unanimously to extend it a year, to give that breathing room, and send over here earlier this week the Higher Education Extension Act of 2015, to do that for the students who are including the Perkins loan as part of their student aid package and, as I understand it, for those for whom this loan makes sense—low-income students, vulnerable students, the ones we want to fight for here—to make sure they have access to the American dream. That is about $2,000 for students who are some of the most financially in need.

I understand there are other loans available. But when you look at a student aid package, it is usually a combination of loans, especially if you are someone who comes from a background where you aren't able to pay for college yourself. I think the reasonable position here would be this: Let's extend this; let's provide that certainty while the HELP Committee is doing the work that I think we all agree on needs to be done to address higher costs, to make it easier for students, to give more transparency in this system for students and for parents, and to make it easier for students to repay these loans.

I am here fighting for the 5,000 students in New Hampshire and for others like them. I don't want them to be a victim of Washington uncertainty or those who come after them for whom the Perkins loans make sense. Until we get to this broader discussion, which is an important discussion, let's not let this lapse on behalf of those students. I think there is a reasonable position that allows the important work of the HELP Committee to go forward, but it extends this important loan program.

With all the respect I have for the senior Senator from Tennessee, this is something on which I agree with my colleague from Wisconsin and others who have said: Let's not leave them hanging on this issue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, the Senator from New Hampshire is always eloquent as she is fighting for students in New Hampshire. I want to assure her and any of those 5,000 New Hampshire students who already have a Perkins loan are not affected by this. In fact, almost no students across the country who have a student loan are affected by this. There are about $8 billion worth of outstanding Perkins loans out of $1.3 trillion in student loans. We are talking about less than 1 percent of all student loans. We are talking about students that might be awarded loans a year from now. No one who currently has a Perkins loan is affected by this.

What is our goal here? Our goal is to help students afford college. How do you help students afford college, No. 1, by continuing a program that has a higher interest rate than the loan they could get in a regular student loan? No, the Perkins loan rate is higher than the interest rate on a Direct Loan that every single undergraduate student who applies for federal aid is entitled to. No. 2, by continuing the Perkins loan which does not have the income-based repayment program offered in the Direct Loan program?

What is that income-based repayment plan? It says that you can pay your loan back over 20 to 25 years, not paying more than 10 percent to 15 percent of your disposable income each year. If you are a teacher or a firefighter or if you have a lower-income position, you are not treated the same as someone with a higher income. You pay back less because you earn less. If you get to the end of the 20 years and you haven't paid it back, your loan is forgiven. That is the law today. That is a loan that is available to every single student going to college. A low-income student can take advantage of that.

What we are seeking to do in our discussions—and they are indeed bipartisan as are the proposals to change the structure of the loan programs—is to say that instead of a combination of student loans, which is where you have a whole stack of confusing student loans and you pay one to this part of the Federal Government and another to this part, you will have one student loan at the lowest possible rate. Under our proposal, you will make only one payment to the Federal Government, and you will have the advantage of a 20-year repayment. If you haven't paid it off, it is forgiven.

We will simplify your application for that loan from a 108-question form, which I can't hold up according to the Senate rules, to 2 questions, and we will simplify the process for paying it back. That is how we are proposing to replace the Perkins Loan program, but we haven't made a decision about that.

We have had eight hearings. I am working with Senator MURRAY, the senior Democrat on the education committee, and other members of the committee to make sure that we come to a conclusion. I am not sure what conclusion we will come to. But the argument I am making is the same argument that so many witnesses before our committee said: Simplify the student aid process. You are discouraging low-income kids whose parents may never have gone to college. Those parents may say: Ok, you can go to college and we will help you, but in your senior year of high school you need to fill out this 108-question form requiring information about your taxes before you file your tax return. And sorry, you can't use your Pell grant year-round.

After completing college, there is a complex repayment form. The program is generous, but it is so complex that you will never use it. We are losing millions of students, most of them lower income, most of them are the first in their families to go to college, because of the complexity of our student aid system. We have bipartisan proposals to simplify it, and this is part of that. Instead of getting three Federal loans, you get one. You will be able to potentially borrow more, but you will get a loan with the lowest rate and a generous income based repayment program. Why wouldn't that be a better deal for the students we are trying to help? Why would we extend something with a higher rate and no generous repayment program? That is the argument here.

I see no need to rush through the House and the Senate a subject that we are considering in our committee—and debating it fully in a bipartisan way. We plan to mark up and have ready for the full Senate our proposal by the end of the year. I see no need to rush that through so fast. Every student with a Perkins loan today still has one tomorrow. Those who might apply for one next year will have time to do that if for some reason the program is reinstated. They will also be able to apply for a Federal loan that now exists with a lower interest rate and a better repayment plan. That is my reason for standing here today because we are trying to help students afford college by simplifying the process of applications and the process of paying their loan back. You don't make it easier with a loan with a high interest rate, no income based repayment program and a confusing bunch of loans.

You could come back and say: But this is an additional loan, and that would be true. We haven't decided yet exactly how much a full-time student may borrow from the Federal Government in our new reauthorization. This is a third loan on top of the other two federal loans. How many Senators have stood up on this floor and complained about the overborrowing of students, about how we have $1 trillion-plus of loans outstanding, and about how students can't pay back their loans? What we are saying to students is that we don't want to encourage you to overborrow. We don't want you borrowing more than you can afford. What we want to offer you is a plain, clear, simple opportunity to borrow an amount of money at a low interest rate with a generous repayment plan, and we want to give the university you are attending more latitude in explaining to you whether you can pay that back or not. Now they are handcuffed. Who is putting them in handcuffs? The federal government is. We have Federal laws that make it hard for universities to counsel students about how much to borrow. I don't think we are doing students any favor by extending this loan. We are not cutting anybody out of a loan who already has one. In fact, we are offering all students a low-interest-rate loan.

The last point I want to make is that it is a revolving fund. It is true that the Federal Government has contributed about two-thirds of the revolving fund and the universities themselves contribute the rest. I heard from university presidents that they find this

loan useful as they put together their financial aid package. I have heard all of that. But for the last number of years, the Federal Government hasn't been contributing to the Perkins fund. For the last number of years, Congress has said that it is time to sunset the Perkins Loan program. Both President Bush and President Obama at one time or another have recommended that we sunset the Perkins Loan program. Many of the witnesses before our committee said the same thing. They said: You are overwhelming these students and their families. Give them something simple. Give them something direct. Give them one grant. Give them one loan.

That is our proposal—one grant, one loan, and the loan will be at the lowest possible rate—which is currently lower than a Perkins loan—with the most generous repayment terms that are responsible. The Perkins loan doesn't have those repayment plans. Make it available to every single student at an amount that we would agree upon and then allow the universities, colleges, and technical schools to be able to counsel these students. Don't borrow too much, because a loan is not a grant. You can keep a grant. You are going to have to pay back a loan.

There has even been some talk—and I support the concept—of saying to the universities and schools that you are going to have to have some skin in the game. If you are one of those schools or universities with too great a default rate on your student loans, you will have to pay some of the amount borrowed because we want you to take some responsibility for it.

I, actually, am not one of those Americans who is so concerned about the amount of student loans outstanding today. I think it is a pretty healthy indication in many ways. We have $1.2 trillion or $1.3 trillion in outstanding student loans. We have about $900 billion in outstanding car loans. The average student loan for a 4-year graduate is about $29,000. The average car loan is about $27,000. Your car will depreciate. Your degree will appreciate. Some say it will earn you a million dollars more in your lifetime than you would otherwise.

The unemployment rate in America today for Americans with a 4-year degree is 3 percent. The average income for those Americans is in the mid-40s. I think it is a pretty good investment if we can say to Americans: Go on to the community colleges where the average tuition is $3,300—and the average Pell grant is about $3,300—if you are low-income. For all intents and purposes, it is free today for most low-income students. Go on and earn that degree and improve your skills. That is the way you make it up the ladder in this country. In order to help, we will loan you some money at a lower rate with a generous repayment term on top of that if you need it. But we are going to take steps to make sure we don't loan you more than you can pay back.

I think that is a pretty good picture of the American dream—the unemployment rate of 3 percent, the average income that is almost twice what the average total student loan debt of an individual, a chance for 2 years of community college or any 2-year school if you are low-income, with the taxpayer paying the average tuition of $3,300. That is a pretty good system. We are trying to make it better. But the right way to do this is to take all of this discussion that we have had in a bipartisan way—all of these things I have talked about have been proposed by Democratic Senators and Republican Senators—and finish our work in the committee, which is the way our Senate is supposed to work, and then recommend to the full Senate what the student loan program ought to be. If some Senators want to say that we want to take $5 billion and for the next 10 years authorize extending the Perkins Loan Program—that is what it costs, according to the Congressional Budget Office—I am probably going to stand up and say: Let's take that $5 billion and instead give a year-round Pell grant for students. Let's pay for the Pell grants for all those students who are persuaded to go to college because we have simplified their application form and their repayment form. We are going to have a lot more Pell grants, a lot more students getting degrees. If we do, we will have a lot more Americans joining the middle class.

We are all for helping students. We want you to succeed. But my argument is that so far I am not persuaded that you succeed more with a Perkins loan that has a higher rate and no repayment program than you do with a student loan that I have described that is already available to you with a lower rate and a generous repayment program. This is a healthy debate. It is one we are having in our committee. Actually, I am glad it has gotten the attention of enough Senators. We are hearing from college presidents all over the country. Soon we will have this debate in our full committee and then on the Senate floor. I look forward to it, and I think the students of America will benefit from the work we are doing in a bipartisan way.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, as many of my colleagues know, I have been coming to the floor for 22 weeks now—every time the Senate has been in session during this cycle—to address another waste of the week, and that is what I am doing here this afternoon.

The amount of money we would be able to save that has been designated as waste, fraud, and abuse has an estimated total of nearly $116 billion, and though people continue to say we can't cut a dime because every dime of taxpayer money is used for an essential function, that is simply not true.

While we have not been able to come forward with what I believe is absolutely necessary to stop this continued deficit spending and plunge into debt—the larger issues that we will be dealing with later in this session—we can at least hopefully stand together and support those documented spending waste, fraud, and abuse issues that have been presented to us by the various nonpartisan agencies that audit and look at how we control our spending.

Today I will add some more money to that amount by discussing an agency called the National Technical Information Service, NTIS. This is an agency within the Department of Commerce. It was created during the Truman administration to keep all the reports produced by the Federal Government in a central location and make them available to the American public through sale. The idea here was that various research papers, and other studies which were conducted by various agencies in the government, would be centrally located in one place and that the American people would have access to that research and information. They had to pay for the receipt of that, and it was a modest pay-for, but the money they paid for that was to be used to pay for the administrative costs of storing this information and providing it and making it available for people. Frankly, it was a good idea. It was the only way we could truly access that. It had important information that the government could access as well.

Times have changed. Obviously, the way we store information and the way we make information available to people is entirely different than it was back during the Truman administration some 70 years ago. Today the American people access and conduct research using a variety of tools and methods, largely online and largely for free. The abundance of free information has obviously greatly decreased the need for the NTIS.

In fact, last year, the Government Accountability Office, GAO, found that three-quarters of the documents added to the NTIS collection in the past 20 years can be found elsewhere, and 95 percent of it can be found for free by using a basic search on Google.

When testifying before the Senate, the Government Accountability Office said ''the legislation that established NTIS requires it to be financially self-sustaining to the fullest extent feasible. However, the increasing availability of the information that NTIS collects and disseminates—primarily through the Web—has called the service's basic statutory function into question.''

Well, that is a mild way of saying: Look, this is an outdated, antiquated way of providing benefits to the American people to get these scientific papers and research. They no longer have to go through NTIS to get this information. It is available for free.

The irony here is that if you do dial up NTIS on their Web site, a large message comes up—first thing on the screen—saying ''Before purchasing from NTIS, you may want to check for free access from'' and then they list those Web sites. NTIS says you can use their Web site to get this information for free. They list the U.S. Government Publishing Office's Digital System Web site, the Federal Government Internet portal, usa.gov, or a Web search conducted by a commercial search firm, such as Google.

In fact, one of my colleagues, who retired from the Senate just last year, actually introduced a bill called Just Google It Act, a clear indication that we no longer need this agency and it no longer serves its function. That has been introduced again by Senator KIRK this year, and I have cosponsored it. This is an agency that is saying: Don't use us anymore. You can get it for free, and we will even show you how to get it for free. Why are we covering the cost of NTIS at a rate of $880 million over 10 years when that savings could be applied to reducing our deficit, giving money back, and not requiring that amount of money to come from taxpayers—or better used for another essential purpose of the Federal Government.

What we are putting up and adding to our ''Waste of the Week'' this week is another $880 million, bringing our total to nearly $117 billion of savings that has been declared through nonpartisan government agencies that oversee our spending as waste, fraud, and abuse. So Members cannot come down here and simply say: Where are we going to get the money to cover this or do that? They can't come down here and say: It is impossible to cut any more spending. We have done all that we can do, and now we need more revenue. That is simply not the case.

Each week I will continue to bring up examples that are documented by nonpartisan agencies to be totally unnecessary. This is a small step in the direction of trying to deal with a much larger problem. That much larger problem is something I have been dealing with since I came back to the Senate after the election of 2010, and I am going to continue to talk about it even though it is not foremost on many people's minds right now, given all of the dysfunction and other problems we are dealing with. We must not ignore the fact that we are continuing to act on a deficit-spending basis, meaning we spend more than we take in each year, and we have to borrow the money to cover the difference.

Our national debt has moved to a staggering level of nearly $19 trillion, and almost $9 trillion of that amount accumulated in less than a decade. It was more than 200 years before we first reached the $1 trillion mark. We have been on a spending binge ever since then, and it has to stop or we will pay a huge price. The debt collector will be at the door.

We need to make a major effort, and hopefully we will make an effort this year. I have already announced that I will not support any spending effort to continue funding for this government unless we put some policy changes in to start us down the path to fiscal responsibility. We are working hard on that, and I will outline a number of ways in which we can do that.

In the meantime, I am saying: If you can't go big, let's at least start small. Let's at least take those things that we already know have been declared waste, fraud, and abuse by nonpartisan agencies. At least we are taking steps in the right direction.

Mr. President, with that, I yield back my time.

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. 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.

BIPARTISAN DIALOGUE IN THE SENATE

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I rise today with my friend and colleague, TOM UDALL, the Senator from New Mexico, to talk about how to come together to fix our broken Senate and specifically to invite our colleagues from both sides of the aisle to engage in a dialogue together to address the dysfunction that we see so evident on the floor of the Senate day after day. What we have come to understand in the course of 2015 is that the frustration with a broken Senate is a bipartisan, equal opportunity frustration.

In 2013 and 2014, Democrats were in the majority and Republicans were in the minority. The majority was frustrated and couldn't get onto bills to start debate, and when we did get on the bills, we couldn't start the process of having amendments; the time on the floor was being wasted. Now here we are in 2015 and the roles are reversed. Republicans are in control, and Republicans are frustrated that we can't get to bills and have them on the floor and that the amendment process is broken. And on amendments, it affects the minority and the majority. So here we have Democrats and Republicans with something deeply in common: a common interest in fixing this broken Senate.

The perspective I bring to this goes back to when I first came to this Chamber in the summer of 1976. I was an intern for Senator Hatfield. I was assigned to work on a bill called the Tax Reform Act of 1976 that came up on the floor of the Senate. I was assigned to follow the debate because, of course, we didn't have television coverage at that point and we didn't have emails at that point. I would meet Senator Hatfield out at the elevators, just outside these beautiful double doors, and brief him on the amendment, and he would go in and vote. Then, an hour later, we would do it all over again. Debate was largely on amendments that were relevant to the main underlying bill. There was no delaying, no wasted time between amendments. There was no agreement that had to be negotiated between the Democratic and the Republican leaders; it was simply whoever got the attention of the Presiding Officer after the preceding amendment was completed. In a lot of ways, it represented how the Senate had operated since our founding.

But today we are in a very different place. Today we are in a place where multiple aspects of the Senate are broken. We all wrestle with getting bills to the floor. We wrestle with wasting time and not being able to bring our amendments forward. We wrestle with the responsibility of the Senate to execute advice and consent responsibility on nominations in a responsible fashion. So I wish to speak a little bit about these three areas, and, again, at the core of my message is an invitation to a bipartisan dialogue to try to address these issues.

Let's talk first about the motions to proceed to the floor. These motions used to be routine. This is a chart which shows when there was a necessity of doing a cloture motion—a motion to close debate on a motion to get to a bill. This chart goes back to about 1915. From 1915 through 1960, no one ever contested a vote on whether to bring a bill to the floor. It just was not done. It was a social contract. It was voted either up or down; let's go to the bill or not go to the bill.

Starting in 1962—and we see the accelerating number of red bars—it became more and more routine, through times when Democrats were in the majority and through times when Republicans were in the majority, to contest and obstruct the effort to even start debate on a bill. So this is an area we can work together to address.

Let's talk about the frustration of actually being able to debate amendments. I thought one way of contrasting this would be to look at the number of amendments the Senate has considered in different years. Back in the 1993 through 1995 session, 2000, roughly, or 1,961 amendments were debated and voted on here in the Senate. The following 2-year period, 1995 through 1997, 2,540 amendments were voted on. How does that contrast with the two previous Congresses? In 2011 through 2013, we were under 1,000—974; from 2013 to 2015, just over 500 amendments, or roughly one-fifth of the number that were considered 20 years earlier. So those are the numbers.

But what it really looks like here on the floor is we get onto a bill, and then nothing happens because the tree has been filled—filled by the Democratic leader when the Democrats have been in the majority, filled by the Republican leader when the Republicans have been in the majority—so no one can introduce an amendment unless they have unanimous consent, and there is

always someone willing to object. Therefore, we are paralyzed. This is an area we can address.

Virtually every Senate legislature has worked out a system where they can come to the floor on a bill and immediately start considering amendments. There are many different ways we can solve this problem, but we won't solve it unless we come together as Democrats and Republicans and work together to figure it out—figure out a way that will work for both sides.

Let's turn to nominations. Here again we see that before 1960—this chart goes back to about 1915—we never had cloture votes on nominations. The nomination was proposed, debated, and then there was an up-or-down vote. That was the social contract. There could have been an objection to closing debate, but there wasn't. People understood that the time is short and if a nominee has majority support, then that nominee for a judicial position, for an executive position, should be in that position; that we shouldn't allow one branch of government—the legislative branch—to systematically undermine and attack the other branches of government.

Now, it is true that we haven't quite reversed roles at this point in time the way we did in terms of being here on the floor of the Senate simply because both last session and this session we still have the same President—we still have a Democratic President. But let's turn our minds to the next election in November of 2016, which is not that far away—a year and a month a way—and then January 2017, when that new President is going to take office. At this point, we have no idea whether that will be a Democratic President or a Republican President and we have no idea whether control of this Chamber will be in Democratic hands or Republican hands. But I do know that my Republican colleagues across the aisle—if there is a Republican President, they don't want this Chamber to systematically obstruct the ability of that Republican President to be able to put capable people into the necessary positions to operate the government. Our role is to screen out terrible nominees, not to systematically undermine the ability of an administration to function.

So as we look forward to 2017, not knowing who will be in charge, maybe this is a window of opportunity where we can come together and work out a plan to expedite nominations so that we can return to the traditions of the Senate and serve our role of advice and consent without conducting a war on the judicial branch or a war on the executive branch.

This concept of a supermajority was not the vision of the Founding Fathers. In fact, they worried about this. Madison spoke to it. So did Hamilton. Madison talked about the danger of a supermajority. He said:

> It would be no longer the majority that would rule: The power would be transferred to the minority. Were the defensive privilege limited to particular cases, an interested minority might take advantage of it to screen themselves from equitable sacrifices to the general weal, or, in particular emergencies, to extort unreasonable indulgences.

He continues to address supermajority rule and says: ''The fundamental principle of free government would be reversed.''

Let me translate that. What he is saying is that in a principled democracy, there is wisdom in the majority; that if the majority says this is the right decision, that is the decision we should make. But if we systematically go in the direction in which the minority says we should go, then we have chosen the less wise option. Those decisions build up over time and undermine the success of the Nation, and that would be a huge mistake.

Hamilton addressed this as well. He said—and this is Federalist Paper No. 22, and he was speaking from painful experience as a New York Representative in Congress that was created under the Articles of Confederation. He said that supermajority rule results in ''tedious delays; continual negotiation and intrigue; contemptible compromises of the public good.''

I think a lot of Americans, when they think about the way Congress is operating now, would say: That is what we see. We see contemptible compromises of the common good. We don't see 100 Members of the Senate working together for the public. Instead, we see a lot of special interest deals, contemptible compromises, really abuse of minority role in blocking.

They have seen both the Democrats in the minority this year, Republicans in the minority before, so it is an equal opportunity critique, if you will, toward both parties. Of course, our national rating is very low.

Again, as we look toward the future and have no idea whether the next President will be a Democrat or Republican, and we don't know whether the next majority leader will be a Democrat or a Republican, we have a chance, an opportunity, an incentive to work together to establish new rules—rules that will make this place work again, rules that will restore the Senate.

Senator UDALL and I have laid out ideas on how we might address these things, but those ideas—there is no one wisdom, no silver bullet. So let's come together in a dialogue.

There are ideas that I absolutely love. I love the idea of a talking filibuster. That is, let's get rid of the filibuster on motions to proceed. That is in sync with the way the Senate used to operate. Let's get rid of it on conference committees. That is the way the Senate used to operate. And on final passage, if 41 Senators want to continue debate, then let's insist that one of them be on the floor speaking. That makes it both a commitment of time and energy, which is not required now under the supermajority requirement, and it makes it visible and transparent to the American public. So I love that idea, but perhaps that is not an idea on which we can build a bipartisan bridge. I don't know, and I won't know unless we can come together in a bipartisan way to discuss it.

I love the idea of coming to the floor with a protocol for amendments, since we have been so paralyzed, so that immediately five amendments from the minority and five from the majority that are relevant to the bill and that are in order could be offered. That would be terrific. It would be a simple majority passage. I think if that was done, then the majority and minority Members would hear from their leaders and say: Let's do five more on each side. But we wouldn't come to the floor and play music on C–SPAN because we can't even start debate on an amendment. Let's use the valuable time we have on this floor to do the people's work, not to sit here in deep-freeze paralysis.

I love the idea of establishing a rule that creates a specific way to discuss and debate rule changes. We don't have that right now. When we start every 2-year Congress, we wrestle with how can we create a conversation over rules. There is no systematic way in our rules to do that. I love the idea of us working together to lay out a way to do that. I think it would serve this body well.

We need to work together to restore this body. It has often been referred to by the nickname ''the world's greatest deliberative body.'' That certainly is not an accurate description today, but together we can restore that. We have a responsibility to the citizens of the United States to restore that vision.

Let's make deliberation work and characterize this body, not deep freeze. Let's engage in respectful dialogue, not rigid partisanship. Let's take this moment, as we plan toward January 2017, and build a vision together, dialogue together, a vision of how to make the Senate work for Americans.

Thank you, Mr. President.

It is my privilege to introduce my colleague from New Mexico, who has wrestled with this issue even before he came to the Senate and has been engaged in it from day one and has brought so much insight and wisdom to bear on this challenge.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I have said many times. The Senate is too often a graveyard for good ideas. And the shovel is the broken filibuster. I want to thank Senator MERKLEY for his remarks about the need to reform the Senate rules. And I want to say a few words myself, because this issue continues to prevent this body from working for the American people.

That is why we pushed for reform in the 112th Congress and in the 113th Congress. Some said it was just a power grab by the majority—a partisan push—nothing could be further from the truth. Now that the shoe is on the

other foot, I think many Republicans are realizing the modern filibuster may need reform.

Some of the same people who voted for, or supported, record numbers of filibusters in recent years are now complaining about the filibuster when Democratic Senators use it.

Conservative commentators, House Members, and Republican Presidential candidates all are now talking about the filibuster.

Several years ago, a number of senior Republican Senators said Senator MERKLEY and I would step back once we were in the minority. They said we would not try again, but we renewed our fight at the beginning of this Congress. We are in the minority today. We hope that does not last long, but we support filibuster reform—regardless of who is the majority leader. The American people want a government that works. Majorities will change, but the need for responsive government does not—at least it should not. So we will keep pushing for reform that is fair, that reins in abuse, and protects the minority. That was our goal before and that is our goal now.

The heart of our proposal is the ''talking filibuster.'' It is simple, it is reasonable, and it makes sense. If you oppose a bill, then go to the floor and explain why. The filibuster was once used sparingly. It allowed the minority to be heard. But under the current rules, it is used too much and too easily. One Senator just needs to notify the floor staff of his or her objection. The American people deserve a real debate, not one Senator picking up a phone.

This is not news to our Republican colleagues, who are now in the majority. In the last Congress, we voted on cloture 218 times. To put that in perspective, the Senate voted on cloture only 38 times in the 50 years after the rule was adopted in 1917. Filibuster reform will allow a majority to pass more legislation in the Senate. But as everyone who has served here knows, floor time is a precious commodity. The ability to come to the floor and delay action by debating forces compromise, and most importantly, filibuster reform would apply to both parties equally going forward.

If legislation is passed more easily under a reform scenario, it can also be reformed, amended, or repealed more easily. Demanding one party to give up its rights under the rules will never succeed. The solution is to change the rules for both parties going forward on a permanent basis.

We made some progress in the last Congress by allowing for simple majority votes for qualified nominees for judicial and Executive appointments, and the Senate is working better. By changing the rules, we confirmed 96 judges—more judges than any modern Congress since 1980.

We also confirmed 293 Executive nominations in 2014—the most since 2010. That was an important change. It was bold. It was necessary. And the unprecedented mass obstruction by the new majority of this President's nominees only underscores that we did the right thing last year. But, we still need broader filibuster reform.

We said it before, and we will say it again: We can do this with respect for the minority, with respect for differing points of view, and with respect for this Chamber, but most of all with respect for the people who send us here. The right to change the rules at the beginning of a new Congress is supported by history and by the Constitution. Article I, section 5 is very clear. The Senate can adopt and amend its rules at the beginning of a new Congress by a simple majority vote. This is known as the Constitutional Option. It is well named. It has been used numerous times—often with bipartisan support—since the cloture provision was adopted in 1917.

We opened the door, as we said we would, at the beginning of this Congress. Our reform proposal remains on the table. The majority leader can bring it up at any time. This is not just about rules. It is about the norms and traditions of the Senate.

I support any Senator's right to oppose bad legislation. The filibuster has a role to play. The abuse of the filibuster does not.

Our constituents are waiting. There is a lot of work to be done. We need to make sure we get it done, and get it done right. These are commonsense reforms to restore the best traditions of the Senate. Neither side is 100 percent pure. Both sides have used the rules for obstruction. And no doubt they had their reasons. But most Americans don't care about that. They don't want a history lesson or a lesson in parliamentary procedure. They want a government that is fair, reasonable, and works no matter which party is in the majority.

We changed the process for nominations, and that was a good start, but, it was the beginning, not the end. We still have a lot of work to do.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to carry on a short colloquy with Senator MERKLEY or maybe other Senators who could join us and also for as much time as we may consume.

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

Mr. UDALL. Thank you, Mr. President.

Senator MERKLEY, I have listened very carefully, and I think you and I have worked diligently since we got into the Senate to try to make sure the Senate functions properly. What we want to see more than anything is bipartisanship, working together.

Whenever we have worked on the rules, I know one of our principles—which was a good one—was to draft rules so that they apply to either the majority or minority. That is something I think we have done on a regular basis, is to look at the rules and say: If we do the right set of rules, then if we are in the minority, we will feel good about it, and if we are in the majority, they will work for us that way also.

I am wondering. I see calls of reform all around the Senate right now. You see the Presidential candidates who look at our Senate rules and say there ought to be reforms. There ought to be filibuster reform. You see Republicans over in the House almost every week raising the issue that there should be filibuster reform. We need democracy to work.

Many of the outside scholars—people such as Thomas Mann, Norm Ornstein, and scholars like them—write books over and over again, and always a big part of the reform package goes to the Senate rules.

So I would ask the Senator, do you think that we are really talking about there being fertile ground right now for us to come together; that this is a time, when enough people are speaking about this, that we should be able to come together? And what we are urging—are we urging them to join us in some kind of format on the floor, off the floor, to have a meeting with various Senators who have worked on this in the past? Is this a good time to do this?

Mr. MERKLEY. I think Senator UDALL is absolutely accurate that this is the perfect moment to do it.

When we first engaged in this dialogue, we reached out to our Republican colleagues. We held one-on-one meetings. We sought to champion this. What we found was that the view of reform was polarized on whether you were in the majority or the minority.

We said that we were going to have this test for what we put forward: that what we put forward when we were in the majority is what we put forward when we are in the minority. If we don't think it would work for us in the minority, then it is not an honest or fair appraisal of making the Senate work.

So now we have come to that test because here we are now in the minority and we are proposing the same set of ideas. This Senator absolutely believes these ideas would make this place work better. It would enable more bills to be debated, which is—to have that value when you are in the minority, to actually put your amendments forward and have that debate, is a gift.

Certainly it says that if you really believe—the idea that we put forward, a talking filibuster—if you really believe you want to block something, you have to stand on this floor and debate it. I think that is a way to keep the theory of the filibuster and return it to the social contract of the past where people understood that it was a simple-majority body, as envisioned in the Constitution, as envisioned by Hamilton, as envisioned by Madison; that they had the experience of the supermajority and knew that caused deep damage, but that if you really believe in something so deeply, then you are willing to spend the time and energy.

So I think the things we crafted in the majority still hold up. But the bigger point is this: Now that we have had a reversal, many of our colleagues are experiencing firsthand the frustrations the minority can inflict on the majority. I think that opens a window of opportunity.

I have a list of 20 quotes. The Senator referred to people in the House—he is a former Member of the House—saying to their Senate Republican colleagues: Why don't you do something to fix the Senate? And now we are standing here saying: Join with us in a dialogue to fix the Senate.

Mr. UDALL. I say to Senator MERKLEY, I couldn't think of this being a more appropriate time. I think it is fertile ground, and I think it is great that we have come here.

The important thing to remember is a point you and I both made in the past, and it has to do with the old movie everybody knows called ''Mr. Smith Goes to Washington.'' People always thought the filibuster was as it is portrayed in that movie. You have Mr. Smith coming to Washington, and he is concerned with a passion about an issue, and he thinks he may be in the minority, but he wants to fight it out. He comes to the floor and he speaks about it, and he rallies people outside.

Now today, as we know, you don't see that very often. Actually, sometimes what people call a filibuster, we are at the early stage of a motion to proceed before we even get onto the bill.

What we are doing is trying to return to ''Mr. Smith Goes to Washington.'' What we want to see happen is a talking filibuster where every Senator gets to talk.

As you and I know—you have been a real scholar and a student of the Senate in terms of its history—before there was this rule in place on the filibuster, the tradition was always that every Senator had an opportunity to speak. That was a fine Senate tradition. It was established. They didn't have to write it down. Everybody said: We are not going to take any action until we let every Senator speak.

The other part of it was just what you talked about in our amendment proposal—allowing Senators to offer amendments. Today we are so far away from that.

We have this motion to proceed. We don't even get onto the bill. That causes so much mischief because you have all these procedural things that happen in advance of even getting on the bill.

You were a leader in the Oregon Legislature, so I would ask you to just reflect a little on that because you have seen that when you get a bill on the floor, you work on it, you get to amend it, to debate it—and most of the time when people are working on it, they want to get to the end game, but we are not able to do that. Was that your experience in working in the Oregon Legislature? If you get on the bill, that is half the work right there. And we are blocked here on the motion to proceed and the filibuster on the motion to proceed.

Mr. MERKLEY. Indeed, my experience in the Oregon State Legislature was dramatically different. In many ways, it was much more similar to the way I thought the Senate was operating when I was here in the 1970s and then working for Congress in the 1980s. Once we got to a bill on the floor of the Oregon House, where I served for 10 years and spent 2 years as speaker, every moment was utilized in debate. There was no paralysis. People only had limited time. We were there to hear each other and to make decisions and certainly in a more expeditious style than is the custom in the Senate. But what we had in common was floor time was well utilized in the Senate in the past and well utilized in Oregon.

As you were speaking about tradition and how the Senate worked, I was thinking about how all this began. When they had the first U.S. Senate, they had in their rule book a motion to force a vote. They had that rule, but they never used it. Why didn't they use it? Imagine if there are 13 States and just 26 Senators and they stand here occupying a quarter of the space we now occupy and they say: Well, we certainly can extend the courtesy of hearing each person's insight or opinion before we vote.

So after a couple of years, when they rewrote the rule book, they decided not to include the rule. They didn't need it because they had the courtesy of hearing each other. So suddenly there is a Senate with no rule on how to close debate and force a vote. And over time that courtesy eroded. It was after World War I that the first time occurred when the Senate said: Well, let's enable a majority—a supermajority of the Senate to close debate if there is too much abuse or paralysis.

The point is that the filibuster is not in the Constitution. Some of my colleagues have said this is the way the Founders designed the Senate—to be a supermajority body. That is wrong, wrong, wrong. It is not in the Constitution, it was not in the early Senate, and it was not a major feature of the Senate in terms of it being a common experience until these recent years.

So if we can recapture the spirit and the courtesy of hearing each other's opinion but enable us to get onto the bill, debate the bill, do amendments, and then if someone finds a moment of great principle, great heartfelt objection, and wants to spend the time and energy to extend debate, they do so in this visibile talking-filibuster fashion, I think that would be a huge improvement and well worth our time.

Mr. UDALL. I say to Senator MERKLEY, what you point out that is so important for people to understand—when we put the original bill back in there in World War I, it was put in so that a minority could not block it. We had Woodrow Wilson as President. He was very concerned. We were talking about national security during a war, and he wanted to arm our merchant ships. He got a bill out of the House of Representatives, and it was rolling toward the Senate. It was near the end of the session, and he took that bill very seriously. He thought it was vital to the national security of the country, and he asked the Senate to act on it. There were about 11 or 12 Senators, I believe, who had decided: We are near the end of the session; let's just run out the clock. There was no procedure to be able to get to the bill before the clock ran out. These 11 Senators took to the floor and they ran out the clock, and Woodrow Wilson said: No way am I going to allow that to happen again. He got a bee in his bonnet on that one.

The next Congress that came in, the President said he wanted a rule so that wouldn't happen again. So they put in a rule which was at the time 67 votes in order to cut off debate, and that rule has really been turned on its head with what is happening in recent times. The rule was originally so that a small minority could cut off debate and could proceed to the issue. Now we have calls to the cloakroom, calls to the leadership. You and I don't know what is going on. We don't know why we don't get on an issue. We go on a motion to proceed, and we have a motion to invoke cloture and all these procedural things nobody understands, until people say: Why can't you get on the bill? Well, because the filibuster rule has been turned on its head. That is something people have to understand. We are not using this filibuster rule the traditional way that we used it in the Senate for the purpose it was originally put in.

As Senator MERKLEY pointed out on the motion to proceed—and I wanted to ask one more question about the motion to proceed. You talked about how in 1962 we increasingly started to see obstruction in terms of the motion to proceed. It would prevent bills from getting to the floor. There wasn't any way to get on these bills. It jammed things up.

I will never forget the Senator whom I succeeded, Senator Pete Dominici, a solid Republican who believed in the Senate. He came out and said we shouldn't have filibusters on a motion to proceed; we should get right on the bill. I remember several Senators who came in in our class and after—Republican Senators—who said the same thing. So I think there is a lot of room here.

I am asking you again, in terms of the motion to proceed and us calling for a bipartisan effort—we should be able, with the people who are here, to either work on a motion to proceed, work on the talking filibuster, or work on a variety of other amendment issues that are crucial. Don't you think this is the time?

I just want to make sure before you leave that we make sure there is an invitation from us to 98 other Senators to sit down in some format, whether it

is a bipartisan conference or something else, and talk about how we make this place work better and how we make it more democratic.

Mr. MERKLEY. There are two former Members of the Senate right now who are working on a book that is coming out in January that will be addressing reform in the Senate, and that is Trent Lott and Tom Daschle. They have already issued a number of ideas about how to reform this.

The point I am making is that when people leave the Senate, they reflect back and say: You know, there is a bipartisan opportunity, a bipartisan responsibility to make this Chamber work.

What we are saying is that this can't be accomplished through folks who have left the Senate; that we must invite bipartisanship here and solve it ourselves; and that any rule changes that are envisioned, any agreements that are forged have to be done here on the floor, and we are extending that invitation, as you put it, to our 98 colleagues to be part of that dialogue.

We can draw on the ideas that our former Members have put forward as a starting point. We can draw on the ideas that you and I have put forward, but these ideas, there is no one way to address this. We are inviting others to brainstorm together in a dialogue to try to gather a vision that perhaps we can commit ourselves to, in a bipartisan fashion, to enact at the start of the next legislature, when we realize we may not be minority or majority, and that becomes a magical way to escape our current status as we are embattled and we are having deep emotional fights over foreign policy, social policy, and how to create jobs in America—but to get some distance on that and say how to make this Chamber work the way it was envisioned, because certainly I think 100 Members can agree the Senate is broken. Would it not be phenomenal if, in a bipartisan effort, we were able to restore the U.S. Senate to being a great deliberative body?

Mr. UDALL. Yes, I say to Senator MERKLEY, you are absolutely right. I am just going to close by saying that the thing we have—and I said this in the beginning. The thing we have worked on and tried to achieve is to make sure that when we crafted changes to the rules—motion to proceed, talking filibuster, how we allow each side to have amendments—we have always said we could live with them if we were in the minority.

We have been in the minority now for almost a year. In a couple of months it will be a year. We came out right at the beginning of the Congress and talked about our rules again. We proposed the same rules in the majority. We want to be fair to both sides, but what is more important isn't that fairness; it is the fairness to the American people to get their democracy back again so it works.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOOMEY). The Senator from Colorado.

AURORA, COLORADO, VETERANS HOSPITAL

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, today marks a pivotal day for veterans in Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region. Just minutes ago, the House of Representatives approved the Senate bill to extend several important authorizations to Coloradans, authorizations important to the health care of our country's veterans because the bill includes the authorization to complete the Denver VA replacement medical facility.

After years of persistence, years of passion, years of emotion, we have finally passed a bill to finish the job at the Denver VA replacement facility in Aurora, CO. This bill will allow us to finish the job, allowing the replacement facility that is critical for the care of veterans in Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region to move forward, to fulfill the promise we have made to our veterans.

This bill also turns the page on the gross mismanagement by the VA of this project and will allow the Army Corps of Engineers to take over the management of the project to ensure its completion without further delay.

There is simply no acceptable excuse for how the project ended up in this current state—years delayed, hundreds of millions of dollars over budget. While the bill will turn the page on this day, it will not turn our focus away from reforms at the VA to ensure accountability and to ensure this never happens again. I have worked with a number of my colleagues to initiate these reforms, including an amendment to the Defense authorization bill that will get the VA out of the big construction business.

I come to the floor to say thank you—thank you to my colleagues, specifically Senator ISAKSON, Senator BLUMENTHAL, Senator KIRK, Senator TESTER, the majority leader, their staff, and my colleague MICHAEL BENNET for their leadership on this issue.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the incredible work of MIKE COFFMAN, the Congressman representing the area, ED PERLMUTTER, the entire Colorado delegation who worked so hard to make this happen. They have all provided a great service to veterans in passage of the legislation out of the House today. Years from now, when veterans go to this hospital to receive the care we have promised, they will enter into what will be the crown jewel of the VA infrastructure, the crown jewel of the VA system. It took a lot of hard work to get here.

Today I am excited, with the passage of the House bill, passage in the Senate, that a bill is on its way to the President to finish the job, to complete the hospital, and to fulfill our promise.

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.

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

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

CONDUCT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE ST. PAUL OFFICE OF THE VBA

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to express my concern and disgust at recent revelations of improper and dishonest conduct by senior executives at the Department of Veterans Affairs, including the director of the St. Paul office of the Veterans Benefits Administration.

According to a report released by the VA's Office of the Inspector General this week, two Veterans Benefits Administration executives used their positions to assign themselves to different jobs that involved fewer responsibilities while maintaining their high salaries. One of them has been the director of the VBA St. Paul regional office since October of 2014. The inspector general found that the St. Paul VBA director used her influence as director of the VBA Eastern Area Office to compel the relocation of the previous St. Paul office director. She then proceeded to submit her own name for consideration to fill the vacancy she herself had created.

Taking on the job of directing the St. Paul regional office was actually a step down in responsibility for this administrator. In the inspector general's words, she ''went from being responsible for oversight of 16 [regional offices] to being responsible for only 1 [regional office].'' But she kept her previous senior executive service salary of $173,949 per year. She also received over $129,000 in relocation expenses.

So look at this: She had a responsible job managing 16 regional offices. She created an opening by transferring the person under her. She took that opening and went from supervising 16 regional offices to supervising 1. Then she kept the same salary, going from 16 offices to 1 office, and then took $129,000 in relocation expenses.

This is the kind of action that has created the breach of trust between our veterans and the departments that exist to serve their needs. There are so many people who have such good will who work at the Veterans' Administration, including in Minnesota, and there are so many deserving veterans who deserve their help. But to make this truly work, we have to show that the people at the top are accountable.

What this director did was not responsible, it was not a good use of taxpayer money, and it certainly was not fair to our veterans. This is a senior executive who is supposed to be focused on ensuring that veterans are being served the way they deserve and who instead used her position to push out one of her colleagues and get herself a plum assignment where she would have fewer responsibilities but at the same time keep the same salary. This conduct is unacceptable. It erodes the

public's trust in the VA. It is commendable that the VA inspector general took action by referring these two cases to the U.S. attorney for possible criminal prosecution. The VA needs to do right by our veterans and our taxpayers by holding bad actors accountable and implementing reforms to prevent exploitation such as this from ever happening again.

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

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

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I want to talk today about the bill we are considering currently—the MILCON-VA bill. I urge the Senate to take up and pass an appropriations bill that does right by our Nation's veterans. I think it is very important. But the MILCON-VA bill before us today—and I might add along with the rest of the appropriations bills—is shackled to an unwise and unrealistic budget that locks in destructive sequestration cuts and vastly underfunds programs vital to this Nation's security and prosperity, and it doesn't deal with the challenges the Veterans' Administration faces. Make no mistake about it, America's veterans would be severely shortchanged by this bill as it is currently drafted.

Coming from the State of Montana, where we have the second highest per capita veterans population, I cannot look in the eyes of our Nation's brave men and women and say to them that this bill will fulfill our promise to you. This bill underfunds our veterans by over $850 million, subjecting the VA to the across-the-board spending caps the majority is desperate to avoid on the Defense bill. That is hypocritical because, let's be honest with ourselves, caring for our veterans is a cost of war.

What we know and what the majority knows is that this bill is severely limiting the VA's ability to fulfill its mission—caring for those who have borne the battle. Need I remind everyone that just a few weeks ago, because of a surge in demand for hepatitis C treatments and a historic increase in non-VA care referrals, the VA medical services account ran out of money. As a result, we had to pass emergency legislation to allow Choice Act funding to be used to shore up the VA and prevent a serious disruption for veterans across this country.

The budget pressures that caused that shortfall are the result of an unprecedented demand for services in terms of both numbers and complexity, and that demand will only continue to grow. At some point during the next year, nearly half the veterans will be 65 years old or older. Many of these folks will be seeking treatment to deal with the effects of toxic exposure—something we are struggling to better understand and treat and something that could have effects on their children and grandchildren.

At the same time, a younger generation of veterans is struggling to cope with the unseen wounds of war. They are fighting to keep their lives and their families together, and for some of them it is a daily struggle to overcome the suicidal thoughts that claim the lives of at least 22 of their peers each and every day. Those are the stakes here. They are that high.

We are also talking about an unprecedented demand for expensive new treatments for diseases, such as hepatitis C, which are shorter in duration and which have fewer side effects and have cure rates approaching 100 percent. That is good news, but we have to have money to do that. We are talking about addressing a chronic shortage of medical professionals, particularly mental health professionals in rural America, which greatly hinders our ability to provide veterans with timely and quality care. We are talking about a growing population of caregivers who have been forced to abandon their jobs and their livelihoods to care for loved ones with debilitating medical conditions, and we are talking about facilities that are literally crumbling in some cases and severely impacting the delivery of care.

I believe we need more transparency and accountability from the VA to ensure it is spending taxpayer dollars in a responsible way. But let's be clear. Today we are asking more and more of the VA, and this bill gives them less than they need. Now is not the time to take a step backward. If we do that, we are never going to catch up.

If we don't enact a commonsense, long-term budget that better reflects our priorities, our values, and provides the tools and resources required to fulfill our promises to veterans and their families, then we should all question just what are we doing here.

Mr. President, there are cases when each of us has looked at a bill or amendment and said: You know, it is not perfect, but it is good enough. Sometimes that is what it takes to get work done around here. But when it comes to our veterans, when it comes to restoring confidence in the VA after the problems they have had in the last 2 years, I don't think that is a path we should take.

I know my chairman, Senator KIRK, did his best in writing this bill to soften the blow of budget constraints that he was forced to meet. I truly appreciate his efforts and his inclusiveness in working with me. But the fact is that he was handed a no-win allocation by his party's budget. You can't patch the holes in the VA budget created by sequestration. You can't shift money from known medical care requirements—treatment for cancer, diabetes, or kidney disease, to name just a few—to plug gaps in emerging requirements, such as lifesaving but costly new hepatitis C treatments.

That is why I offered an amendment in committee to restore $857 million to bring the VA to its requested level. Unfortunately, none of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle joined me, and it failed on a party-line vote. I am at a complete loss as to why we are now being asked to move to a bill that we all know underfunds the VA by almost $1 billion. For what? So that we can send this bill to conference with the House, whose own VA bill underfunds the VA by $1.4 billion—$600 million more than the Senate. That will not improve the quality or the timeliness of veterans health care nor will giving the VA authority to fire more doctors and nurses without due process.

It is time to stop the political games and maneuvering. To serve our veterans, to serve this country, and to serve all Americans, Congress must establish funding levels driven by what the VA actually needs, not by some arbitrary mathematical formula. We need a rational, realistic, bipartisan budget agreement to replace the draconian sequestration funding levels entrenched in the majority's fiscal year 2016 budget.

I have been calling on Senate leaders for months to sit down and hash out a long-term budget agreement. The majority leader's response was to wait until the day before the government was scheduled to shut down and then pass a short-term CR. As early as tomorrow, we expect to vote on an appropriations bill that will drastically underfund the VA for the next fiscal year. This is clearly an attempt to paint those of us who think this bill is insufficient as voting against veterans.

That plan will not work because I am here to tell you that veterans are well aware of the funding shortfall. It is one of the chief problems that is currently plaguing the VA. I will continue to provide adequate funding to support America's veterans.

While I am disappointed the majority wouldn't work with us on a broader budget deal this summer, the CR that we passed today gives us just over 2 months to reach a reasonable budget agreement—an agreement that will support our veterans, an agreement that Members on both sides of the aisle agree we need. That is the job we are elected to do. But make no mistake, if we are having this same conversation on December 10, we have failed—failed our veterans, failed the American people.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the motion to proceed to this bill so that we can finally negotiate a bipartisan budget agreement that will do away with the devastating impacts of sequestration and will instead provide a responsible way forward to fund our government, to protect our national security, and to care for this Nation's veterans.

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

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

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

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

LAW OF THE SEA TREATY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on climate change's radical alteration of the Earth's marine environments—particularly in the Arctic—and how these epic changes in the environment strengthen the case of U.S. accession to the Law of the Sea Treaty.

Competitors of the United States in the global economy are taking advantage of climate change's environmental impact on the Arctic, particularly how the disappearance of Arctic sea ice is opening new shipping lanes and access to the mineral resources in the Arctic seabed. Our competitors' advances in the Arctic are happening at the expense of U.S. national security, energy development, and maritime transit interests, and it is the failure of the United States to join the treaty that is giving those countries a huge advantage of staking a claim in largely unclaimed territory.

In the 3½ years since a partisan effort thwarted the Senate from providing the necessary advice and consent of the Law of the Sea Treaty, the United States has ceded millions in potential economic opportunity in the Arctic, and we have no recourse to dispute the legality of any of the territorial and economic zone expansions countries like Russia are making in the Arctic waters and sea ice.

While the economic and territorial claims—including mineral, oil, and gas extraction rights—in the Arctic are not the only reason for the United States to accede to the Law of the Sea Treaty, the situation in the Arctic is arguably the most dynamic due to the impact climate change is having on the Arctic Ocean environment. As long as the United States sits on the sidelines by not being a party to this treaty, our global economic competitors will continue to take leaps and bounds ahead of the United States, accessing the opportunities we are squandering.

The Arctic Ocean environment has experienced notable changes that have tracked ahead of the global rise in temperatures. Starting in the mid-1970s, global average temperatures have risen 0.5 degrees Centigrade, with each of the last three decades being successively warmer at the Earth's surface than any preceding decade since 1850. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, the 10 hottest years, based on average global surface temperatures, have all occurred since 1998, with 2014 being the hottest year on record. However, many climate scientists are projecting that this year, 2015, will surpass last year as the hottest year on record. Temperature increases at the Poles have been even more significant, and the impacts and consequences are more severe.

I show this photograph here that points out that the data from the National Snow and Ice Data Center shows that over the past 30 years, the Arctic has warmed at a higher rate than any other region on Earth. Arctic warming is causing changes to sea ice, snow cover, and the extent of permafrost in the Arctic.

According to NOAA, in the first half of 2010, air temperatures in the Arctic were 4 degrees Celsius—7 degrees Fahrenheit—warmer than the 1968-to-1996 reference period. Satellite data shows that over the past 30 years, Arctic sea ice cover has declined by 30 percent during the months of September—the month that historically marked the end of the summer melt season.

In this NASA survey photo from April 2012, you can see for miles toward the horizon how thin the ice is over the Arctic Ocean, and you can see open channels in the ice with icebergs in the background. That is a new phenomenon. That didn't exist many years ago.

This image is of the Arctic Ocean in April, 1 month into the spring melt season. It shows just how thin the aerial coverage of Arctic sea is and in some places where the ice has disappeared altogether. While annual variation in ice coverage has always followed the seasons, the melt periods are growing longer annually, meaning that much of the ice is never restored during the colder winter months.

The peak melt periods during the protracted melt seasons have opened up new shipping channels that we must start paying greater attention to.

A 2013 report in the ''Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences'' entitled ''New Trans-Atlantic shipping routes navigable by mid-century'' shows how declines of ice in the Arctic's rapidly changing environment will have dramatic changes in international freight movement.

Russia is already declaring that the Northern Sea Route through Russian territorial waters will rival the Suez Canal as a faster and more efficient maritime passage between Europe and West Asia and the west coasts of the United States, Canada, and East Asia. Climate, surface temperature, and sea ice data were run through extensive computer modeling at UCLA, and the outcome produced pretty alarming results showing how wide open the Arctic will likely become for trans-hemispheric transit between North America, Europe, and Asia.

Historically, Arctic shipping lanes to Western Europe and the North Atlantic, via the Bering Strait, which connect the ports of the Pacific, including Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver, Alaska, and all of East Asia to Western Europe and the North Atlantic, have depended on ice breakers to clear channels and were only open during narrow summer melt seasons. These northerly routes have historically been across the Russian side of the Arctic.

In recent years, the shipping channels have grown shorter in distance as what was once permanent and thick ice located at the Poles has become increasingly thinner with each passing warmer year. Each year, the shipping routes across the Arctic are getting closer and closer to being ''over the top.''

The blue lines I depict on the chart I brought to the floor, this chart—this would not require any ice-breaking ships to assure clear passage during the peak of the summer melt seasons. The red lines are routes that are passable by ships that can either break ice or follow behind ice breakers. As you can see, from 2006 to the present, the ice-breaking routes are very close to traversing directly over the North Pole and all the other routes are in the Russian Kara, Barrents, and Laptev Seas.

The modeling data run through this peer-reviewed study, however, projects that in 30 years the Arctic Ocean will reach near open water status, passable by most ships on either the Canadian or Russian side of the Arctic.

In the simplest of economic terms, climate change's impact on diminished sea ice in the Arctic will be a major boon to foreign ports at the expense of U.S. ports.

The geopolitical consequences of a more open and expansive Arctic Ocean is something we cannot afford to observe from the sidelines. The Arctic's rapidly changing marine environment is influencing the territorial claims our Arctic neighbors Canada, Russia, Denmark, Greenland, Iceland, and Norway are making, and all these countries are making legal advances under the law of the sea—the treaty we have not ratified. The United States is the only Arctic nation not staking any expanded claims in the Arctic, nor are we willing to challenge the actions of neighbors who may be encroaching on waters we may have claims to.

The State Department cannot be blamed for not making claims or challenging our neighbors because it is the U.S. Senate that has failed to give the State Department the ability to rightfully stake claims and challenge the legality of our competitors' claims purely out of unfounded and ideologically partisan opposition to the United States being party to the Law of the Sea Treaty.

The law of the sea establishes international conventions allowing our neighbors to expand the reach of their economic zones, providing a framework for parties to the treaty to stake legal claims to mineral, oil, and gas deposits along the Continental Shelf beyond the

200 miles of a country's conventional territorial seas—they can do that under law of the sea, and we cannot; and to enjoy navigational freedom between parties to the convention, making passage through treaty partners' territorial seas easier—they can; we cannot. We have not ratified the law of the sea. It provides legal certainty to their nations' industries operating in these dangerous yet potentially productive waters—certainty that the United States simply cannot validly claim without being party to the Law of the Sea Treaty. Once again, they can give certainty to their industries; we cannot.

Our Arctic neighbors' exploitation of Arctic resources is happening right now and is as real as climate change's impact on the Arctic ecosystems that is making these foreign economic ventures possible. They couldn't do it before, but now they can do it. The reports our Arctic Coast Guard fleet are making on the dramatic increase of commercial vessel activity in Alaskan waters are testament to this new reality. The Coast Guard has monitored and reported on this growth, all of which has happened in the last decade. Heightened Arctic maritime activity is directly contributing to the declining sea ice.

Both the Washington Times and the New York Times, while covering the President's recent trip to Alaska, reported on the increase of commercial and naval fleet traffic transiting through and across the Arctic.

In the New York Times story, Coast Guard Commandant ADM Paul F. Zukunft stated: ''We [the Coast Guard] have been for some time clamoring about our nation's lack of capacity to sustain any meaningful presence in the Arctic.''

U.S. accession to the Law of the Sea Treaty has been a failure of many Congresses, not just this one. The United States played a critical role in the development of the treaty going back to the 1970s. The United States has the most to gain from being part of this treaty. For example, we shaped the constructs of the treaty to be very favorable to the United States, including giving the United States the only permanent seat on the international council that will oversee and make decisions about seabed mining. Obviously that permanent seat remains vacant and decisions are being made about seabed mining in international waters without U.S. participation.

The estimated area of territorial expansion over which the United States can claim sovereignty under the Continental Shelf expansion conventions of the treaty is estimated to be about 291,000 square miles or roughly one and a half times the size of Texas.

A broad set of stakeholders, ranging from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, to environmental organizations, our Nation's military brass, industry-specific trade groups representing commercial fishing, freight shipping, and mineral extraction, all support the ratification of the Law of the Sea Treaty.

The combination of changes in the Arctic environment and changes and advancement in the maritime industry technologies is making the benefits this treaty stands to provide the United States greater and greater with each passing year. As long as the United States is outside the convention, our companies are left with two bad choices: Either take their deep sea mining businesses to another country or give up the idea altogether. Meanwhile, China, Russia, and many other countries are already securing their licenses under the convention to begin mining for valuable metals and rare Earth elements.

Accompanying the previously mentioned New York Times story is a map depicting the breadth and scope of the international claims that are being made in the Arctic, the most concerning of the claims are the ones that Russia is making. This map demonstrates the urgency for U.S. action to ensure that these emerging opportunities don't pass us by and go to our competitors.

The Law of the Sea Convention provides the international framework to deal with these new opportunities. We are the only Arctic nation outside the convention. Russia and other Arctic states are advancing their Continental Shelf claims in the Arctic. Some of these claims encroach on waters that we could have a viable claim to if the United States were a party, but we are not a party to the convention. Yet we will willfully remain on the outside looking in, painfully complicit to let foreign businesses better our U.S. industries. If the United States were a party to the convention, the United States would have a much stronger basis to assert our interests throughout the entire Arctic region.

Lastly, the absence of the United States from the treaty weakens our national security. In 2012, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff GEN Martin Dempsey testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—I was present during that testimony—on how our security interests are intrinsically linked to the freedom of navigation. They testified in favor of the Law of the Sea Treaty ratification.

The United States stands to gain considerably more from the legal certainty and the public order this treaty provides on the oceans than any other country. The U.S. Armed Forces need the navigable rights and freedoms provided under the Law of the Sea Convention, granting global access to the world's oceans to ease and expedite movement to combat areas when necessary and to sustain our engaged deployed forces. In 2012, the former Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman and ranking member Senator Richard Lugar of Indiana made one of the most cogent set of arguments for U.S. accession to the treaty. In conclusion, let me quote what Senator Lugar told us at that time. I think it is still relevant today. He said:

> The substantial case for Law of the Sea is even stronger today than it was in 2004 when I brought it up as chairman of the committee. . . . Every year that goes by without the United States joining the convention results in deepening our country's submission to ocean laws and practices determined by foreign governments without United States input.
>
> Our Navy and our ocean industries operate every day in a maritime environment that is increasingly dominated by foreign decision-making. In almost any other context, the Senate would be outraged at subjecting Americans to foreign controls without United States input.
>
> What many observers fail to understand about Law of the Sea is that the convention already forms the basis of maritime law regardless of whether the United States is a party or not. International decisions related to resource exploitation, navigation rights, and other matters will be made in the context of the convention whether we join or not.
>
> By not joining the treaty, we are abetting Russian ambitions in the Arctic. We are making the job of our Navy more difficult despite the longstanding and nearly unanimous pleas of Navy leaders that the United States participation in Law of the Sea will help them maintain navigational rights more effectively and with less risk to the men and women they command.
>
> We are turning our backs on the requests of important American industries that use the oceans and must abide by rules established under this convention, and we are diminishing our chances for energy independence by making U.S. oil and gas exploration in international waters less likely. . . . We will feel these costs more keenly in the Arctic.
>
> The decision . . . is whether the Senate should continue to consign the United States to a position of self-imposed weakness in our ability to influence ocean affairs despite the fact that no organization has a greater interest in navigable freedoms, a larger exclusive economic zone, or a more advanced technological capacity to exploit ocean resources.
>
> The Senate should enthusiastically affirm the leadership of the United States in this vital area of international relations by giving advice and consent to the Law of the Sea Convention.

I took the time to give a long explanation as to why I believe it is important for the Senate to exercise its responsibility to give advice and consent to a treaty that is the Law of the Sea. It is critically important that we take this issue up and that we ratify the treaty. As I said earlier, it is supported by the Chamber, it is supported by our military, and it is supported by businesses. Laws are being made that affect the United States without our participation. By ratifying the treaty, we will have a seat at the table, and we will be able to protect our interests—our commercial interests, our security interests or whether it is the interests of our military.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The Senator from Iowa.

ENERGY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I don't know how many times I have

come to the floor in the last several years or maybe in the last several days to talk about energy. In the process of talking energy, I always say I am for ''all of the above,'' as a lot of my colleagues do; meaning all forms of energy, which would be petroleum, natural gas, alternative energies, including biofuels and wind, conservation as a third one, and nuclear energy as a fourth one. I still believe that. Although I believe some of my colleagues who say they are for ''all of the above'' are for everything that is underground but not much above the ground. So I think there is an inconsistency there.

With that background, I want to talk about something that is going to happen tomorrow morning. The Senate banking committee is scheduled to mark up legislation called the American Crude Oil Export Equality Act. I don't have any fault with that action tomorrow.

This bill would repeal the four-decade ban on the export of domestically produced crude oil. This ban was put in place in response to the Arab oil embargo, which created an energy crisis and led to fears of crude oil shortages. That goes back to the 1970s. The recent technologies of horizontal drilling and fracking of oil shale has resulted in enormous increases in domestic crude oil production and reduced oil and gas prices. This has led to the domestic oil industry's insistence on repealing the export ban.

I am all for fair and free trade. I recognize that Iowa manufacturers and farmers benefit from the export markets. One of every five tractors produced by John Deere is exported. Much of Iowa's agricultural abundance, both commodities and livestock, is exported. I understand, then, the economic benefit and economic impact that vibrant export markets can have on the domestic economy, creating good-paying jobs, and on productivity.

What bothers me is not that Big Oil is on the cusp of achieving their highest priority in getting Congress to pass a bill to repeal the export ban, what bothers me is that Big Oil is pushing Congress to repeal the ban, while at the very same time continuing to attack and undermine domestic renewable fuels. Iowa does not produce any crude oil or natural gas, but Iowa farmers lead the Nation in the production of homegrown, renewable, clean ethanol and biodiesel.

Congress created the renewable fuel standard to guarantee that consumers have a choice to buy clean renewable fuel. Big Oil has fought tirelessly to repeal and undermine the renewable fuel standard law because they are afraid of competition. If Big Oil wants to get the export ban lifted, I would suggest they end their selfish pursuit of the repeal of the renewable fuel standard.

Big Oil should be satisfied with achieving their highest priority, a repeal of the export ban, and drop then their crusade against clean-burning biofuels. It is time for Big Oil to stop acting like pigs at the trough. It is time for Big Oil to lay off the renewable fuel standard.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I understand the pending business is that we are discussing the motion to proceed to the VA-Military Construction bill, and I rise today to urge my colleagues to vote against this motion to proceed. And why? Well, because, quite simply, this is a parliamentary maneuver. This isn't a real deal to get to real benefits and real help for America's veterans or to modernize our military bases. This maneuver, quite simply, is a scam. The Republican leadership knows we do not have enough resources for our veterans. This bill is inadequate. And to bring up an appropriations bill before we have a new budget deal is really just a hollow gesture.

We passed a continuing resolution. I am so pleased we did that so we would not have a government shutdown. We do not need a government shutdown. It is not in our national interest, it is not good for the economy, it is not good for our standing in the world, and most of all it is not good for the way we need to help the American people, whether it is in the area of national security or economic security.

Having passed the CR, it is well known that the leadership on both sides of the aisle and the President want to negotiate a new budget deal. So what does that mean? A new budget deal gives the Committee on Appropriations a top line—something called a 302(a). A 302(a) tells the Committee on Appropriations what it can spend. We can't spend over a 302(a) unless we waive the Budget Act. And the whole purpose of the negotiation for the budget is to lift the cap through responsible, bipartisan, bicameral negotiations and to come up with additional revenue by either cuts or new revenue.

My advice to my colleagues is don't go through trying to pass the bill when we know we are going to be getting a new allocation to truly try to meet America's needs. We all say we love our veterans. Everybody wants to wear yellow ribbons, and we all want to go to Veterans Day observations and so on. But I believe you show your support for veterans by deeds and in this case by putting forth the help we do need for our veterans.

The bill pending now shows we need a new budget agreement. We need to cancel sequester—these across-the-board draconian cuts—so we can keep our promises to our veterans. Cloture on the motion to proceed is Washington-speak in order to filibuster a debate. The real debate here is whether the Senate will move forward with spartan Republican budget levels or whether we will come up with a new deal that will enable us to lift the cap we have and move ahead to getting a real deal. The Senate passed the bill to keep the government open. Now we need a budget deal that lifts the caps to make sure we have a 50–50 split between defense spending and domestic spending, acknowledging that domestic spending also meets national security needs.

This bill is a perfect example. Military construction doesn't come out of DOD. There it is, in a domestic bill, and it is in the same subcommittee as funding our veterans. In terms of funding our veterans, the bill before us has an unacceptable cut of over $850 million from the VA, yet at the same time VA costs are rising.

What am I talking about? Well, let's go to the new hepatitis C drugs that are causing veterans to seek treatment and really get the help they need. This inhibits us from buying the lifesaving drugs we need. Then there is the cost of the caregiver program. Those costs have nearly doubled since the original fiscal 2016 estimates that we received. And who are these caregivers? They are wives, spouses, parents taking care of really sick wounded warriors. You know those pictures we see when we have a concert for a fundraising drive for a veterans charitable organization—those men who are bedridden, many who can't talk, and some who have traumatic brain injury or some causing injury that causes paralysis—your heart goes out to them, and we have families taking care of them. Those families need help. The cost for that care is doubling. Yet this bill doesn't take care of it. We say: Oh, a grateful nation never forgets. Well, we seem to forget when it comes time to voting on the budget.

We have held in the Committee on Appropriations hearing after hearing. The VA's Secretary McDonald testified that the budget request for hepatitis C is too low by as much as $1 billion. In fiscal year 2015 alone, the VA spent close to $700 million just on hepatitis C drugs. I think we need to be able to give veterans the medications they need.

Veterans care should not be held hostage to artificial budget caps, and veterans in the audience watching this should understand this is not a single-year problem. This cap will be in place until 2021. Remember, we are not funding an agency; we are funding help for our veterans. We want to reduce that backlog. We want to make sure our hospitals are fit for duty. We want to make sure there are no waiting lists for veterans. We want to be sure that the way they showed up for America, we are showing up for them. These veterans deserve to know that promises we made will be the promises we keep.

I am asking my colleagues to get serious. Let's get a real budget deal. I

know the Republican leadership has been in contact with the President. We need our Democratic leadership to be a part of that conversation. I am the vice chair of the Committee on Appropriations. This is the committee that puts the money in the Federal checkbook. I want to be complimentary about the chairman, the distinguished gentleman from Mississippi, Senator COCHRAN. We know how to move bills, but what we need are the right allocations given to us so we can make the right decisions.

Now, can we make some trims here, can we make some strategic cuts? Yes, but we need a new budget deal that lifts the caps. So I therefore will vote no on the motion to proceed, which is parliamentary-speak, but by voting no on the parliamentary maneuver I am saying we vote yes in meeting the compelling national needs we have.

Let's get a new budget deal, let's lift the caps, let's do it in a responsible way, and let's help move America forward.

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

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

SIGNING AUTHORITY

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the junior Senator from Colorado be authorized to sign duly enrolled bills or joint resolutions on Wednesday, September 30.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2101

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, from coast to coast the Land and Water Conservation Fund is the primary tool that our Nation uses to fund the protection of our natural and our cultural heritage. In my home State of New Mexico, the LWCF has protected some of our most iconic and famous landscapes—places such as the Valles Caldera National Preserve, Ute Mountain, and the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument. These are places families go back to year after year, generation after generation to camp, hunt, hike, and fish.

Our public lands are uniquely American, but the future of our outdoor places—all the places we enjoy as public lands—depends on the Land and Water Conservation Fund. We must permanently authorize and fully fund the LWCF. Permanently and fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund will help ensure the outdoor places we all enjoy will be protected for future generations to enjoy as well.

So I ask unanimous consent that the Energy and Natural Resources Committee be discharged from and the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 2101; I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

I wish to point out the Federal Government currently owns over 600 million acres of land throughout the United States. In the opinion of many Americans, that is way too much. Some of my colleagues are pushing a piece of legislation that would reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund—or LWCF—a program that is primarily used for land acquisition, and they want to do this without making a single reform to that same program.

Before taking such a drastic and I believe misguided step, I would ask my colleagues to examine the Federal Government's current landholdings and in particular evaluate the manner in which they are being maintained.

In many Western States, the largest landholder is the Federal Government. In my home State of Utah, the Federal Government owns close to 70 percent of the land within the State. This reality is hard for a lot of my colleagues from States east of the Mississippi River to even comprehend.

Imagine if the Federal Government could tell your constituents where they could live, recreate, hunt and fish, and how they could earn a living. Imagine that the Federal Government used its vast landholdings to block developments of the valuable natural resources. Imagine further that the Land and Water Conservation Fund was used to acquire privately held lands from your constituents.

Given how much land the Federal Government owns, it is not surprising to find out that much of it is rather poorly maintained. Specifically, the Department of the Interior currently has a maintenance backlog on Federal public lands with an estimated cost between $13.5 and $20 billion. Instead of looking to acquire even more land through the LWCF, the Federal Government should focus on properly managing the land it already owns.

Make no mistake, LWCF is a land acquisition program. According to a Congressional Research Service report from October 2014: ''The $16.8 billion appropriated throughout the history of the LWCF program has been unevenly allocated among federal land acquisition (62%), the state grant program (25%), and other purposes (13%).''

Today we are talking about the expiration of the LWCF's ability to accrue additional revenues to the fund—nothing more, nothing beyond that, just that. According to CRS, LWCF currently has an unappropriated balance of around $20 billion that can be appropriated to implement LWCF projects. If we assume the current rate of appropriations, roughly $300 million per year, it would take around 60 years before that Fund was exhausted. At full appropriation, $900 million, it would take about 20 years. When we wake up tomorrow after allowing LWCF's authorization to expire, nothing will have substantively changed. Both the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the House Natural Resources Committee are working to reform the LWCF to address the numerous issues I have raised. I know I speak for many of my colleagues in the West when I say that LWCF reform, especially with regard to Federal land acquisition, is a necessary condition of reauthorization.

On that basis, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I also wish to speak to the issue of the objection on this, the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Twenty-nine percent of all the land in the United States is already under Federal ownership. Let me clarify. This is not Federal control—Federal ownership, 29 percent of the land. There is $20 billion in deferred maintenance on that land—$20 billion. So there is a significant issue we face where a tremendous amount of land that is owned by the Federal Government is not being managed properly, including over $11 billion of that just in our national parks.

The issue here is, what is this Land and Water Conservation Fund going to be used for? Continuing to acquire new land. It is actually prohibited under the structure of this account, to actually do any of the maintenance. So we are continuing to acquire new land constantly, expanding landholdings, already at 29 percent of the total property in the United States, but we are not doing maintenance on what we already have, and we continue to complain there is not enough money to be able to go around and get this done.

If only this was the only program that actually did land acquisition in Federal control. In the past several years, there have been 130 conservation banks also set up by the Fish and Wildlife Service. These 130 different conservation banks that are scattered around the United States actually take private land and set it aside for what they call perpetual—perpetual—set-aside. This is land that is still in private ownership, but that is under conservation that can never be changed from its current status. Just in the recent decades, 160,000 acres have been moved into what they are calling these conservation banks.

To reiterate, we have a growing amount of land that is being taken in Federal ownership through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and then we have a separate set of programs—and this is only one of many programs—that is moving other land into Federal control and mitigation, and we have this expanding control of the Federal Government.

We should have National Parks. We should have land that is set aside for public use. That is not the issue, but we are not taking care of what we currently have. The key issue is, what do we do with this program, and how do we reform it. As has already been mentioned, it is the key issue. If the Land and Water Conservation Fund has a reform, there are ways to be able to handle some of our deferred maintenance and the backlog that is there. If it doesn't have any reform at all, we are continuing to purchase new land, but one key thing that is in this as well, as it currently stands right now, the Land and Water Conservation continues to function. Nothing changes about it. The only thing that changes, as of tomorrow, is that we are not adding new dollars into it. Twenty billion dollars is already sitting in that fund, enough money to fund this program at current rates for 65 years'—65 years'—worth of savings that is already built up in this program. I think it is fairly safe at this point. Strangely enough, the Land and Water Conservation Fund is more stable than Social Security is.

So the argument is that there is some urgent emergency here to be able to take care of it, and to continue to add dollars to it without reform I think will not work. We need to reform this program. We need to manage carefully the land we have, and we can do that.

I would highly suggest that the committees continue to do their work to be able to continue to reform this program. With that, I would also join in the objection to extending it as it currently exists today.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, my colleague from Utah purports to speak for westerners. I want to make it clear, he doesn't speak for New Mexico, he doesn't speak for me, he doesn't speak for my constituents, and he certainly doesn't speak for the businesses that write letters to me speaking about how the Land and Water Conservation Fund has benefited their businesses—particularly businesses that rely on tourism and outdoor recreation, that rely on places like the Valles Caldera National Preserve, that rely on places like the Rio Grande National Monument for their livelihood. The reason why, as westerners, I can take my kids out and go hunting on public land and the reason we can go camping and cut firewood to heat our homes is because of the public land the Land and Water Conservation Fund has provided in places like New Mexico.

We had a hearing in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. If anything, what we heard is that we didn't need to reform this program; that, frankly, it was working better than just about any program in the Federal Government.

LWCF works. It has broad bipartisan support. It creates recreation jobs that are key to Western States. LWCF buys from willing sellers in places that oftentimes reduce how much we spend on maintaining, protecting, and managing our Federal lands. Imagine in-holdings that make it harder for our foresters to manage wildfires and to protect and do the work. We need to do a better job of managing wildfires across the West.

So many of these issues that have been raised, particularly reform, are a red herring for what is truly an ideological opposition to the Land and Water Conservation Fund—a program that has put soccer fields and baseball diamonds in just about every little town across the United States. All of my counties, many of my cities, have benefited from sports fields specifically from this fund for decades now, as well as purchases like the new National Wildlife Refuge in Albuquerque's South Valley, the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, something the local community has enormous pride in. They had a friends group set up for this wildlife refuge before the refuge even existed.

So it is an indication of just how off base and out of the mainstream some of our conversations in Washington, DC, have become that we have this ideological opposition to the Land and Water Conservation Fund—a program that is actually working as it was designed to work and that has broad bipartisan support from one coast to the other in this Nation.

So I am disappointed in the actions of my colleagues. This issue is not going away. We have a strong coalition. We are going to continue to fight for the reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I would argue that we ought to stop taking money out of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and using it to cover other expenses within the general fund; that we should remain true to the concept of this fund as it was created back in the 1960s, under Secretary Udall, and return to a level of fiscal responsibility, where the money flowing into the Land and Water Conservation Fund actually benefits land and water.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

FEDERAL PERKINS LOAN PROGRAM

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, time is running out for the Senate to act to save the Federal Perkins Loan Program.

If we do nothing, this critical program that makes college affordable for 30,000 students per year in Illinois will expire at the end of the day.

Perkins was first authorized as part of the National Defense Education Act of 1958; and, unlike Federal student loans that we often think about, Perkins is a campus-based loan program.

Participating colleges and universities make low-interest federally subsidized loans to students with exceptional financial need.

The program also offers forgiveness and cancellation options to qualifying borrowers.

The real key to Perkins is the flexibility it offers to schools to provide financial aid to students to make up for gaps in costs that Pell or other financial aid may not cover.

If a student has an unexpected change in the financial situation of their family, say a parent loses a job, Perkins allows a college or university to step in and provide aid to that student to allow them to continue their studies.

The campus-based nature of the program means that students' individual financial needs can be met more effectively, and in my home State of Illinois, more than 150 institutions of higher education provide Perkins loans.

College presidents and financial aid administrators across Illinois have told me that without this key piece to the Federal financial aid puzzle, many students may be left behind, unable to afford a college education.

But it does not have to come to that.

The House sent us a bill passed with overwhelming bipartisan support that would extend this worthy program for another year.

I am disappointed that an attempt to take up and pass this House measure to continue the Perkins program was blocked today on the Senate floor.

Despite today's setback, I hope the Senate will still act to extend the Federal Perkins Loan Program and help keep college in reach for more than half a million students across the country who rely on this program.

BUDGETARY REVISIONS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, section 251 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 establishes statutory limits on discretionary spending and allows for various adjustments to those limits, while section 302 and 314(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 allows the chairman of the Budget Committee to establish and make revisions to allocation, aggregates, and levels consistent with those adjustments. Today, the Senate passed

H.R. 719, the TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act of 2015, with Senate amendment 2689, the continuing resolution. This measure included a provision providing $700 million to the wildland fire management account for the U.S. Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture that was designated as emergency funding pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Deficit Control Act of 1985. The inclusion of this designation makes this spending eligible for an adjustment under the Congressional Budget Act.

As a result, I am revising the budgetary aggregate for 2016 by $700 million in budget authority and $700 million in outlays. I am also revising the 2016 allocations for budget authority and outlays to the Appropriations Committee by $700 million in budget authority for the revised nonsecurity category and $700 million in outlays.

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 BUDGETARY AGGREGATES—

[Pursuant to Section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and S. Con. Res. 11, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2016]

$ Millions	2016
Current Spending Aggregates:	
Budget Authority	3,032,788
Outlays	3,091,273
Adjustments:	
Budget Authority	700
Outlays	700
Revised Spending Aggregates:	
Budget Authority	3,033,488
Outlays	3,091,973

REVISION TO SPENDING ALLOCATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016—

[Pursuant to Sections 302 and 314(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974]

$ Millions	2016
Current Allocation:	
Revised Security Discretionary Budget Authority	523,091
Revised Nonsecurity Category Discretionary Budget Authority	493,491
General Purpose Outlays	1,156,644
Adjustments:	
Revised Security Discretionary Budget Authority	0
Revised Nonsecurity Category Discretionary Budget Authority	700
General Purpose Outlays	700
Revised Allocation:	
Revised Security Discretionary Budget Authority	523,091
Revised Nonsecurity Category Discretionary Budget Authority	494,191
General Purpose Outlays	1,157,344

Memorandum: Adjustments by Designation

	Program integrity	Disaster relief	Emergency	Total
Revised Security Discretionary Budget Authority	0	0	0	0
Revised Nonsecurity Category Discretionary Budget Authority	0	0	700	700
General Purpose Outlays	0	0	700	700

NOMINATION OBJECTION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I intend to object to any unanimous consent request at the present time relating to the nomination of Brian James Egan, of Maryland, to be Legal Adviser of the Department of State.

I will object because the Department of State has failed to fully respond to almost a dozen outstanding letters dating back to 2013. In addition, on August 20, 2015, my staff met with Department officials in an effort to prioritize material for production. The Department has failed to comply with its commitments, producing material late, failing to provide all requested material, and even failing to provide material to the Senate Judiciary Committee contemporaneously with providing the same documents to Freedom of Information Act requestors.

This past August, I warned the Department that if it failed to change its ways that I would be forced to escalate the scope of my intent to object to unanimous consent requests for Department nominees. Since then, the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee chairman has joined me in requesting witness interviews of Department employees. Despite the Department's commitment to make witnesses available and assist in the identification of additional relevant witnesses, none of these interviews have actually been scheduled. The Department needs to respond in good faith to the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. Thus far, it has primarily been promises with little or no followthrough. The Department's good faith will be measured in documents delivered and witnesses provided.

My objection is not intended to question the credentials of Mr. Egan in any way. However, the Department must recognize that it has an ongoing obligation to respond to congressional inquiries in a timely and reasonable manner.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE MARINE MAMMAL CENTER

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, as the Marine Mammal Center, MMC, celebrates its 40th anniversary, I want to congratulate the staff, volunteers, and supporters of this extraordinary center for all they have done for decades to rescue and rehabilitate more than 20,000 marine mammals along our California coast.

MMC was founded in 1975 by a small group of local residents who wanted to aid sick and injured marine mammals such as elephant seals, sea lions, whales, sea otters, and dolphins. Over the years, MMC steadily expanded its efforts to emerge as the only organization authorized by the National Marine Mammal Fisheries Service to rescue ill or injured marine mammals along 600 miles of California coast. This mission has become increasingly important as the effects of climate change threaten our oceans and the marine life that depend on them.

MMC also has a robust scientific research program that serves as an incredible resource for information about mammal care, medicine, and health. MMC offers educational programs that engage the public and enrich science education for children, and their recently renovated headquarters will expand these efforts by allowing visitors to watch rescued animals be cared for at their modern animal hospital facility.

For 40 years, MMC has worked tirelessly to protect our magnificent marine animals, and I know their work will continue to make a profound difference for this generation and every generation to come.•

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

• Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate and honor Calvary Baptist Church of Charleston, SC, who will celebrate their 150th anniversary on October 10, 2015.

In 1865, the Calvary Baptist Church was founded by Reverend Charles Smalls as the Baptist Church in Charleston. The church is known as a the founding member of the Baptist Education and Missionary Convention of South Carolina and Gethsemane, the first African American Baptist Association in South Carolina.

Calvary was damaged, but not destroyed, by an earthquake in 1886, rebuilt after being burned down in April 1887, and repaired after a 1938 tornado. Commendably, Calvary Baptist Church has endured tough times, but still managed to greatly prosper.

Calvary Baptist Church is an example of a group who remains committed to Christ and community. During the civil rights movement, the church fought for justice and equal opportunity. Their leadership has helped both the Charleston community and our beloved country march forward.

Today, Reverend Arthur Evans, Sr., continues to lead the congregation with praise, love, and worship. Calvary has shown tremendous faith through works of charity, and their honorable legacy will forever be appreciated. I acknowledge with pleasure the church's influence in Charleston and therefore recognize their growth, success, and 150 years rooted in faith.•

OTTAWA UNIVERSITY

• Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I wish to commemorate the 150th anniversary of

the founding of Ottawa University in Ottawa, KS.

Ottawa University has grown from a single building in 1865 to a comprehensive, global institution of higher learning dedicated to preparing and educating students to have a lifetime of enlightened faith, exemplary service, inspired leadership, and personal growth and significance.

The university traces its roots to a strong partnership between Baptist missionaries and the Ottawa Indian tribe. In 1865, the partnership between members of the Baptist church and the Ottawa Indian tribe, under the leadership of Tauy Jones, led to the founding of a school for the benefit of children of the Ottawa Indian tribe. Originally chartered as a boarding school, OU's leaders also recognized the importance of offering a college-level education and having a college to serve as an economic growth engine for the community emerging around the Marais des Cygnes River.

Ottawa University's partnership with the Ottawa Indian tribe remains strong. In 2008, Kevin C. Eichner, president of Ottawa University, and Chief John Ballard of the Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma, entered into an agreement to grant, in perpetuity, free tuition and room and board to all certified members of the Ottawa tribe who wish to attend the residential college in Ottawa, KS, or any of OU's adult on-ground or online programs. This 2008 agreement has been widely embraced and celebrated by members of the tribe and the faculty, alumni, board members, and friends of OU as emblematic of the institution's core mission and principles and its enduring commitment to maintaining a strong partnership with the Ottawa Indian tribe.

Throughout its history, Ottawa University has pursued an innovative approach to higher education. In the 1970s, OU was among the first universities to embrace a growing demand for programs of higher education specifically tailored to the needs of adult students, opening an adult campus in Kansas City in 1974; Phoenix, AZ, in 1977; Brookfield, WI, in 1992; Jeffersonville, IN, in 2002; and Chandler, AZ, in 2009. In 2008, OU began offering complete degree programs online.

Today, Ottawa University serves more than 5,000 students from 50 States and six countries. The university employs more than 200 faculty and staff who are committed to ensuring that each student receives a high-quality education that honors OU's mission and history. Today there are more than 23,000 distinguished OU graduates serving their communities, professions, and churches around the world.

Congratulations to Ottawa University on the 150th anniversary of its founding, its enduring partnership with the Ottawa Indian tribe, and the achievements of all faculty, staff, students, and alumni who have contributed to the university's success.●

TRIBUTE TO MIKE HORSLEY

● Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure and the highest regards that I speak on the retirement of my long-time friend and valued constituent James Michael Horsley. Mike announced his retirement as president of the Alabama Hospital Association earlier this year and is planning to transition to his next venture in November.

Mike has had a long and distinguished career with the Alabama Hospital Association and has represented well the interests of hospitals and the patients they serve. His tremendous knowledge of the health care industry has been a valuable resource for members of the Alabama delegation. This knowledge is grounded not only in his 24 years of service to the association but also in his service to the State as commissioner of both the Alabama Medicaid Agency and the Alabama Department of Mental Health. His knowledge of health policy is unparalleled in the State and his expertise will be sorely missed as we continue to discuss the myriad of issues concerning health care delivery.

Not only is Mike well versed in health policy, but he is also a skilled negotiator, who has been able to convene diverse interests and facilitate lasting solutions that benefit all parties. He is respected as a man for his word, with a reputation for being ethical in all of his endeavors.

Mike is a strategic thinker who possesses the ability to find innovative solutions for seemingly insurmountable challenges. Under his leadership, Alabama's hospitals have been able to provide extraordinarily good care with very limited resources. In addition, he has been very active in highlighting the inequalities of the current Medicare wage index payment mechanism and advocating for a change of the broken system. I commend Mike's tireless work to reform the Medicare Area Wage Index, and I am proud to have worked with him on many successful endeavors to improve the wage index. In 2003, after leadership by the Alabama Hospital Association, the Congress passed legislation that improved the wage index for several rural States. The action resulted in payment gains for hospitals in Alabama of approximately $1 million per hospital per year. The State of Alabama has been lucky to have him as their champion on this issue.

I also want to commend him for his exemplary service to his country as an active member of the U.S. Navy and as a long-time reservist. Mike was a respected intelligence officer who retired at the rank of captain and was responsible for keeping many of our Navy men and women out of harm's way.

In addition to this remarkable career and military service, Mike is also a devoted husband, father, and grandfather. He has been married to Wanda for almost 40 years, and together, they have one son and two grandchildren. In light of these and all of his many accomplishments, I want to congratulate him on his outstanding career and to wish him the best in his impending retirement.●

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 Committee on Armed Services.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

NOTIFICATION OF THE PRESIDENT'S INTENT TO TERMINATE THE DESIGNATIONS OF SEYCHELLES, URUGUAY, AND VENEZUELA AS BENEFICIARY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES UNDER THE GENERALIZED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES (GSP) PROGRAM—PM 24

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 502(f)(2) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the ''1974 Act'') (19 U.S.C. 2462(f)(2)), I am providing notification of my intent to terminate the designations of Seychelles, Uruguay, and Venezuela as beneficiary developing countries under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program. Section 502(e) of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2462(e)) provides that if the President determines that a beneficiary developing country has become a ''high income'' country, as defined by the official statistics of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development of the World Bank (the ''World Bank''), the President shall terminate the designation of such country as a beneficiary developing country for purposes of the GSP program, effective on January 1 of the second year following the year in which such determination is made.

Pursuant to section 502(e) of the 1974 Act, I have determined that it is appropriate to terminate the designations of Seychelles, Uruguay, and Venezuela as beneficiary developing countries under the GSP program, because they have become high income countries as defined by the World Bank. Accordingly, their eligibility for trade benefits

under the GSP program will end on January 1, 2017.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *September 30, 2015.*

NOTIFICATION OF THE PRESIDENT'S INTENT TO TERMINATE THE DESIGNATION OF SEYCHELLES AS A BENEFICIARY SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN COUNTRY UNDER THE AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (AGOA) PROGRAM—PM 25

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

To the Congress of the United States:

I am providing notification of my intent to terminate the designation of Seychelles as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) program.

Section 506A(a)(1) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the ''1974 Act'') (19 U.S.C. 2466a(a)(1)) authorizes the President to designate a country listed in section 107 of the AGOA (19 U.S.C. 3706) as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country eligible for the benefits described in section 506A(b) of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2466a(b)), if the President determines that the country meets the eligibility requirements in section 104 of the AGOA (19 U.S.C. 3703), subject to the authority granted to the President under subsections (a), (d), and (e) of section 502 of the 1974 Act.

Pursuant to section 502(e) of the 1974 Act, I have determined that Seychelles has become a ''high income'' country and its designation as a beneficiary sub-Saharan country is no longer within the authority granted to the President under section 502 of the 1974 Act. Accordingly, pursuant to section 506A(a)(1) of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2466a(a)(1)), I have determined that Seychelles is no longer eligible for benefits as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country for the purpose of section 506A of the 1974 Act, effective January 1, 2017.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *September 30, 2015.*

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 9:55 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3495. An act to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to allow for greater State flexibility with respect to excluding providers who are involved in abortions.

At 3:30 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 2082. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain expiring provisions of law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 5:20 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 136. An act to amend chapter 21 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that fathers of certain permanently disabled or deceased veterans shall be included with mothers of such veterans as preference eligibles for treatment in the civil service.

S. 139. An act to permanently allow an exclusion under the Supplemental Security Income program and the Medicaid program for compensation provided to individuals who participate in clinical trials for rare diseases or conditions.

S. 565. An act to reduce the operation and maintenance costs associated with the Federal fleet by encouraging the use of remanufactured parts, and for other purposes.

S. 2082. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain expiring provisions of law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3614. An act to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the Acting President pro tempore (Mr. GARDNER).

At 5:42 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 719) to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 79. Concurrent resolution directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make corrections in the enrollment of H.R. 719.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 5:53 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 bill:

H.R. 719. An act to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the Acting President pro tempore (Mr. GARDNER).

MEASURES REFERRED

The following concurrent resolution was read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 79. Concurrent resolution directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make corrections in the enrollment of H.R. 719; to the Committee on Finance.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BARRASSO, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, without amendment:

S. 209. A bill to amend the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act of 2005, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–149).

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. LEE (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. HATCH):

S. 2102. A bill to amend the Clayton Act and the Federal Trade Commission Act to provide that the Federal Trade Commission shall exercise authority with respect to mergers only under the Clayton Act and only in the same procedural manner as the Attorney General exercises such authority; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. 2103. A bill to modify a provision relating to adjustments of certain State apportionments for Federal highway programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

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

S. 2104. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide relief to Medicare Advantage plans with a significant number of dually eligible or low-income subsidy beneficiaries and to prevent the termination of two star plans; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 2105. A bill to authorize funding for, and increase accessibility to, the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, to facilitate data sharing between such system and the National Crime Information Center database of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to provide incentive grants to help facilitate reporting to such systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 2106. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop and publish an action plan for improving the vocational rehabilitation services and assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. BLUNT):

S. 2107. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to help build a stronger health care workforce; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. TOOMEY (for himself and Mr. BENNET):

S. 2108. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for an extension of certain long-term care hospital payment rules and the moratorium on the establishment of certain hospitals and facilities; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. JOHNSON:

S. 2109. A bill to direct the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to develop an integrated plan to reduce administrative costs under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency

Assistance Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HIRONO, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2110. A bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to provide for greater spousal protection under defined contribution plans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 2111. A bill to establish an alternative, outcomes-based process for authorizing innovative, high-quality higher education providers to participate in programs under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SCOTT (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 2112. A bill to require law enforcement agencies to report the use of lethal force, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary .

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. DAINES):

S. 2113. A bill to harness the expertise, ingenuity, and creativity of all people to contribute to innovation in the United States and to help solve problems or scientific questions by encouraging and increasing the use of crowdsourcing and citizen science methods within the Federal Government, as appropriate, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. Res. 272. A resolution congratulating the University of Kansas for 150 years of outstanding service to the State of Kansas, the United States, and the world; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 314

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) 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. 334

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 334, a bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to provide for automatic continuing resolutions.

S. 553

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 553, a bill to marshal resources to undertake a concerted, transformative effort that seeks to bring an end to modern slavery, and for other purposes.

S. 613

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 613, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to improve the efficiency of summer meals.

S. 624

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 624, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to waive coinsurance under Medicare for colorectal cancer screening tests, regardless of whether therapeutic intervention is required during the screening.

S. 711

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) 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. 931

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 931, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide that a deduction equal to fair market value shall be allowed for charitable contributions of literary, musical, artistic, or scholarly compositions created by the donor.

S. 968

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 968, a bill to require the Commissioner of Social Security to revise the medical and evaluation criteria for determining disability in a person diagnosed with Huntington's Disease and to waive the 24-month waiting period for Medicare eligibility for individuals disabled by Huntington's Disease.

S. 1013

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1013, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage and payment for complex rehabilitation technology items under the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 1383

At the request of Mr. PERDUE, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1383, a bill to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to subject the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection to the regular appropriations process, and for other purposes.

S. 1521

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1521, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase access for the uninsured to high quality physician care.

S. 1539

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1539, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to establish a permanent, nationwide summer electronic benefits transfer for children program.

S. 1555

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1555, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Filipino veterans of World War II, in recognition of the dedicated service of the veterans during World War II.

S. 1559

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1559, a bill to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence from emotional and psychological trauma caused by acts of violence or threats of violence against their pets.

S. 1742

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1742, a bill to improve the provision of postal services to rural areas of the United States.

S. 1757

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1757, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to promote health care technology innovation and access to medical devices and services for which patients choose to self-pay under the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 1833

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1833, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to improve the child and adult care food program.

S. 1844

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1844, a bill to amend the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to provide for voluntary country of origin labeling for beef, pork, and chicken.

S. 1915

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1915, a bill to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to

make anthrax vaccines and antimicrobials available to emergency response providers, and for other purposes.

S. 1974

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1974, a bill to require the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection to amend its regulations relating to qualified mortgages, and for other purposes.

S. 1996

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1996, a bill to streamline the employer reporting process and strengthen the eligibility verification process for the premium assistance tax credit and cost-sharing subsidy.

S. 2015

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2015, a bill to clarify the treatment of two or more employers as joint employers under the National Labor Relations Act.

S. 2034

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2034, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide additional aggravating factors for the imposition of the death penalty based on the status of the victim.

S. 2067

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) were added as cosponsors of S. 2067, a bill to establish EUREKA Prize Competitions to accelerate discovery and development of disease-modifying, preventive, or curative treatments for Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, to encourage efforts to enhance detection and diagnosis of such diseases, or to enhance the quality and efficiency of care of individuals with such diseases.

S. 2071

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2071, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to modernize payments for ambulatory surgical centers under the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 2075

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2075, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage and to express the sense of the Senate that the resulting revenue loss should be offset.

S. 2101

At the request of Mr. TESTER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2101, a bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to extend the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

S.J. RES. 15

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 15, a joint resolution removing the deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment.

S.J. RES. 16

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 16, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to equal rights for men and women.

S. RES. 267

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 267, a resolution expressing support for the continuation of the Federal Perkins Loan program.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. BLUNT):

S. 2107. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to help build a stronger health care workforce; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I am pleased to be joined by Senator BLUNT in the reintroduction of the Building a Health Care Workforce for the Future Act.

According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, by 2025, there will be a shortage of up to 90,000 physicians. Approximately 1/3 of the shortage, up to 31,100 will be in primary care. Individuals and families living in underserved areas, urban and rural, will continue to be those most disadvantaged by this shortage.

Last year, we expanded our health care system to provide health insurance to millions more Americans. In fact, recent studies have shown that the uninsured rate has decreased to the lowest level since 1997 over the last 2 years. In Rhode Island, the uninsured rate decreased by half, down to 5 percent. As a result, millions of Americans are going to the doctor for preventive health care for the first time. In order for these efforts to be successful, we must expand our health care workforce to ensure that we have enough health care professionals to treat the newly insured.

The Building a Health Care Workforce for the Future Act would authorize programs that would grow the overall number of health care providers, as well as encourage providers to pursue careers in geographic and practice areas of highest need.

Building on the success of the National Health Service Corp, NHSC, Scholarship and Loan Repayment Programs, and the State Loan Repayment Program, this legislation would establish a state scholarship program. Like the NHSC State Loan Repayment Program, States would be able to receive a dollar-for-dollar match to support individuals that commit to practicing in the State in which the scholarship was issued after completing their education and training. At least 50 percent of the funding would be required to support individuals committed to pursuing careers in primary care. The States would have the flexibility to use the remaining 50 percent to support scholarships to educate students in other documented health care professional shortages in the state that are approved by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

The Building a Health Care Workforce for the Future Act would also authorize grants to medical schools to develop primary care mentors on faculty and in the community. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, graduating medical students consistently state that role models are one of the most important factors affecting the career path they choose. Building a network of primary care mentors in the classroom and in a variety of practice settings will help guide more medical students into careers in primary care.

The legislation would couple these mentorship grants with an initiative to improve the education and training offered by medical schools in competencies most critical to primary care, including patient-centered medical homes, primary and behavioral health integration, and team-based care.

It would also direct the Institute of Medicine, IOM, to study and make recommendations about ways to limit the administrative burden on providers in documenting cognitive services delivered to patients. Primary care providers treat patients in need of these services almost exclusively, and as such, spend a significant percentage of their day documenting care. That is not the case for providers who perform procedures, like surgeries. This IOM study would help uncover ways to simplify documentation requirements, particularly for delivering cognitive services, in order to eliminate one of the potential factors that may discourage medical students from pursuing careers in primary care.

Providers across the spectrum of care recognize that this bipartisan legislation is part of the solution to addressing the looming health care workforce shortage and have lent their support, including: the Alliance for Specialty Medicine, the American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine, the Association of Academic Health Centers, and the Association of American Medical Colleges.

I look forward to working with these and other stakeholders as well as Senator BLUNT and our colleagues to pass the Building a Health Care Workforce for the Future Act in order to help ensure patients have access to the health care they need.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HIRONO, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2110. A bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to provide for greater spousal protection under defined contribution plans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Women's Pension Protection Act of 2015.

Out in Washington State, I recently heard from a woman named Cathy. A few years ago, Cathy said she got a taste of what it is like to have serious doubts about her future in retirement. Her husband was unemployed. On one income, they were trying to pay the bills, pay for health insurance, and pay for college tuition for their younger son. Every month, Cathy said they had to dip further and further into their retirement savings. She said she would stay awake at night, worrying how they were going to make it all work.

When I hear stories like Cathy's, it reaffirms for me what we should be working on in Congress. We need to grow our economy from the middle out, not the top down. Our country should work for all families, not just the wealthiest few. That is especially true for seniors—who, after a lifetime of hard work, deserve to live healthy, full, and financially secure lives.

I believe a secure retirement is one of the surest hallmarks of a strong middle class. But seniors today are facing some daunting challenges, just like Cathy.

Many Americans simply don't have enough savings. They are relying on thin Social Security checks that barely last until the end of the month. Sometimes, they are forced to choose between paying for groceries or paying for a prescription.

Too often, it is women who struggle the most with financial hardship in retirement, more so than men. Why is this? Well, for one, women live longer than men. So, they are more likely to outlive their retirement savings.

But there are also some systemic challenges we need to address to make sure women are better able to have a secure retirement. During their working years, women earn less than men. Today, women make just 78 cents for every dollar a man makes. That is just patently unfair. Women are more likely than men to work low-wage jobs. In fact, women comprise two-thirds of all minimum-wage workers. It is plain and simple math: Lower wages make it hard to support a family, let alone save enough for retirement. Women are also much more likely to work part-time, sometimes so they can take on caregiving responsibilities.

This earnings gap leads to a retirement gap later in life. Don't forget, workers in low wage and part-time jobs, often don't have access to a retirement savings plan at work. A new GAO report shows that workers in low-wage and part-time jobs are among the least likely to participate in a workplace retirement plan. It is mainly because these plans are not offered or because they are not eligible. Keep in mind this is particularly problematic for women, because they make up the majority of low-wage and part-time workers.

It is not that these workers don't want to save for their future. This same GAO report found that when given the opportunity, a majority of part-time workers and workers in low-wage jobs do participate in retirement plans. For a long time, people assumed that these workers would not take advantage of a workplace retirement account or that they couldn't afford to save. This report busts that myth. Instead, it is the lack of access to retirement plans that prevent many workers from saving.

But, as if all that wasn't enough, 401k plans today lack basic consumer protections. I have heard from advocates who work with women whose husbands cashed out their 401k during a separation or right before a divorce. Right now, there is nothing in the law that prevents that from happening. That is just not right.

Without consumer protections, both husbands and wives are at risk of having the rug pulled out from under them because their spouse made a financial decision without their knowledge.

These challenges—from inequality in the workplace to gaps in consumer protections—won't just go away. In fact, they will only get worse until we resolve to do something about it for seniors today, for those who want to retire in the next few years, and for future generations.

Thankfully, we can do something about it. We need to address the inequalities that women face during their working years. It is time to finally ensure women get equal pay for equal work. The Paycheck Fairness Act would tackle pay discrimination head-on. I hope we can all agree that in the 21st century, workers should be paid fairly for the work they do, regardless of their gender.

We should raise the minimum wage to $12 by 2020. It will put more money in workers' pockets so they can spend it in their local communities and put more away for retirement. My bill will provide a strong floor—a Federal bare minimum—that workers and cities can build off of and go even higher where it makes sense—like in Seattle in my home State of Washington.

It is time to make more progress on paid sick leave, so women aren't penalized for taking care of their families. I have introduced a bill called the Healthy Families Act to allow workers to earn paid sick days. Those solutions to empower women in today's workplace will pay off for their golden years to come.

Today, I am proud to introduce a bill with a number of my Democratic women colleagues. It is called the Women's Pension Protection Act, and it would take three major steps to protect women's retirement security.

First, my bill would expand spousal protections to cover defined contribution plans, like 401(k)s. These protections already exist for defined benefit plans, and it is just common sense to extend these protections to defined contribution plans as well. It would help improve access to retirement savings plans for part-time workers. This bill would improve women's financial literacy. With fewer traditional pensions, people will need to make some difficult financial decisions in retirement. So, increasing financial literacy will be very important in the years ahead.

Ensuring women are able to access a secure retirement is part of my ongoing work to help our economy grow in the way we know is strongest: from the middle out, not the top down.

Eighty years ago, Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act into law. At the time, he called it ''a cornerstone in a structure, which is being built, but it is, by no means, complete.'' We added on to that original cornerstone with Medicare, Medicaid, and the Older Americans Act. Those programs laid the foundation for seniors to have solid footing in America's middle class.

Now, it is time to build on that foundation. Because like FDR foresaw 80 years ago, the structure of retirement security is still incomplete. We need to start the next phase to address the pressing challenges that seniors face today. I am going to be fighting to make sure more workers, more seniors and more families have access to a healthy, independent, and financially secure retirement. I am going to keep fighting to build an ever-stronger foundation for families in my home State of Washington State, and across the Nation, for generations to come.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 272—CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS FOR 150 YEARS OF OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE STATE OF KANSAS, THE UNITED STATES, AND THE WORLD

Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. ROBERTS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 272

Whereas the University of Kansas was founded in 1865 as the State university for the State of Kansas, embodying the values and ideals of the people who fought and died to ensure that Kansas would enter the Union as a free State, as symbolized by the mascot of the university, the Jayhawk;

Whereas, 150 years after its founding, the University of Kansas is home to 28,000 students and 2,800 faculty;

Whereas the university graduates more than 6,700 individuals each year who join the ranks of the 338,240 Jayhawk alumni living throughout Kansas, the United States, and the world;

Whereas the University of Kansas has been a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities since 1909;

Whereas the University of Kansas has been open to all genders and races since its founding;

Whereas the first valedictorian of the university was Flora Richardson in 1873;

Whereas the University of Kansas has 13 schools, offers more than 600 degree programs, and has students come from all 50 States and 105 countries to study at the university;

Whereas the University of Kansas recognizes that the understanding of world cultures is essential for the progress of the United States;

Whereas the university offers more than 40 separate language courses;

Whereas continuing education programs at the University of Kansas include fire and law enforcement training centers that annually train over 5,000 public safety officers across Kansas;

Whereas basketball was first played at the University of Kansas in 1898, coached by James Naismith, the inventor of the game, and the university has one of the most successful programs in the country, winning 5 national championships and more than 2,150 games;

Whereas Allen Fieldhouse has hosted the University of Kansas basketball games since 1955 and the building remains one of the most historically significant and prestigious buildings in college athletics;

Whereas President Theodore Roosevelt pronounced the chant of the university, Rock Chalk Jayhawk, the ''greatest college cheer ever devised'';

Whereas the University of Kansas has a long history of working with the United States Armed Forces, is one of only 53 schools to host all 3 Reserve Officers' Training Corps programs, and works with the United States Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth to produce military and civilian faculty with the advanced degrees necessary to teach at the highest level;

Whereas, in 1917, the first United States officer killed in World War I combat was a University of Kansas Medical Center student;

Whereas research at the University of Kansas provides numerous economic and societal contributions;

Whereas helium was first isolated in Bailey Hall, located on the main campus of the University of Kansas, and the first time-release capsule was developed by a university professor;

Whereas the Spencer Museum of Art houses an internationally known and diverse collection with approximately 38,000 artworks and artifacts in all media;

Whereas the Kenneth Spencer Research Library is home to some of the rarest and most precious volumes and materials in the world, including cuneiform tablets written 4 millennia ago;

Whereas astronauts, artists, authors, business leaders, Pulitzer Prize winners, a Nobel laureate, and Governors and Senators have launched careers at the University of Kansas, including former Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole; and

Whereas the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics offers opportunities for all citizens to discover how to best serve their communities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes that the diverse elements of the University of Kansas are united by the mission to educate leaders, build healthy communities, and make discoveries that benefit and improve society; and

(2) congratulates the University of Kansas for 150 years of outstanding service to the State of Kansas, the United States, and the world.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2704. Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1493, to provide for an increase, effective December 1, 2015, in the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2705. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. ISAKSON) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2617, to amend the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 to reduce a scheduled increase in the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa.

SA 2706. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. ISAKSON) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2617, supra.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2704. Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1493, to provide for an increase, effective December 1, 2015, in the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 3, strikes lines 8 through 14 and insert the following:

(c) RATE OF INCREASE.—Each dollar amount described in subsection (b) shall be increased by 0.9 percent.

SA 2705. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. ISAKSON) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2617, to amend the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 to reduce a scheduled increase in the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. MINIMUM WAGE FOR AMERICAN SAMOA.

(a) MINIMUM WAGE.—Paragraph (2) of section 8103(b) of the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 (29 U.S.C. 206 note) is amended to read as follows:

''(2) the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa under section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)) shall be—

''(A) the applicable wage rate in effect for each industry and classification as of September 29, 2015; and

''(B) increased by $0.40 an hour (or such lesser amount as may be necessary to equal the minimum wage under section 6(a)(1) of such Act), beginning on September 30, 2015, and on September 30 of every third year thereafter, until the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa under this paragraph is equal to the minimum wage set forth in such section.''.

(b) GAO REPORTS.—Section 8104 of the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 (29 U.S.C. 206 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking ''September 1, 2011'' and inserting ''April 1, 2017''; and

(B) by striking the second sentence and inserting the following: ''The Government Accountability Office shall submit a subsequent report not later than April 1, 2020.'';

(2) in subsection (b), by striking ''the study under subsection (a)'' and inserting ''any report under subsection (a)''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(c) REPORT ON ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE IN AMERICAN SAMOA.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of 'An Act to amend the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 to reduce a scheduled increase in the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa', the Government Accountability Office shall transmit to Congress a report on alternative ways of increasing the minimum wage in American Samoa to keep pace with the cost of living in American Samoa and to eventually equal the minimum wage set forth in section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)).''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This Act, and the amendments made by this Act, shall take effect as of September 29, 2015.

SA 2706. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. ISAKSON) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2617, to amend the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 to reduce a scheduled increase in the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa; as follows:

Amend the title so as to read: ''An Act to amend the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 to reduce a scheduled increase in the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa.''.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO OBJECT TO PROCEEDING

I, Senator CHARLES E. GRASSLEY, intend to object to proceeding to the nomination of Brian James Egan, to be Legal Advisor of the Department of State, dated September 30, 2015.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 30, 2015, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''The Economic Crisis on Ukraine.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet

during the session of the Senate on September 30, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. McCAIN. 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 September 30, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''A Review of the Department of Education and Student Achievement.''

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 30, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–224 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Nominations.''

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 30, 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. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 30, 2015, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL SPENDING OVERSIGHT AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Federal Spending Oversight and Emergency Management of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 30, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Prudent Planning or Wasteful Binge? A Look at End of the Year Spending.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WILDLIFE, AND WATER

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, and Water of the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 30, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD-406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Oversight of the Army Corps of Engineers' Participation in the Development of the New Regulatory Definition of ''Waters of the United States.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SECURITIES, INSURANCE, AND INVESTMENT

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on Securities, Insurance, and Investment be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 30, 2015, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Oversight of the Securities Investor Protection Corporation.''

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

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Special Committee on Aging be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 30, 2015, at 2:30 p.m. in room SD-562 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Pension Advances: Legitimate Loans or Shady Schemes.''

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

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 238, S. 2078.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2078) to reauthorize the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. 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 (S. 2078) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2078

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Reauthorization Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of the Congress that the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom—

(1) was created by Congress to independently assess and to accurately and unflinchingly describe threats to religious freedom around the world; and

(2) in carrying out its prescribed duties, should use its authorized powers to ensure that efforts by the United States to advance religious freedom abroad are timely, appropriate to the circumstances, prudent, and effective.

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY.

Section 209 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6436) is amended by striking ''September 30, 2015'' and inserting ''September 30, 2019''.

SEC. 4. STRATEGIC PLAN.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives;

(C) the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(D) the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(2) COMMISSION.—The term ''Commission'' means the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom established under section 201 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6431).

(3) COMMISSIONER.—The term ''Commissioner'' means a member of the Commission.

(4) VICE CHAIR.—The term ''Vice Chair'' means the Vice Chair of the Commission who was appointed to such position by an elected official from the political party that is different from the political party of the elected official who appointed the Chair of the Commission.

(b) STRATEGIC POLICY AND ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW PLANNING PROCESS.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less frequently than biennially thereafter, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission, in coordination with the Commissioners, the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, Commission staff, and others jointly selected by the Chair and Vice Chair, shall carry out a strategic policy and organizational review planning process that includes—

(1) a review of the duties set forth in section 202 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6432) and the powers set forth in section 203 of such Act (22 U.S.C. 6432a);

(2) the preparation of a written description of prioritized actions that the Commission is required to complete to fulfill the strategic plan required under subsection (d);

(3) a review of the scope, content, and timing of the Commission's annual report and any required changes; and

(4) a review of the personnel policies set forth in section 204 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6432b) and any required changes to such policies.

(c) UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To the greatest extent possible, the Chair, Vice Chair, and all of the Commissioners shall ensure that this section is implemented in a manner that results in unanimous agreement among the Commissioners with regard to—

(A) the strategic policy and organizational review planning process required under subsection (b); and

(B) the strategic plan required under subsection (d).

(2) ALTERNATIVE APPROVAL PROCESS.—If unanimous agreement under paragraph (1) is not possible, items for inclusion in the strategic plan may, at the joint discretion of the Chair and Vice Chair, be approved by an affirmative vote of—

(A) a majority of Commissioners appointed by an elected official from the political party of the President; and

(B) a majority of Commissioners appointed by an elected official from the political party that is not the party of the President.

(d) SUBMISSION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of the Act, and not less frequently than biennially thereafter, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission shall jointly submit, to the appropriate congressional committees, a written strategic plan that includes—

(1) a description of prioritized actions for the Commission for a period of time to be specified by the Commissioners;

(2) a description of any changes the Commission considers necessary with regard to the scope, content, and timing of the Commission's annual report;

(3) a description of any changes the Commission considers necessary with regard to personnel matters; and

(4) the Commission's funding requirements for the period covered by the strategic plan.

(e) PENDING ISSUES.—The strategic plan required under subsection (d) may identify any issues or proposals that have not yet been resolved by the Commission.

(f) IMPLEMENTATION OF PERSONNEL PROVISIONS AND ANNUAL REPORT.—Notwithstanding section 204(a) and 205(a) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6432b(a) and 6533(a)), the Commission is authorized to implement provisions related to personnel and the Commission's annual report that are included in the strategic plan submitted pursuant to this section.

(g) CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT.—Upon request, the Commission shall—

(1) make available for inspection any information and documents requested by the appropriate congressional committees; and

(2) respond to any requests to provide testimony before the appropriate congressional committees.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 207 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6435) is amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 207. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Commission $3,500,000 for each of the fiscal years 2016 to 2019 to carry out the provisions of this Act and section 4 of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Reauthorization Act of 2015.

''(b) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Amounts authorized to be appropriated under subsection (a) shall remain available until the earlier of—

''(1) the date on which they have been expended; or

''(2) the date on which the Commission is terminated under section 209.

''(c) LIMITATION.—In each fiscal year, the Commission shall only be authorized to expend amounts that have been appropriated pursuant to subsection (a) if the Commission—

''(1) complies with the requirements set forth in section 4 of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Reauthorization Act of 2015; and

''(2) submits the annual financial report required under section 208(e) to the appropriate congressional committees.''.

NATIONAL KINSHIP CARE MONTH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 266 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 266) designating September 2015 as ''National Kinship Care Month.''

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 266) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of September 22, 2015, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMENDING THE FAIR MINIMUM WAGE ACT OF 2007

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 2617, which was received from the House.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2617) to amend the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 to postpone a scheduled increase in the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Isakson amendment at the desk be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, the amendment to the title be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 2705) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To reduce an increase in the minimum wage for American Samoa, to adjust the reporting requirements of the Government Accountability Office regarding the proposed minimum wage increases for American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and for other purposes)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. MINIMUM WAGE FOR AMERICAN SAMOA.

(a) MINIMUM WAGE.—Paragraph (2) of section 8103(b) of the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 (29 U.S.C. 206 note) is amended to read as follows:

''(2) the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa under section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)) shall be—

''(A) the applicable wage rate in effect for each industry and classification as of September 29, 2015; and

''(B) increased by $0.40 an hour (or such lesser amount as may be necessary to equal the minimum wage under section 6(a)(1) of such Act), beginning on September 30, 2015, and on September 30 of every third year thereafter, until the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa under this paragraph is equal to the minimum wage set forth in such section.''.

(b) GAO REPORTS.—Section 8104 of the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 (29 U.S.C. 206 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking ''September 1, 2011'' and inserting ''April 1, 2017''; and

(B) by striking the second sentence and inserting the following: ''The Government Accountability Office shall submit a subsequent report not later than April 1, 2020.'';

(2) in subsection (b), by striking ''the study under subsection (a)'' and inserting ''any report under subsection (a)''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(c) REPORT ON ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE IN AMERICAN SAMOA.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of 'An Act to amend the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 to reduce a scheduled increase in the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa', the Government Accountability Office shall transmit to Congress a report on alternative ways of increasing the minimum wage in American Samoa to keep pace with the cost of living in American Samoa and to eventually equal the minimum wage set forth in section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)).''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This Act, and the amendments made by this Act, shall take effect as of September 29, 2015.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed, and the bill to be read a third time. The bill was read the third time.

The bill (H.R. 2617), as amended, was passed.

The amendment (No. 2706) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the title)

Amend the title so as to read: ''An Act to amend the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 to reduce a scheduled increase in the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa.''.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, October 1; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein; further, that the time be equally divided, with the majority controlling the first half and the Democrats controlling the final half; further, that following morning business, the

Senate then resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 2029, with the time until 1:45 p.m. equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; finally, that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2029 at 1:45 p.m.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:36 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, October 1, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. STEPHEN E. MARKOVICH

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE 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

LT. GEN. ANTHONY J. ROCK

IN THE ARMY

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 brigadier general

COL. MARTA CARCANA

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 brigadier general

COL. FRANK D. EMANUEL

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

LT. GEN. JOHN E. WISSLER

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

A TRIBUTE TO AMELIA BOYNTON ROBINSON, CONGRESSMAN LOUIS STOKES, AND JULIAN BOND

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 28, 2015

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to three heroes of the Civil Rights Movement: Julian Bond, Amelia Boynton Robinson and Former Congressman Louis Stokes.

My thoughts and prayers are with their families during this very difficult time.

First let me thank Rep. DONALD PAYNE, JR., and Rep. ROBIN KELLY for organizing this Special Order and for their leadership in the Congressional Black Caucus. I have known Julian since the 1970s and most recently stood with him to remember the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam Peace Movement at the Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial in Washington, DC. As a cofounder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Julian galvanized young people to fight against segregation, march in the Civil Rights movement, and better the lives of all Americans.

Julian dedicated his career to public service. After his work with SNCC, he served in the Georgia Legislature and as president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). I know his legacy of tireless advocacy for equality and social justice will live on. It inspires me every day as we work to address inequality and reform our broken criminal justice system.

I also rise to remember Amelia Boynton Robinson, a true hero of the Civil Rights Movement. Ms. Boynton Robinson was a trailblazer who championed civil rights and worked tirelessly for justice and equality. As one of the brave protestors at Selma, Amelia Boynton Robinson was brutally beaten in what would become known all around the world as "Bloody Sunday." Ms. Boynton Robinson, along with her fellow protestors, drew nationwide attention to the plight of African Americans and led us to the Voting Rights Act.

Last but not least, I want to commemorate the life of Former Congressman Louis Stokes. Congressman Stokes was a wonderful mentor to me as a member of Congressman Ron Dellums' staff and later as a Member of Congress. Congressman Stokes grew up in Cleveland public housing and his childhood informed the policies he championed.

He was the first African American Congressman to represent Ohio, one of the Founders of the Congressional Black Caucus and also the first African American to win a seat on the Appropriations committee, a committee on which I now sit. Congressman Stokes spent his congressional career fighting for the poor and the voiceless; he is a true American Hero.

Mr. Speaker, it is because of the tireless advocacy of these leaders that we saw an end to legal segregation, the enactment of the voting rights act, and the election of so many African Americans to Congress.

It was a great honor to count myself among the lives they touched. May the work they started continue until all forms of inequality are addressed.

And may their spirits soar as their memories live on in our hearts.

RECOGNIZING FLORIDA'S 16TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT FIRE AND RESCUE AND EMS PERSONNEL

HON. VERN BUCHANAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize fire and rescue and EMS personnel who have provided distinguished service to the people of Florida's 16th Congressional District.

As first responders, fire departments and emergency medical service teams are summoned on short notice to serve their respective communities. Oftentimes, they arrive at scenes of great adversity and trauma, to which they reliably bring strength and composure. These brave men and women spend hundreds of hours in training so that they are prepared when they get "the call."

In 2012 I established the 16th District Congressional Fire and Rescue and EMS Awards to honor officers, departments, and units for outstanding achievement.

On behalf of the people of Florida's 16th District, it is my privilege to congratulate the following winners, who were selected this year by an independent committee comprised of a cross section of current and retired fire and rescue personnel living in the district:

Firefighter/EMT Michael Dunn of the Cedar Hammock Fire Rescue was chosen to receive the Preservation of Life Award

Lt. Don Rossow of the Englewood Area Fire Control District was chosen to receive the Dedication and Professionalism Award

District Chief/Paramedic Robin Thayer of the Manatee County Emergency Medical Services was chosen to receive the Career Service Award

Lt. Jason Wilkins, Lt. Jamie Mann, Firefighter/EMT Nicholas Jones, Firefighter/Paramedic Sean Sponable and Firefighter/EMT Clayton Huber were chosen to receive the Unit Citation Award

Deputy Chief Brett Pollok of the West Manatee Fire and Rescue was chosen to receive the Career Service Award

Fire Investigator/Inspector Larry Betts of the Southern Manatee Fire and Rescue District was chosen to receive the Dedication and Professionalism Award.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PAUL HLYNSKY

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember and honor the life of Paul Hlynsky, an Akron, Ohio community leader who passed away on September 23, 2015 at the age of 61 after a long and hard fought battle with cancer. As a man of great conviction and dedication to those he served, Paul will be remembered as a strident defender of his friends, family, and colleagues.

Through his 18 years of service as President of the Akron Lodge 7 Fraternal Order of Police, Paul led countless fights for the rights of his coworkers as the longest serving President of the Order. After 16 years in the Army where he rose to the rank of Major, Paul became a police officer in 1992, serving his country and community for decades. Paul was a unifier, bringing together Akron union leaders to work collectively on fighting for their workers' rights and interests.

As the child of Ukrainian immigrants who had been in a German labor camp during World War II, Paul faced difficult life challenges from the start, learning the value of staying dedicated to those you know and love.

Paul was preceded in death by his parents and older sister. Paul is survived by his sister, Irene (Dan) Harland; nieces, Stephanie (Scott) Jowers and Jeannette Harland; fiancée, Olya Tymciurak. He is also survived by many of his police brethren for whom he worked tirelessly.

I am deeply saddened by the loss of Paul Hlynsky, a man who was such a vital servant of the Akron, Ohio community. I hope you all will join me in offering my thoughts and prayers to him and his family.

IMPROVING RESEARCH AND TREATMENT FOR DYSTONIA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, Janice and Len Nachbar of Freehold, New Jersey, who lead the Central New Jersey Dystonia Support and Action Group, eloquently addressed a congressional briefing yesterday on dystonia—a neurological movement disorder characterized by muscle contractions causing abnormal and often painful body movements and postures. Dystonia can cause a range of impairments, in some cases leaving a person legally blind or unable to walk or communicate.

Janice and Len are the loving parents of Joanna, a remarkably brave and smart woman who is afflicted with dystonia. Janice and Len explained their daughter's multi-year battle with this condition, saying in part:

"Eventually, her dystonia became so advanced and painful; she was approved for Deep Brain stimulation surgery, or commonly known as, DBS. She underwent seven hours of brain surgery while wide awake to implant electrodes in her brain with a second surgery to follow."

Ultimately, says Janice, "[Dystonia's] largest tolls are emotional. How hard it is to see a bright child with the world open to her disintegrate daily."

Today, though Joanna faces significant mobility and communication challenges, she serves as an online mentor for dystonia patients around the globe.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit the Nachbars' compelling testimony from the briefing, along with testimony from Janet Hieshetter, executive director of the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation. I urge my colleagues to read their statements and seek to join us in expanding improved research and treatments for this little-understood condition.

TESTIMONY OF JANET HIESHETTER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DYSTONIA MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Thank you all for being here today and joining us for Dystonia Awareness Month. If you don't know a great deal about dystonia, you are in the right place. We have a great line up of speakers that can talk extensively about these conditions.

My name is Janet Hieshetter, and I am Executive Director of the non-profit Dystonia Medical Research Foundation. The DMRF works to advance medical research and support individuals and families impacted by dystonia. We also work collaboratively with four other patient-driven dystonia organizations, the Benign Essential Blepharospasm Research Foundation, DySTonia, Inc., the National Spasmodic Dysphonia Association and the National Spasmodic Torticollis Association to improve patient care through a nationwide grassroots effort known as the Dystonia Advocacy Network.

Briefly, dystonia is a neurological movement disorder that is characterized by persistent or intermittent muscle contractions causing abnormal, often repetitive, movements, postures, or both. The movements are usually patterned and twisting, and may resemble a tremor.

There are multiple forms of dystonia, and dozens of diseases and conditions may include dystonia as a symptom. Dystonia can affect a single body area like the eyelids leaving the person legally blind or be generalized throughout multiple muscle groups in the body—often placing people in wheelchairs.

Dystonia affects men, women, and children of all ages and backgrounds. Estimates suggest that no fewer than 300,000 people are affected in North America. Dystonia causes varying degrees of disability and pain, from mild to severe.

Thanks in large part to our federal investment in medical research, significant advancements have been made in our understanding of these conditions. While there remains no cure, clinical research has led to meaningful treatment options including botulinum toxin injections and deep brain stimulation.

TESTIMONY OF JANICE NACHBAR

Joanna was a very bright, articulate child. She walked at ten months. She had a high and big voice.

Her hands always had tremors, but so did those of my mother and grandmother, so we shrugged it off. She also never vomited. A good thing, right.

She was in the gifted class in first grade. She attended dancing school and gymnastics and was good at both.

Strange symptoms started appearing between the ages of six and ten. Her handwriting became cramped and her reading was not advancing properly. In the third grade, she was moved out of the gifted class.

By the sixth grade, she was on the verge of repeating the grade. Although she moved up to the seventh grade, her work was still below grade level.

We took her to a multitude of specialists, including an eye therapist, reading labs and psychologists, thinking she had a learning disability. Nothing was helping. She became frustrated and felt she was a failure.

While in High School, Joanna had braces on her teeth. Coincidentally, her speech started to become cluttered and hard to understand. We attributed it to the braces.

She was classified as a learning disabled student and was placed in a special academic program in school. She was given individual help with her work. We also hired tutors, but her work was still unsatisfactory.

We knew something was radically wrong when her braces came off and we still could not understand her.

Physically, she was still functional. She drove her car. After graduation, she became licensed as a home and nursing home aide and briefly was able to work.

By age 21, her speech was almost gone and she was having pain and spasms. Her back was pulled to the side and her hips were uneven. Her balance was off and she fell repeatedly.

The first neurologist she saw told us she had Fazio-Land disease. This was a form of muscular dystrophy and we were told she would slowly strangle to death.

We next took her to a well-known neurologist in a large teaching hospital in NYC. He admitted her to their testing center and spent three days having various medical staff poke, prod and test. He came up with nothing, other than to watch her.

As parents, we were panicking as we watched her diminish and were fortunate enough to obtain an appointment with Dr. Mark Hallett, Senior Investigator of the Human Motor Control Section of the NINDS.

Joanna and I traveled to Bethesda and spent an afternoon with Dr. Hallett.

Thanks to him, and after 15 years of searching, we finally had a diagnosis.

He referred us to a movement disorder specialist who, coincidentally, was in the same building and one floor below the neurologist she had been seeing for two years, but who had never mentioned the movement disorder clinic in his own department.

This kind of disconnect by physicians is a huge issue for those seeking a diagnosis and treatment. If a physician does not recognize a movement disorder or avoids a referral to a movement disorder specialist, the patient is helpless.

After seeing the new movement disorder neurologist, Joanna began taking medications for Dystonia. At this point, the mystery of her school failure was revealed. Her hairdresser commented that her head no longer had minute tremors. Tremors? I never saw them. When the tremors stopped, she could read.

She didn't have a learning disability; she just couldn't see the page. Imagine how different her school experience would have been with an early diagnosis and treatment? Now she was able to go to a local college and obtain an associate's degree, something none of us could have imagined.

Eventually, her dystonia became so advanced and painful; she was approved for Deep Brain stimulation surgery, or commonly known as DBS. She underwent seven hours of brain surgery while wide awake to implant electrodes in her brain with a second surgery to follow.

Some people have miraculous results. Joanna had minimal results, but the DBS did lessen her pain.

Remember she never vomited? It seems she has no gag reflex. She also cannot cough. As a result, Joanna has had numerous pneumonias, with the last one requiring 11 days in CCU, five days of which on a ventilator. It was a devastating experience for all of us. I spent the entire 11 days next to her, only leaving her side to eat or shower in the hospital or to take a short break when another family member sat with her. All patients need advocates, but a non-verbal one is even more vulnerable.

Because her dystonia affects her mouth so intensely, she cannot take in enough nourishment to sustain health.

At 5′3 inches in height, she weighed about 88 pounds. She now has a permanent feeding tube and takes all nutrition and hydration through it.

She can eat very little, since just about everything is a choking risk and she can't cough to move the food out. Her g tube became infected and she spent 7 weeks in a rehab center. Of course, her dad and I spent 7 weeks there, as well.

Despite all of these treatments, Joanna's dystonia worsened. She lost all speech, most of the use of her hands and the ability to walk safely.

My husband and I are aging and were fearful for Joanna's future security. As a family, we made the most difficult decision of a lifetime. In March of 2014, Joanna moved to a long-term care facility in Philadelphia.

It's a wonderful place and she has many friends, but it's still not the life any of us envisioned for our bright and lively child.

Dystonia has affected Joanna and us in many ways. Economically, we made huge changes in our work so as to be able to care for her. Her medical bills, hospitalizations and trips to see doctors added up.

Socially, our family became hermits, avoiding social activities either because Joanna couldn't keep up or we had nobody who could stay with her. We missed birthdays, weddings, family vacations and other important events due to Dystonia.

The largest tolls are emotional. How hard it is to see a bright child with the world open to her disintegrate daily. How hard is it for Joanna?

That's our family story and Joanna's journey. Thank you.

TESTIMONY OF LEN NACHBAR

My wife, Janice, spoke to you about how dystonia has affected our daughter, Joanna, and our family. I'm going to tell you about how dystonia changed the lives of members of our New Jersey and Philadelphia support groups and of friends of ours around the country.

Last week, a bright, beautiful and talented friend in her twenties wrote: "Feeling so completely broken. Why was I even born? I live in such pain and agony. There is no end in sight." She's a graduate student who should have a promising career and life, but the constant pain caused by her dystonia hasn't allowed it.

Sometimes the pain, the inability to work and the resulting poverty becomes too much to bear. A few years ago, a member of our New Jersey support group attempted to commit suicide. She is also a bright woman and was a graduate student at Rutgers University when dystonia struck.

Another member of our support group was the Facilities Administrator at a major Philadelphia hospital before he developed dystonia. His neck is involuntarily pulled to the side. He's unable to straighten it. He tried to continue working, but the constant pain made him retire.

A member of our New Jersey support group has been a teacher for many years. She loves the career and wants to continue teaching, but says that her school district is trying to force her to resign. A second grade teacher who's a member of our Philadelphia group is still working, but sometimes needs assistance. So far, her colleagues have been able to help her hide the problems.

A New Jersey Special Ed teacher is an ''expert'' on the accommodations that people with disabilities need. She's angry because her school makes accommodations for her students, but has refused to do so for her. She asked for a chair and a program that would enable her to dictate because she has difficulty writing.

Dystonia has impacted or ended the careers of many other friends and support group members. The bass member of a singing group can no longer sing. A travel agent can no longer drive and has difficulty speaking to clients. An attorney has similar problems. A guitarist friend, who was a Grammy winner, lost the ability to finger the strings. A French Horn player's lips stopped working properly.

A half year ago, a story about a Midwest woman in her thirties received a lot of Internet and media attention. Her story was featured on national news programs and she was interviewed on the Today show. The woman had been diagnosed with CP, was treated unsuccessfully for that disease for over thirty years and led a very disabled life. After living as a CP patient for over three decades, she finally received the correct diagnosis: dystonia. Her story is even more frustrating. The woman is one of a minute percentage of dystonia patients who have dopa responsive dystonia. The symptoms that those people have can be controlled by medication. After thirty years, the woman is now leading an almost ''normal'' life.

Misdiagnosis is common. Many patients are told that their symptoms are psychosomatic.

A third of the hundreds of thousands of dystonia patients in this country are children. An eight and a half year old girl from New Jersey and a fifteen year old young woman from Connecticut were both diagnosed with CP. Both had unnecessary and very painful surgeries that cut their leg tendons in an attempt to straighten their feet. Both actually have dystonia. A foot turning in is often a first symptom. It wasn't recognized by their pediatricians or by their orthopedists.

When we started our New Jersey support group, it took our daughter and many of the original members over ten years to be diagnosed correctly. Research conducted by the NIH has shortened that time for many patients. It has also improved the types and number of treatments that are available. However, as our presentations have illustrated, there's much more to learn and it's important to continue funding the research.

Please help us.

Thank you.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF GERTRUDE HENDRICK

HON. DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 100th Birthday of Staten Island's Gertrude Hendrick.

Ms. Hendrick currently resides on Staten Island at the New Lane Shores assisted living facility. She is a mother of three sons: Michael; John; and Raymond, and a grandmother of eleven, and a great-grandmother of two.

Ms. Hendrick is originally from Brooklyn, NY, where she attended Bay Ridge High School. She retired 35 years ago in 1980 from Bankers Trust, where she worked in the accounting department for 23 years. After her retirement, she moved from Brooklyn to Staten Island. Two years later, on August 24, 1984, she moved into the New Lane Assisted Living Facility where she is now the longest, and oldest, resident in New Lane.

During her time at New Lane Shores, she volunteered and orchestrated trips for residents, which included collecting money for transportation that allows the residents to go shopping, demonstrating her commitment to helping others.

At the age of 100, Ms. Hendrick is very energetic and loved by all. She enjoys playing poker and dancing with her walker. She loves to attend parties and is a source of positive energy in every room.

Mr. Speaker, Gertrude Hendrick's positive personality and commitment to helping others embodies the perfect example of a model American citizen. I commend her outstanding life and I am proud to honor this citizen from New York's 11th District on her 100th birthday.

IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of September as National Recovery Month.

Established 26 years ago, National Recovery Month strives to educate Americans about opportunities for addiction treatment and mental health services, and the urgent need to take advantage of them. This year, National Recovery Month is highlighting the value of peer-to-peer support in educating, mentoring, and helping others in their recovery.

Addressing the prescription drug abuse epidemic is a uniquely American problem. It is not limited by geography or demographics. Prescription drug abuse has spread across the country like wildfire—with the U.S. accounting for less than five percent of the world's population yet consuming over 80 percent of the world's opioids and 99 percent of its hydrocodone. Tragically, 46 people die each day from an overdose of prescription drugs, and, each year, a staggering 185,000 people over the age of twelve in Massachusetts are at risk of an overdose. This number rises to a chilling 424,000 when taking into account those suffering from alcohol abuse. These statistics neither fully convey the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse nor the toll of this epidemic—both on families nationwide and on the limited resources available to law enforcement and social service agencies.

The first step toward stemming the rising rates of addiction is investing directly in our communities. This includes promoting and encouraging prevention, treatment and recovery measures in every state, as well as ensuring robust funding for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). I am proud of the programs in my district that serve as a positive and successful example for others to follow—including, but not limited to, High Point Treatment Center, South Shore Mental Health, Gosnold Treatment Center, and Stanley Street Treatment and Resources (SSTAR) Addiction Treatment. They have proven the extent to which we can fight substance abuse through the integration of mental health services and treatment, thereby providing opportunity for individuals in recovery.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in highlighting this important issue. There is no single solution to fighting this epidemic, but together we can make a difference.

HONORING BEN RICHMOND OF THE LOUISVILLE URBAN LEAGUE ON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. JOHN A. YARMUTH

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Benjamin K. Richmond, the President and C.E.O. of the Louisville Urban League, who retires today after serving our proud city and community for nearly three decades.

Since 1987, Ben and his staff have helped countless individuals and families across the city of Louisville achieve economic stability. Under Ben's leadership, the League has broken down barriers to ensure that all Louisvillians have the opportunity to pursue a better education, a better career, and a better life for their families. The organization has been a national model for success, regularly exceeding expectations and finding new ways to tackle the challenges facing our community.

Ben was instrumental in creating REBOUND Inc., the Urban League's charitable arm dedicated to housing development and rehabilitation. This program not only transforms vacant and abandoned properties into new houses for low and moderate income families, it helps transform the lives of those families and the neighborhoods they will call home.

At every level, Ben's passion and dedication has increased the Urban League's presence and stature throughout Louisville, forging new partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and members of the community.

Ben has spent his entire life making sure that all individuals have the opportunity to not only be successful, but to achieve that success while helping others. Quite simply, he is the very embodiment of the mission of the Urban League: to empower communities and change lives.

Louisville would not be what it is today without the contributions and commitment of Ben Richmond. I am proud to have worked closely with him through the years, but I'm even prouder to be able to call him a friend.

On behalf of the people of Kentucky's Third Congressional District and the city of Louisville, thank you, Ben, for your service and for being such a powerful source of inspiration for so many of us. I wish you all the best in your retirement. It certainly is well deserved.

RECOGNIZING THE 104TH NATIONAL DAY OF TAIWAN

HON. SCOTT DesJARLAIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. DESJARLAIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the upcoming Double Ten Day, the Republic of China's, also known as Taiwan, national day, which falls on October 10th and to extend my very best wishes to the people of Taiwan as they gather to celebrate the 104th National Day.

As a vibrant democracy and contributor to the global economy, Taiwan plays an important role in the peace and security of the Asia-Pacific region. I am proud of the role our country and the United States' Congress have played, through the Taiwan Relations Act, in making it possible for the hard working and resilient people of Taiwan to build a strong, prosperous and democratic society. Our relationship is as strong as ever, as I believe it will continue to be in the years and decades ahead.

As a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, I would also like to commend the actions taken by President Ma Ying-jeou and his government to create an environment where peace and prosperity for all countries of the region can be pursued. President Ma has proposed both an East China Sea Peace Initiative and a South China Sea Peace Initiative, which lay out diplomatic approaches for all sides involved in maritime disputes to set aside their differences and jointly explore the natural resources of the disputed waters, while upholding international law.

In global disputes, such as these, it is this exact vision that is needed to reduce tensions and open up a dialogue between claimants, and as such, it should be given all due consideration by the international community.

In closing, I applaud the nation of Taiwan for its strong commitment to democratic values and more importantly, for the shining example it sets for aspiring countries, both in the Asia-Pacific region and around the world. As someone who is very appreciative of Taiwan's many contributions to the global community, I encourage my colleagues to join me in wishing the people of Taiwan a happy Double Ten Day.

MALNUTRITION AWARENESS WEEK

HON. RENEE L. ELLMERS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about a hidden epidemic facing millions of Americans and their families. It is the epidemic of malnutrition, often unrecognized, yet directly impacting many of our own families and the constituents we serve. It increases the burden of our nation's health care costs and hits our elderly and minority communities especially hard according to a number of studies.

For example, a 2014 study conducted by researchers at the University of North Carolina and the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm found that of older adults living at home, one of every six are malnourished when they enter a hospital. Other studies have shown that an additional 1 in 3 become malnourished while in the hospital. Why is this important? Patients with malnutrition have been shown to potentially heal slower, experience longer hospital stays and be at greater risk for re-hospitalizations and complications.

This economic burden of disease-associated malnutrition is profound. One study estimates that the U.S. burden is roughly $156.7 billion per year—and for those aged 65+ it is estimated to be $51.3 billion per year. As we struggle to contain health care costs and get the most value for patients and our health care dollars, it seems counterintuitive to ignore malnutrition, particularly among our most vulnerable populations.

So what can we do? A broader engagement by the healthcare community is the first step. The critical role of nutrition in the prevention and treatment of disease should have a greater emphasis in physician training. Malnutrition screening should become part of regular patient assessment. Knowing the nutrition status of patients and undertaking appropriate interventions are low-cost, common-sense solutions that will improve health outcomes and save health care dollars.

This week of September 28 through October 2 is Malnutrition Awareness Week. Let's help foster a greater attention to the problem and make a difference through solutions that better support healthy aging among senior citizens across our country. Sometimes the solution is easier than we think.

IN MEMORY OF REP. JIM SANTINI

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the life and times of one of our former colleagues, Rep. Jim Santini from Nevada. I actually never served with Jim, but I came to know him well and appreciate him for his work on travel and tourism issues, two issues for which we shared a great passion. Sadly, Jim Santini passed away on September 22 from esophageal cancer.

Jim Santini was elected in 1974 and left the House in 1982. He served in the House at a time when Nevada only had one representative. In many respects he was the third Senator. He travelled to every corner of the state and was especially interested in protecting the interests of the rural communities; he didn't want even the smallest of towns in the desert to be forgotten.

During his tenure in the House he honed in on one of the great economic engines of our country: travel and tourism. This industry often toils in disparate ways but Santini recognized its potential power if it ever came together over its common goals: to encourage new adventures around the country through travel and exploration and to serve customers by creating memorable, lasting experiences for them in the process of travel. Currently, travel and tourism accounts for $2.1 trillion in economic output in the U.S. and employs 15 million persons.

Rather than letting this vast travel economy move along in all its separate parts he helped all the many facets of travel and tourism see their commonalities and unite around a common purpose. In doing so he elevated the industry's interests in Congress from its myriad components into a singularly focused agenda. Part of the way he did this was to organize the Congressional Travel and Tourism Caucus.

After Santini left Congress the caucus disappeared. But given California's tremendous tourism industry and my involvement in promoting travel and tourism when I was in the California Assembly, one of the first things I did when I got elected to Congress was to re-establish the Caucus. I am proud to say that the Caucus today is quite vigorous with 116 Members. We have significant accomplishments under our belt including the enactment and reauthorization of the BRAND USA legislation which helps promote the United States to international travelers, and the JOLT Act which was introduced this year and proposes to reform and enhance the way visitor visas are processed so as to make travel to the U.S. easier from abroad. We have Jim Santini to thank for these accomplishments. It is his vision that is embodied in much of today's travel and tourism agenda.

Jim Santini leaves behind his devoted wife, Ann Crane Santini, his children David, Lisa, Katherine, Lori, Mark and JD and their families, 13 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild.

Mr. Speaker, I feel certain the House joins me in offering condolences to the Santini family and in giving our former colleague posthumous thanks for all he did to serve the great state of Nevada and the nation.

RECOGNIZING DYSAUTONOMIA AWARENESS MONTH

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the millions that fight each day against dysautonomia. Dysautonomia is a group of debilitating medical conditions that result in a malfunction of the autonomic nervous system. This system is responsible for ''automatic'' bodily functions such as respiration, heart rate, blood pressure, digestion, and temperature control. Dysautonomia continues to significantly impact the lives of Americans across the United States especially here in Buffalo, New York.

Multiple forms of dysautonomia can be extremely disabling and this disability can result in social isolation, stress on the families of those impacted, and financial hardships. The outstanding character and strong moral fiber of those in the Western New York community have provided the much needed support for the victims suffering from dysautonomia. Looking ahead it will be important for the community to rally around these victims as they continue their hard fought battle against this disease.

Dysautonomia awareness is monumental in the early detection of the disease due to the fact that most patients take years to get diagnosed. Dysautonomia International, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that advocates on behalf of patients living with dysautonomia, encourages communities to celebrate Dysautonomia Awareness Month

each October around the world. At this time Dysautonomia International is funding research to develop better treatments and hopefully find a cure for all forms of this condition in the future.

I wanted to recognize the contributions of the professional medical community, patients and family members who are working to educate our citizenry about dysautonomia throughout Western New York.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me a few moments to recognize Dysautonomia Awareness Month. I ask that my colleagues join me in support for those suffering from the devastating medical condition and encourage them to spread awareness across the United States this October. I am pleased to inform you that on the night of October 1st, in my Congressional District in Niagara Falls, New York, Niagara Falls will be lit up turquoise from 10:00 p.m. to 10:15 p.m. in support of Dysautonomia Awareness Month.

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF JOB CORPS

HON. RICK LARSEN

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, today I congratulate Job Corps on the recent 50th Anniversary of the founding of the program.

Established in 1955 as a partnership between public agencies and private businesses, Job Corps has since offered more than 3 million young people housing, educational opportunities and job training to connect them with good jobs and financial independence.

Every year, more than 50,000 people enroll in Job Corps, including veterans, young parents and youth aging out of the foster system, because Job Corps provides these individuals with the critical resources they need to become successful. Job Corps continues to evolve to meet the changing needs of youth and employers, preparing students to succeed in the current marketplace. And it changes lives—more than 80% of Job Corps graduates obtain jobs, join the military or enroll in higher education.

Cascades Job Corps in Sedro-Woolley is one of four centers in Washington state. Cascades Job Corps Center ably serves my constituents, helping nearly 500 students each year learn skills necessary to fully participate in our economy and democracy. Hands-on and self-paced job training in fields like carpentry, medicine and office administration ensures that students are qualified for jobs in the local economy. After graduating from the program students receive support to help them find housing, transportation and jobs in their field.

Cascades Job Corps Center was recently selected by the Burlington Chamber of Commerce as Business of the Year, underscoring its importance in the community. Nationally, Job Corps generates an average of $1.91 in local economic activity for each dollar invested in it. The Cascades Job Corps Center also makes a difference by partnering with local organizations like Community Action of Skagit County, Habitat for Humanity and the Helping Hands Food Bank to offer students meaningful service work.

I congratulate Job Corps for 50 years of offering young people from all walks of life the opportunity to build successful careers and fulfilling lives.

RECOGNIZING FEEDING SOUTH FLORIDA AND ITS WORK FOR HUNGER ACTION MONTH

HON. LOIS FRANKEL

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Feeding South Florida for their work during the 8th annual Hunger Action Month this September. Hunger Action Month is a Feeding America nationwide campaign to mobilize the public, help raise awareness about the issue of hunger, and take action to help end it. To celebrate Hunger Action Month, Feeding South Florida ''painted the town orange'' and held a series of events throughout South Florida to raise awareness about food insecurity, making it clear that anyone and everyone can do something to help end hunger.

In South Florida, hunger and food insecurity are all too common. Nearly 14 percent of the population of South Florida is food insecure, with more than 785,000 people not knowing where they will get their next meal. Feeding South Florida is committed to providing assistance to the South Florida residents living with food insecurity. They have distributed 40 million pounds of food in 2014 in Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe counties.

No American should have to wonder where they're getting their next meal. I join my community in raising awareness of this critical issue in the hope that every South Floridian has reliable access to nutritious food. I am proud to support Feeding South Florida in both their Hunger Action Month campaign and their day-to-day fight against hunger.

H.R. 3495

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I voted against H.R. 3495, the so-called ''Women's Public Health and Safety Act,'' which is just the latest attack on Planned Parenthood, an essential health service provider for 70,000 women annually in Oregon and over 2.7 million women nationally.

In my community, Planned Parenthood has provided compassionate and critical care for over 50 years and is a necessary part of our health care system. Planned Parenthood centers serve a greater share of safety-net contraceptive clients than any other type of safety-net providers. These clinics are more likely to make reproductive care accessible, and in a timely manner, to the women who need it most

H.R. 3495 would not only deny critical health services for low-income women, but it would undermine the entire Medicaid program. The language is so broad and vague that it could result in whole hospital systems being denied Medicaid participation—further eroding low-income individuals' access to care.

Under this bill, a state could remove any health professional that ever worked in a health care practice of any kind that at one point was involved in providing abortion. This assault on Medicaid will result in fewer providers to serve the 72 million low-income men, women, and children covered by the program.

These attacks are appalling—they are built on misinformation and rhetoric and need to stop.

HONORING CONSTANCE BOULWARE

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work of Constance Boulware a City Councilwoman for Rio Vista and one of my district's 2015 Woman of the year.

Whereas, on the Twenty-Second Day of September, of the Year Two Thousand and Fifteen, Constance Boulware was recognized as a 2015 Woman of the year.

Whereas, upon retirement after 30 years of service with the Social Security Administration, Constance (Connie) Boulware relocated from the Bay Area to Rio Vista in 2007. While on her journey of discovery in her newly adopted hometown, she found volunteer organizations and service clubs in need of an extra pair of hands and offered hers. Over time, Connie's interest in city government grew. She was appointed first to the Airport Committee and then to the Army Base Reuse Committee. In 2010, Connie was elected to the Rio Vista City Council and re-elected in 2014 where she serves today.

Whereas, as a council member, Connie has a particular interest in the needs of Seniors and Children. Her hallmark has been her responsiveness to constituents and her ability to bring people together to tackle community needs. In the midst of a city budget crisis, Connie has been successful in bringing volunteers together to make much needed Senior Center repairs and provide unmet summer recreational needs for children at little to no cost to the City.

Whereas, Connie also serves as President of the Solano County Library Foundation, Board Member of Rio Vision, Co-President of Women's Improvement Club, President of the Rio Vista Lions Club, and President of the Rio Vista Soroptimists Club.

Whereas, Constance Boulware inspires with the quiet, modest and caring way she leads by example, drawing others to join her in making life better for her community. She never says, ''We can't do that,'' but instead says, ''Let's see what we can do together.''

Resolved, That I Congressman JOHN GARAMENDI of California's Third Congressional District, do hereby recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of Constance Boulware.

CONGRATULATIONS TO JESSE M. BALTAZAR ON HIS 95TH BIRTHDAY

HON. RYAN K. ZINKE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. ZINKE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a great American patriot, Mr. Jesse M. Baltazar, on the occasion of his 95th birthday. His service to America covers three wars, four federal agencies, postings in nine countries and government travel to over 80 nations. He is a true and tested member of the Greatest Generation.

Major Jesse M. Baltazar, USAF (Ret.) was born in Manila, Philippines on October 8th, 1920, and began his military career with the United States Armed Forces, Far East (USAFFE). He is a veteran of WWII, Korea, and Vietnam; a Japanese Prisoner of War and Bataan Death March Survivor.

During Maj. Baltazar's Purple Heart ceremony on January 20, 2015, former Chief-of-Staff of the Army Gen. Ray Odierno summarized Maj. Baltazar's career to this country as follows:

> I am moved by Maj. Baltazar's humility, his selflessness, and his service to our Nation . . . It's a story about a young man from the Philippines who fought to defend both his home and our Nation following the fateful attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941; a story about a man who understands the importance of unparalleled national commitment and the willingness to volunteer and serve; a story of honor and courage; and a story about an American Patriot, Soldier, Airman, and Diplomat.

And Gen. Odierno went on to describe the bravery of Maj. Baltazar during the Battle of Bataan, which earned him the Purple Heart:

> On March 15, 1942, Sergeant Baltazar was hit by shrapnel in the leg when the Japanese bombed an area near his camp. With the American and Filipino forces now having been cut off since January 1942, supplies were dwindling and facilities were limited. So he underwent surgery in an open air jungle hospital with minimal anesthesia and little time to recover. As the battle raged on and our Soldiers valiantly fought to hold the line, 76,000 American and Filipino soldiers eventually were forced to put down their arms and surrender on April 9, 1942.
>
> When the Bataan Death March began, Sergeant Baltazar was forced to use a bamboo stick as a cane to help him walk. He suffered brutality and starvation at the hands of his Japanese captors in conditions that led to the spread of disease. Exhausted and fearing that he was going to die, he seized an opportunity to escape on the third night into the infamous 66 mile march. Hiding in a fisherman's boat for a two-hour ride through the thick swamp, Sergeant Baltazar found his way back home, where he proceeded to join the Filipino resistance movement—what an incredible example of the strength of the human spirit.

After being discharged from the army in 1945, he went on to become the first Filipino-born Officer in the United States Air Force in 1948. He served for 20 years in the Air Force, primarily overseas as a Special Agent in the Office of Special Investigations (OSI), where he authored the monthly Counter-Intelligence report for Korea (1950–52), West Berlin (1956–58) and France (1958–60). During the Korean War, he was one of a handful of American officers posted to Korea that spoke both Russian and Chinese. During the Cold War, he was stationed in Berlin when the Berlin Wall was erected. After retiring from the military he worked for the United States Department of State, USAID and the Department of Labor. From 1966–70 with USAID, he served in Vietnam as Deputy Provincial Advisor. During the Sandinista conflict, he served as Regional Security Officer with the Voice of America for Nicaragua, Belize and Costa Rica. He retired from the State Department in 1988 and then returned as a contract employee. Maj. Baltazar continues to serve at the Department of State, where at 95, he is their eldest worker.

Maj. Baltazar received his BS from Georgetown University in Linguistics and MA from the University of Virginia in Education. He speaks seven languages, including Russian, Chinese, German, French, Spanish, English and Tagalog.

His military awards and decorations include: Bronze Star, Purple Heart, WWII Victory Medal, POW Medal, American Defense Service Medal, WWII Theater Campaign (Pacific), The Korean Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, UN Service Medal, Philippine Presidential Unit Citation, Korean Presidential Unit Citation.

Maj. Baltazar is a devoted husband and father. He has been happily married to his wife Margrit for 55 years. They have five children, Katherine, Susanne, Thomas, Phillip and Melchior, and are blessed with nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Few choose to lead a life of service like Jesse M. Baltazar. He is a living inspiration to all of us of the character, honor, and commitment required to keep our nation free. It is a great honor today to recognize him on his 95th birthday, for his dedication and sacrifice to our great country.

REMEMBERING A TOLEDO TRADITION

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a landmark business in Toledo, Ohio. Red Wells Roast Beef restaurant closed its doors this month after nearly 100 years of serving its traditional hot roast beef sandwich. As he retires, owner Richard Wells does not wish to sell the restaurant and its homemade offerings.

Legendary in West Toledo, Red Wells officially began in 1894 when Allen and Eva Wells served food in their hotels, boarding houses and saloons. After he returned from service in World War 1, their son Clark Wells—nicknamed ''Red''—partnered with his father to open up a restaurant serving signature hot roast beef sandwiches. The restaurant grew quickly and in 1930 the family opened up two restaurants in downtown Toledo, one of which was the first restaurant in the city to be electrified. Richard Wells started in the family business in 1946. He persuaded the family to open up its current location on Sylvania Avenue in West Toledo in 1957.

The business continued to do well offering a menu of items first cooked by Eva Wells: in addition to the most luscious hot roast beef sandwiches anywhere in the world, the restaurant also served such comfort food as mashed potatoes and Red Wells' famous gravy, a hot turkey sandwich, green beans, corn, pies and pudding. Richard Wells also grew the business to other locations, but it was the Sylvania Avenue restaurant that was the business' mainstay.

A gathering place for friends and family, both the regular and occasional diners of Red Wells will surely miss its homey cafeteria atmosphere, friendly staff and hearty food. Just as the restaurant was generational, so too were the diners. Patrons passed their love of Red Wells down through their children. On its last day there were so many people the restaurant could not serve them all.

As Richard Wells eases into retirement, we wish him much enjoyment spending time doing what he wishes and being with those for whom he cares. May he know that the legend that became Red Wells Roast Beef restaurant will live on in Toledo memory.

HONORING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL AND THE 95TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE JOLIET CHAPTER OF KIWANIS

HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 100th anniversary of Kiwanis International and the 95th anniversary of the Joliet Chapter of Kiwanis. What began with only two members on a fateful fall day in 1914 has grown to an international organization with over 600,000 members that devote over 6 million hours of service annually. On January 21, 1915 the state of Michigan returned the corporate charter, this date has been celebrated as the birthday of Kiwanis ever since.

With their motto, ''Serving the Children of the World,'' Kiwanis International has done just that, improving the lives of children across the world, one child and one community at a time. Kiwanis International has reached this milestone because it has always stayed true to the six permanent Objects of Kiwanis International, which remain unchanged since their approval in 1924.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in commemorating the 100th and 95th anniversaries of Kiwanis International and the Joliet Chapter of Kiwanis as they continue their long tradition of fellowship and service.

HONORING DAWN DOWDY

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work of Dawn Dowdy a track coach and mentor and one of my district's 2015 Woman of the year.

Whereas, on the Twenty-Second Day of September, of the Year Two Thousand and Fifteen, Dawn Dowdy was recognized as a 2015 Woman of the year.

Whereas, Dawn Dowdy is a dedicated Track Coach for Hamilton High School. Dawn has redefined the term ''dedication'' and has not let the fact that Hamilton High does not have a track on campus hinder her students from reaching personal goals and competing in regional competitions.

Whereas, Dawn has not allowed substantial budget cuts deter her from attracting a high number of students into her program. She has orchestrated fundraising to ensure students have the means to participate and takes a personal interest in each student to make sure they keep up with their academics. Some of her students have competed in the State Finals and obtained college scholarship funds.

Whereas, Hamilton City is a small, tight-knit community of 2,000. Dawn's ability to mentor, motivate and maximize students' potential on and off the Track is priceless.

Resolved, That I Congressman JOHN GARAMENDI of California's Third Congressional District, do hereby recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of Dawn Dowdy.

TRIBUTE TO CYNTHIA WILLIAMS AND THE AUSTIN PEOPLES ACTION CENTER

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, for more than thirty-five years the Austin Peoples Action Center (APAC) has been an integral part of the Austin community. Organized principally by the Williams family and parishioners of the Third Unitarian Church, APAC has grown to become one of the premier social service agencies in the state of Illinois, and its principal staff person Ms. Cynthia Williams is known as one of the most effective agency directors in the state. As a social service agency, APAC provides quality health and human services to thousands of Chicago's neediest residents, including people with disabilities, seniors at risk, children, youth and adults with mental illness and substance abuse problems. APAC is known for having the largest women, infants and children's program in the state of Illinois and I might add the most effective. For thirty-five years of great leadership and community service I commend Cynthia Williams and the Austin Peoples Action Center for their contributions to improving the quality of life for Chicago residents.

IN RECOGNITION OF JADEN MERRICK'S WORLD RECORD SETTING RACE TIME FOR THE HALF MARATHON IN THE 7-YEAR-OLD AGE GROUP

HON. ROD BLUM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a young constituent of mine—Jaden Merrick from Cedar Falls, Iowa—on his world record setting race time for the half marathon in the 7-year-old age group.

On September 12, 2015, Jaden raced in the Cedar Valley Park-to-Park Half Marathon in Waterloo, Iowa. Jaden, having already raced to a world record for his age group in last year's Park-to-Park 5K, rewrote the record books again—completing the half marathon in an astounding one hour, 43 minutes, and 34 seconds.

In addition to his remarkable race times, the local running community recognizes Jaden by his signature smile. He simply beams through every step of the race and his enthusiasm is undiminished despite the distances. He is an exceptional young man who enjoys having fun while competing.

I extend my sincerest congratulations to Jaden and wish him well as he prepares to compete in the Junior Olympics for cross country and track in the upcoming spring. I would also like to congratulate Jaden's parents Brent and Sabina, on their perpetual support of their son and their encouragement of his talents.

IN HONOR OF THE LIFE OF FORMER INDIANA STATE REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAM A. CRAWFORD

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart and solemn remembrance that I rise today to pay tribute to a respected public servant and outstanding citizen, former Indiana State Representative, William A. Crawford.

Maya Angelou once said, ''A great soul serves everyone all the time. A great soul never dies.'' Representative Crawford is one such great soul, who served humanity in a special way. He spent his entire life dedicated to public service, pushing a message of equality and justice during his 40 years in the Indiana General Assembly.

On a personal note, Representative Crawford was a dear friend and mentor who I was privileged to know from a very young age. I have fond memories of getting to know 'Bill' as he served alongside my grandmother during her time at the Statehouse. With Bill's passing, our state has lost a champion, our city has lost a leader, and I have lost a friend.

Revered as the most influential African-American state lawmaker in Indiana's history, Representative Crawford made sure that African-American Hoosiers had a voice in government. He was the first African-American lawmaker to serve as chairman of the powerful and influential Indiana House Ways and Means Committee and was critical in starting the Indiana Black Legislative Caucus.

Representative Crawford was destined to lead and when he spoke people listened. He was inspired to serve by the life and death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He was present on April 4, 1968, and heard Senator Robert Kennedy's words at 17th and Broadway in Indianapolis announcing the death of Dr. King. Being there that night helped shape his career as an activist and led to his passionate work on behalf of the Kennedy/King Memorial on that historic site. Among his accomplishments was increasing minority enrollment at Ivy Tech Community College and creating the Indiana Black Expo into the institution it is today.

I extend my greatest sympathy to his wife Bernice, children Darren, Sr., Michael, Kim and Monica. I pray that God rests his soul and gives peace and comfort to his family and friends.

HONORING DEIDRE ROBINSON

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work of Deidre Robinson, a business leader and one of my district's 2015 Woman of the year.

Whereas, on the Twenty-Second Day of September, of the Year Two Thousand and Fifteen, Deidre Robinson was recognized as a 2015 Woman of the year.

Whereas, Deidre Robinson has worked tirelessly for over 20 years as a diverse leader of relationship-building and strategic alliances. Deidre's community service and volunteerism starts in Solano County and reaches as far as the San Francisco Bay Area. She recognizes the impact that others have had on her life and career and her passion for volunteerism, leadership, and commitment are based on a vision that is driven by personal experiences.

Whereas, her volunteer contributions to organizations such as CoachArt, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Kid Fest, Relay for Life, and other groups are remarkable. In addition, Deidre is also the Vice Treasurer of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Tau Upsilon Omega Chapter, for which she provides volunteer services to students and young adult women through mentoring and workshops on leadership. Recently, Deidre was appointed by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. to the California Board of Accountancy.

Whereas, as a single mother of two, nothing has prevented Deidre from achieving monumental milestones both professionally and personally. She has been a role model for both her children and the community.

Resolved, That I Congressman JOHN GARAMENDI of California's Third Congressional District, do hereby recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of Deidre Robinson.

RECOGNIZING MAJOR WILLIAM ''BILL'' CONKLIN NOSKER

HON. STEVE STIVERS

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Major William ''Bill'' Conklin Nosker. Bill was a member of the 1939 Ohio State Football Big Ten Championship team and a Major in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II.

Bill was born in 1919 in Columbus, Ohio, and later moved to Upper Arlington. He was an active high school athlete, earning 14 varsity letters in four sports. He became one of the first athletes from Upper Arlington to play football at a major university and earned varsity letters three years at The Ohio State University. In 1940, Bill was named to the honorary All-Big Ten Team.

Bill left one quarter before graduation at Ohio State in 1941, along with six other athletes, to serve his country in the Army Air Corps. Bill did obtain his degree a year later when he submitted a thesis paper to his professor. While in basic training, Bill was selected as the ''Typical Air Corps Cadet'' for a nationwide publicity recruiting campaign, but he was far from ''typical.''

As part of the 449th Bombardment Group, Bill was sent overseas at the end of 1943. He was the original commanding officer of the 718th Squadron stationed in Italy and is credited with 35 total missions as a pilot or copilot. His missions spanned all over Europe, including Italy, Austria, France, Yugoslavia and Romania. In August of 1944, Bill died in a plane crash as part of an air support mission for the invasion of Southern France, also known as Operation Anvil. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal, three Oak Leaf clusters, and the Bronze Star during his service.

Bill was a true American hero and I am pleased to honor his service to our country during World War II. I wish his family all the best this year as they recognize the 70th anniversary of when he was set to return home from war.

HONORING CAL IN THE CAPITAL

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 50th anniversary of the University of California, Berkeley Public Service Center's ''Cal in the Capital'' internship program; long known as one of the premier internship programs in Washington D.C.

Since 1965, this student-led organization has prepared 75 UC Berkeley students each year for once in a lifetime internship opportunities. Placement opportunities include: across all levels of government, the nonprofit sector, think tanks, and within our most advanced research institutions.

In its 50th year, Cal in the Capital has afforded a total of 3,745 interns the platform to engage in 1,608,489 hours of service. Their dedication to public service and civic engagement is showcased through real world experiences and professional growth platforms.

Through its offerings, Cal in the Capital has been providing leadership, service learning, and internship opportunities to the students of my alma mater, UC Berkeley. Their program has successfully demonstrated, for half a century, the benefits of combining world-class education with hands-on experience in the effort to prepare their students for a life of public service.

Alumni of the program have gone on to serve in various capacities of public service. Some worked within presidential administrations, some went on to advocate for workers' rights, and some even became sitting Members of Congress. I too was once a Cal in the Capital intern for a great warrior, statesman and my predecessor, Congressman Ron Dellums. I remember my time as an intern fondly, and can tell you without hesitation that this program changed my life, as it has for so many others.

Because of my experience with the program, I have always enjoyed having the privilege of hosting Cal in the Capital interns in my congressional office. The passion and dedication that these student leaders display toward serving their country, their communities, and those whose voices too often go unheard is an inspiration to all.

On behalf of the residents of California's 13th Congressional District, I congratulate University of California, Berkeley, for its Cal in the Capital program and salute its 50 years of service to our community. I thank the UC Public Service Center for providing its students with decades of public service opportunities while leading the nation in developing the next generation of leaders.

TRIBUTE TO ESTHER GOLAR

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, Esther Golar was called home by the Lord on Monday, September 21, 2015 at age 71. Esther was born in Chicago, Illinois and was educated here including attending college at Malcolm X; and she was a member of Trinity United Church of Christ. Esther devoted her adult life to a tireless quest for social and economic justice; and she worked with Alternative Policing Strategy, Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago and Robert Fulton Elementary Local School Council. In 2006, Esther was appointed to represent the people of District 6 of the Illinois State House of Representatives and was first elected in 2006 to the Illinois House and re-elected again in each election since and she was known and loved as one of the kindest and most compassionate elected officials in Illinois, a woman who used her powerful voice and enduring passion to selflessly champion for her constituents.

Esther leaves to mourn her passing her daughter: Tiffany Golar; and grandchildren Briana Golar, Toni Thomas, Ananda Thomas and Jayden Golar, along with a massive host of friends and co-workers.

Now, therefore be it resolved, that we deeply mourn the passing of our dear friend Esther Golar; and be it further resolved, that we express to her family, friends and all who knew her, our appreciation, admiration and respect for her life and works and we commend her soul to the Almighty God for peaceful repose.

HONORING DIONNE McCULLAR

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work of Dionne McCullar, a business leader, community volunteer and one of my district's 2015 Woman of the year.

Whereas, on the Twenty-Second Day of September, of the Year Two Thousand and Fifteen, Dionne McCullar was recognized as a 2015 Woman of the year.

Whereas, Dionne McCullar was born and raised in San Francisco. She and her husband, Charles are the proud parents of 3 grown daughters and 3 grandchildren. Dionne established a career with the San Francisco Police Department where she served for 14 years as a Peace Officer.

Whereas, now, a resident of Solano County, Dionne is co-owner of a successful small business, Front2Back Designs in Fairfield.

Whereas, Dionne is Past President of Fairfield Kiwanis Club and Chair of Salvation Army Red Kettle. Dionne is an active supporter of Solano Hearts United/Solano Turkey Trot, Mission Solano, Heather House, Rotary Club, Yippie Yogurt Foundation, Heart2Heart, Little Wing Connections, The Leaven, Ride to Defeat Diabetes, Children's Nurturing Project, The Continentals of Omega Boys & Girls Club of Vallejo, and Children in Need of Hugs.

Whereas, Dionne has also served as Ambassador for several area Chambers of Commerce. Her business motto is ''to treat customers how we would want to be treated as consumers and to give back to the community that has helped to sustain our business.'' True to her word, Dionne is a shining star.

Resolved, That I Congressman JOHN GARAMENDI of California's Third Congressional District, do hereby recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of Dionne McCullar.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAMES A. HIMES

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, on September 25, 2015, I was unable to be present for roll call vote 518, on passage of the Responsibly And Professionally Invigorating Development (RAPID) Act of 2015 (H.R. 348). Had I been present, I would have voted NAY.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was $10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is $18,151,025,702,418.99. We've added $7,524,148,653,505.91 to our debt in 6 years. This is over $7.5 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF OMEGA DELTA PHI FRATERNITY, INC., (GAMMA CHAPTER)

HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize and congratulate the Omega Delta Phi Fraternity, Inc., (Gamma Chapter) from the

University of Arizona on the occasion of their 25th Anniversary.

After gaining chapter status on September 28th, 1990 at the University of Arizona, Omega Delta Phi Fraternity, Inc., has set out to be an organization that prides itself with hands on community service. Its members have set out to become role models at the collegiate level for many as members are representative of first generation college students. ODPhi has been a prime example of seeking to put an end to the stereotypical images of fraternity men. As Men of Vision, members have undertaken a responsibility to think outside of the box and become committed to the constructive development of themselves and their communities.

As a service and social organization, The Gamma Chapter of Omega Delta Phi Fraternity, Inc., has continuously lent a helping hand to the Tucson community by hosting and working several community events, namely their Annual Easter Egg Hunt and Annual Haunted House. These two signature events which have been hosted by the chapter every year since the early 1990s, provide a fun and safe environment for local children and families and has been replicated at other chapter locations since. Members invest an average of 40–50 service hours (per member) back into the Tucson community and have done so every semester for the past 25 years.

The chapter at the UA was one of the original organizations in recent years to begin as a Hispanic-Founded organization and paved the way for other Multicultural Greek-Lettered Organizations to begin on campus. The chapter has seen a diverse group of men carry on a tradition of excellence as members have been of Hispanic, Native American, African American, Asian, Indian, and Caucasian descent. As a true multicultural fraternity, ODPhi has a priority of graduating members from the University of Arizona and has seen hundreds of alumni go on to see successful diverse careers in government, public services, medical, higher education, and the private sector.

What began as an idea by four founding individuals: David Gil, Carlos Contreras, Jeff Martin, and Kurt Rex Cooper, to create an organization that gives back to our local area, has now flourished into a thriving brotherhood that has taken on a continued responsibility in social and public affairs. With a rich history, ODPhi has been both humbled and honored to remain a part of Tucson's community and plans to remain an advocate for higher education and service.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize and honor the Omega Delta Phi-Gamma Fraternity on the celebration of their 25th anniversary and commend the fraternity and its members for its service and achievements over the years.

HONORING AMANDEEP KAUR

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work of Amandeep Kaur, an advocate for Underrepresented Student Groups and one of my district's 2015 Woman of the year.

Whereas, on the Twenty-Second Day of September, of the Year Two Thousand and Fifteen, Amandeep Kaur was recognized as a 2015 Woman of the year.

Whereas, Dr. Amandeep Kaur is Science Fellow to Chancellor Linda Katehi at UC Davis. She is a UC Davis alumna and received her PhD in Physics from UC Davis in July 2014. She is a passionate leader and advocate for underrepresented student groups at UC Davis. She has consistently worked towards empowering underrepresented graduate student groups at UC Davis since the academic year 2012–13. She says that her true calling is public service and making an impact in the lives of people. One of her biggest accomplishments was to advocate for creating more fellowships for international PhD students. Her advocacy led Provost Ralph Hexter to create post candidacy NRST fellowships in the academic year 2013–14 and to implement a new budget model of $2 million in the academic year 2014–15. This outcome has had a significant impact in the competitiveness of UC Davis and has allowed for equity for international PhD students at UC Davis. In May 2013, Amandeep was nominated by her peers and received an outstanding leadership award for her advocacy on behalf of international PhD students.

Whereas, last year, as a Graduate Student Assistant to the Dean and Chancellor (GSADC), Amandeep hosted Diversity Dialogues on Graduate Education, a series of seven discussions on creating strategies to empower women students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), students of color, international students, undocumented students, student veterans, student parents, LGBTQIA identified students, and students with visible/invisible disabilities.

Whereas, currently as a postdoctoral science fellow to Chancellor Linda Katehi, she is furthering her advocacy on bridging the gaps for women in STEM through her Empowering Women in STEM (EWIS) initiative. She also believes that graduate students with the right expertise can help policy makers in shaping public policy which has motivated her to create Emerging Leaders in Policy and Public Service (ELIPPS) initiative at UC Davis. One of her goals through ELIPPS is to inspire more students to join public service. She believes in leading by example and is a role model for many students at UC Davis.

Resolved, That I Congressman JOHN GARAMENDI of California's Third Congressional District, do hereby recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of Amandeep Kaur.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, October 1, 2015 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

OCTOBER 6

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the situation in Afghanistan; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC–217, following the open session.

SD–G50

10 a.m.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold hearings to examine the National Labor Relations Board's joint employer decision.

SD–430

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine the potential modernization of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and related energy security issues.

SD–366

2:15 p.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

Subcommittee on Oversight, Agency Action, Federal Rights and Federal Courts

To hold hearings to examine how overregulation harms minorities.

SD–226

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold hearings to examine pending health and benefits legislation.

SR–418

OCTOBER 7

10 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine the National Institutes of Health, focusing on investing in a healthier future.

SD–124

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine removing barriers to wireless broadband deployment.

SR–253

Committee on Environment and Public Works

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

SD–406

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Business meeting to consider S. 708, to establish an independent advisory committee to review certain regulations, S. 1607, to affirm the authority of the President to require independent regulatory agencies to comply with regulatory analysis requirements applicable to executive agencies, S. 1818, to amend title 5, United States Code, to reform the rule making process of agencies, S. 1820, to require agencies to publish an advance notice of proposed rule making for major rules, S. 1817, to improve the effectiveness of major rules in accomplishing their regulatory objectives by promoting retrospective

review, S. 1873, to strengthen accountability for deployment of border security technology at the Department of Homeland Security, S. 2021, to prohibit Federal agencies and Federal contractors from requesting that an applicant for employment disclose criminal history record information before the applicant has received a conditional offer, S. Res. 104, to express the sense of the Senate regarding the success of Operation Streamline and the importance of prosecuting first time illegal border crossers, S. 2093, to provide that the Secretary of Transportation shall have sole authority to appoint Federal Directors to the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, H.R. 998, to establish the conditions under which the Secretary of Homeland Security may establish preclearance facilities, conduct preclearance operations, and provide customs services outside the United States, H.R. 322, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 16105 Swingley Ridge Road in Chesterfield, Missouri, as the ''Sgt. Zachary M. Fisher Post Office'', H.R. 323, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 55 Grasso Plaza in St. Louis, Missouri, as the ''Sgt. Amanda N. Pinson Post Office'', H.R. 324, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 11662 Gravois Road in St. Louis, Missouri, as the ''Lt. Daniel P. Riordan Post Office'', H.R. 558, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 55 South Pioneer Boulevard in Springboro, Ohio, as the ''Richard 'Dick' Chenault Post Office Building'', H.R. 1442, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 90 Cornell Street in Kingston, New York, as the ''Staff Sergeant Robert H. Dietz Post Office Building'', H.R. 1884, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 206 West Commercial Street in East Rochester, New York, as the ''Officer Daryl R. Pierson Memorial Post Office Building'', H.R. 3059, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4500 SE 28th Street, Del City, Oklahoma, as the James Robert Kalsu Post Office Building, an original bill entitled, ''Directing Dollars to Disaster Relief Act of 2015'', an original bill entitled, ''Inspector General Mandates Reporting Act of 2015'', and an original bill entitled, ''Fraud Reduction and Data Analytics Act of 2015''.

SD–342

Committee on the Judiciary

Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition Policy and Consumer Rights

To hold hearings to examine S. 2102, to amend the Clayton Act and the Federal Trade Commission Act to provide that the Federal Trade Commission shall exercise authority with respect to mergers only under the Clayton Act and only in the same procedural manner as the Attorney General exercises such authority.

SD–226

2:15 p.m.

Committee on Indian Affairs

To hold hearings to examine S. 817, to provide for the addition of certain real property to the reservation of the Siletz Tribe in the State of Oregon, S. 818, to amend the Grand Ronde Reservation Act to make technical corrections, S. 1436, to require the Secretary of the Interior to take land into trust for certain Indian tribes, S. 1761, to take certain Federal land located in Lassen County, California, into trust for the benefit of the Susanville Indian Rancheria, S. 1822, to take certain Federal land located in Tuolumne County, California, into trust for the benefit of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians, S. 1986, to provide for a land conveyance in the State of Nevada, and H.R. 387, to provide for certain land to be taken into trust for the benefit of Morongo Band of Mission Indians.

SD–628

OCTOBER 8

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine H.R. 2898, to provide drought relief in the State of California, S. 1894, to provide short-term water supplies to drought-stricken California, S. 1936, to provide for drought preparedness measures in the State of New Mexico, S. 1583, to authorize the expansion of an existing hydroelectric project, S. 2046, to authorize the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to issue an order continuing a stay of a hydroelectric license for the Mahoney Lake hydroelectric project in the State of Alaska, and S. 2083, to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project.

SD–366

10 a.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine threats to the homeland.

SD–342

Committee on the Judiciary

Business meeting to consider S. 1814, to withhold certain Federal funding from sanctuary cities.

SD–226

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining

To hold hearings to examine S. 414, to provide for conservation, enhanced recreation opportunities, and development of renewable energy in the California Desert Conservation Area, S. 872, to provide for the recognition of certain Native communities and the settlement of certain claims under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, S. 1295 and H.R. 1324, bills to adjust the boundary of the Arapaho National Forest, Colorado, S. 1448, to designate the Frank Moore Wild Steelhead Sanctuary in the State of Oregon, S. 1592, to clarify the description of certain Federal land under the Northern Arizona Land Exchange and Verde River Basin Partnership Act of 2005 to include additional land in the Kaibab National Forest, S. 1941 and H.R. 2223, bills to authorize, direct, expedite, and facilitate a land exchange in El Paso and Teller Counties, Colorado, S. 1942 and H.R. 1554, bills to require a land conveyance involving the Elkhorn Ranch and the White River National Forest in the State of Colorado, S. 1955, to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide for equitable allotment of land to Alaska Native veterans, S. 1971, to expand the boundary of the California Coastal National Monument, and S. 2069, to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to modify provisions relating to certain land exchanges in the Mt. Hood Wilderness in the State of Oregon.

SD–366

OCTOBER 20

10 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Cherry Ann Murray, of Kansas, to be Director of the Office of Science, and Victoria Marie Baecher Wassmer, of Illinois, to be Under Secretary, both of the Department of Energy, and Mary L. Kendall, of Minnesota, to be Inspector General, Suzette M. Kimball, of West Virginia, to be Director of the United States Geological Survey, and Kristen Joan Sarri, of Michigan, to be an Assistant Secretary, all of the Department of the Interior.

SD–366

OCTOBER 21

2:15 p.m.

Committee on Indian Affairs

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Government Accountability Office report on Indian energy development.

SD–628

OCTOBER 22

10 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine Puerto Rico, focusing on the economy, debt, and options for Congress.

SD–366

OCTOBER 27

10 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation, and Enforcement's proposed Stream Protection Rule.

SD–366

CORRECTION

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 719, Continuing Appropriations Act, with an amendment.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S7011–S7053.

Measures Introduced: Twelve bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 2102–2113, and S. Res. 272. **Pages S7046–47**

Measures Reported:

S. 209, to amend the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act of 2005. (S. Rept. No. 114–149) **Page S7046**

Measures Passed:

United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Reauthorization Act: Senate passed S. 2078, to reauthorize the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. **Pages S7051–52**

National Kinship Care Month: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 266, designating September 2015 as ''National Kinship Care Month'', and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S7052**

Fair Minimum Wage Act: Senate passed H.R. 2617, to amend the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 to reduce a scheduled increase in the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa, after agreeing to the following amendments proposed thereto: **Page S7052**

McConnell (for Isakson) Amendment No. 2705, to reduce an increase in the minimum wage for American Samoa, to adjust the reporting requirements of the Government Accountability Office regarding the proposed minimum wage increases for American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. **Page S7052**

McConnell (for Isakson) Amendment No. 2706, to amend the title. **Page S7052**

Measures Considered:

Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act—Agreement: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 2029, Making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016. **Pages S7014–43, H7052–53**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill, and, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, and pursuant to the unanimous-consent agreement of Wednesday, September 30, 2015, a vote on cloture will occur at 1:45 p.m., on Thursday, October 1, 2015. **Page S7053**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill at approximately 10:30 a.m., on Thursday, October 1, 2015, with the time until 1:45 p.m., equally divided between the two Leaders, or their designees; and that notwithstanding rule XXII, Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill at 1:45 p.m. **Pages S7052–53**

House Messages:

Continuing Appropriations Act: By 78 yeas to 20 nays (Vote No. 272), Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 719, to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, with McConnell (for Cochran) Amendment No. 2689, making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, after taking action on the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S7013–14**

Withdrawn:

McConnell Amendment No. 2690 (to Amendment No. 2689), to change the enactment date.

Page S7013

Signing Authority—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that Senator Gardner be authorized to sign duly enrolled bills or joint resolutions on Wednesday, September 30, 2015. **Page S7042**

Messages from the President: Senate received the following messages from the President of the United States:

Transmitting, pursuant to law, the notification of the President's intent to terminate the designations of Seychelles, Uruguay, and Venezuela as beneficiary developing countries under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program; which was referred to the Committee on Finance. (PM–24) **Pages S7045–46**

Transmitting, pursuant to law, the notification of the President's intent to terminate the designation of Seychelles as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) program; which was referred to the Committee on Finance. (PM–25) **Page S7046**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

2 Air Force nominations in the rank of general.

2 Army nominations in the rank of general.

1 Marine Corps nomination in the rank of general.

Page S7053

Messages from the House: **Page S7046**

Measures Referred: **Page S7046**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S7047–48**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S7048–50**

Additional Statements: **Pages S7044–45**

Amendments Submitted: **Page S7050**

Notices of Intent: **Page S7050**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S7050–51**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—272) **Page S7014**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 6:36 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, October 1, 2015. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S7053.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

SECURITIES INVESTOR PROTECTION CORPORATION

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Subcommittee on Securities, Insurance, and Investment concluded an oversight hearing to examine the Securities Investor Protection Corporation, including S. 67, to amend the Securities Investor Protection Act of 1970 to confirm that a customer's net equity claim is based on the customer's last statement and that certain recoveries are prohibited, to change how trustees are appointed, after receiving testimony from Stephen P. Harbeck, Securities Investor Protection Corporation, Sigmund S. Wissner-Gross, Brown Rudnick, LLP, and James W. Giddens, Hughes Hubbard and Reed LLP, all of Washington, D.C.; and J.W. Verret, George Mason School of Law, Fairfax, Virginia.

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS OVERSIGHT

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the Army Corps of Engineers' participation in the development of the new regulatory definition of "Waters of the United States", after receiving testimony from Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), Department of Defense.

ECONOMIC CRISIS IN UKRAINE

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a closed hearing to examine the economic crisis in Ukraine, after receiving testimony from Christine Lagarde, International Monetary Fund, Washington, D.C.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the Department of Education and student achievement, after receiving testimony from Ted Mitchell, Under Secretary of Education; Richard K. Vedder, Center for College Affordability and Productivity, Athens, Ohio; and Kevin Carey, New America, Washington, D.C.

END OF THE YEAR SPENDING

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Subcommittee on Federal Spending Oversight and Emergency Management concluded a hearing to examine end of the year spending, after receiving testimony from Jason J. Fichtner, George Mason University Mercatus Center, Arlington, Virginia; Philip G. Joyce, University of Maryland School of

Public Policy, College Park; and Dean W. Sinclair, Alexandria, Virginia.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 799, to combat the rise of prenatal opioid abuse and neonatal abstinence syndrome, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 1893, to reauthorize and improve programs related to mental health and substance use disorders, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute; and

S. 481, to amend the Controlled Substances Act and the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to drug scheduling recommendations by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and with respect to registration of manufacturers and distributors seeking to conduct clinical testing, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Brian R. Martinotti, and Julien Xavier Neals, both to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey, who were both introduced by Senators Menendez and Booker, Robert F. Rossiter, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the District of Nebraska, who was introduced by Senator Fischer, and Edward L. Stanton III, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee, who was introduced by Senators Alexander and Corker, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

NOMINATION

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Michael Herman Michaud, of Maine, to be Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training, after the nominee testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

PENSION ADVANCES

Special Committee on Aging: Committee concluded a hearing to examine pension advances, focusing on questionable business practices and the Federal response, after receiving testimony from Stephen Lord, Managing Director, Forensic Audits and Investigative Service, Government Accountability Office; Kaycee L. Wolf, Arkansas Securities Department, Little Rock; Stuart T. Rossman, National Consumer Law Center, Boston, Massachusetts; Maria Walden, Public School and Education Employee Retirement Systems of Missouri, Jefferson City; and Louis Kroot, USN (Ret.), Lexington, Kentucky.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 9 public bills, H.R. 3651–3659; and 5 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 80; and H. Res. 450–453, were introduced.

Pages H6748–49

Additional Cosponsors: Pages H6749–50

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 1880, to require the Secretary of the Interior to take into trust 4 parcels of Federal land for the benefit of certain Indian Pueblos in the State of New Mexico (H. Rept. 114–271);

H. Res. 448, providing for the consideration of the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 79) directing the Clerk of the House to make corrections in the enrollment of H.R. 719, and providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 719) to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 114–272);

H. Res. 449, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3457) to prohibit the lifting of sanctions on Iran until the Government of Iran pays the judgments against it for acts of terrorism, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1735) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; and providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules (H. Rept. 114–273);

H.R. 2168, to make the current Dungeness crab fishery management regime permanent and for other purposes (H. Rept. 114–274); and

H.R. 1541, to amend title 54, United States Code, to make Hispanic-serving institutions eligible for technical and financial assistance for the establishment of preservation training and degree programs, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–275).

Page H6748

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Jolly to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H6709**

Recess: The House recessed at 11 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H6717**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Reverend William Vanderbush, Cathedral of Praise, Austin, Texas. **Page H6716**

Journal: The House agreed to the Speaker's approval of the Journal by voice vote. **Pages H6716, H6743**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2015: S. 2082, to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain expiring provisions of law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 423 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 526.

Pages H6719–27, H6730–31

Recess: The House recessed at 1:10 p.m. and reconvened at 2:09 p.m. **Page H6727**

Unanimous Consent Agreement: Agreed by unanimous consent that the question of adopting a motion to concur pursuant to House Resolution 448 may be subject to postponement as though under clause 8 of rule 20. **Page H6731**

TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act of 2015: The House agreed to the motion to concur in the Senate amendment to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 719) to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, by a yea-and-nay vote of 277 yeas to 151 nays, Roll No. 528.

Pages H6731–38, H6742–43

H. Res. 448, the rule providing for the consideration of the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 79) and providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 719), was agreed to by a yea-and-nay vote of 239 yeas to 187 nays, Roll No. 525, after the previous question was ordered.

Pages H6727–30

Directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make corrections in the enrollment of H.R. 719: The House agreed to H. Con. Res. 79, directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make corrections in the enrollment of H.R. 719, by a yea-and-nay vote of 241 yeas to 185 nays with one answering "present", Roll No. 527.

Pages H6738–42

H. Res. 448, the rule providing for the consideration of the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 79) and providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 719), was agreed to by a yea-and-nay vote of 239 yeas to 187 nays, Roll No. 525, after the previous question was ordered.

Pages H6727–30

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, October 1. **Page H6743**

Presidential Messages: Read a message from the President wherein he terminated the designations of Seychelles, Uruguay, and Venezuela as beneficiary developing countries under the Generalized System of Preferences program—referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 114–59). **Page H6743**

Read a message from the President wherein he terminated the designation of Seychelles as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country under the African Growth and Opportunity Act program—referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 114–60). **Page H6743**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate today appears on page H6716.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Four yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H6729–30, H6730–31, H6741–42, and H6742–43. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

Committee Meetings

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Agriculture: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 1317, to amend the Commodity Exchange Act and the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to specify how clearing requirements apply to certain affiliate transactions, and for other purposes; and a hearing entitled "U.S. International Food Aid Programs: Stakeholder Perspectives". H.R. 1317 was ordered reported, as amended. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

IMPLEMENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CYBER STRATEGY

Committee on Armed Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "Implementing the Department of Defense Cyber Strategy". Testimony was heard from Robert O. Work, Deputy Secretary of Defense; Admiral Michael Rogers, USN, Commander, U.S. Cyber Command; and Terry Halvorsen, Acting Department of Defense Chief Information Officer.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Full Committee held a markup on a Committee Print of legislation regarding the Committee's instruction pursuant to section 2002(a)(1) of S. Con. Res. 11. The Committee Print legislation regarding the Committee's instruction pursuant to S. Con. Res. 11, the Budget Resolution for Fiscal Year 2016, was approved, as amended, for transmittal to the Committee on the Budget.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Full Committee concluded a markup on H.R. 8, the ''North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act of 2015''; H.R. 3242, the ''Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act of 2015''; and Proposed Matters for Inclusion in Reconciliation Recommendations. H.R. 8 was ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 3242 and the Proposed Matters for Inclusion in Reconciliation Recommendations were ordered reported, without amendment.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Financial Services: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 414, the ''Burdensome Data Collection Relief Act''; H.R. 957, the ''Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection-Inspector General Reform Act of 2015''; H.R. 1090, the ''Retail Investor Protection Act''; H.R. 1266, the ''Financial Product Safety Commission Act of 2015''; and H.R. 2769, the ''Risk-Based Capital Study Act of 2015''. H.R. 414, H.R. 2769, H.R. 957, and H.R. 1090 were ordered reported, without amendment. H.R. 1266 was ordered reported, as amended.

CYBER WAR: DEFINITIONS, DETERRENCE, AND FOREIGN POLICY

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Cyber War: Definitions, Deterrence, and Foreign Policy''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

RIDDING CENTRAL AFRICA OF JOSEPH KONY: CONTINUING U.S. SUPPORT

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations held a hearing entitled ''Ridding Central Africa of Joseph Kony: Continuing U.S. Support''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

THE THREAT OF ISLAMIST EXTREMISM IN RUSSIA

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats held a hearing entitled ''The Threat of Islamist Extremism in Russia''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Homeland Security: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 3102, the ''Airport Access Control Security Improvement Act of 2015''; H.R. 3144, the ''Partners for Aviation Security Act''; H.R. 3350, the ''Know the CBRN Terrorism Threats to Transportation Act''; H.R. 3361, the ''Department of Homeland Security Insider Threat and Mitigation Act of 2015''; H.R. 3490, the ''Strengthening State and Local Cyber Crime Fighting Act''; H.R. 3493, the ''Securing the Cities Act of 2015''; H.R. 3503, the ''Department of Homeland Security Support to Fusion Centers Act of 2015''; H.R. 3505, the ''Department of Homeland Security Clearance Management and Administration Act''; H.R. 3510, the ''Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity Strategy Act of 2015''; H.R. 3572, the ''DHS Headquarters Reform and Improvement Act of 2015''; H.R. 3578, the ''DHS Science and Technology Reform and Improvement Act of 2015''; H.R. 3583, the ''Promoting Resilience and Efficiency in Preparing for Attacks and Responding to Emergencies Act''; H.R. 3584, the ''Transportation Security Administration Reform and Improvement Act of 2015''; H.R. 3586, the ''Border and Maritime Coordination Improvement Act''; and H.R. 3598, the ''Fusion Center Enhancement Act of 2015''. H.R. 3102, H.R. 3144, H.R. 3361, H.R. 3490, H.R. 3493, H.R. 3503, H.R. 3510, H.R. 3572, H.R. 3578, H.R. 3583, H.R. 3584, H.R. 3586, and H.R. 3598 were ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 3350 and H.R. 3505 were ordered reported, without amendment.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on the Judiciary: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 2745, the ''Standard Merger and Acquisition Reviews Through Equal Rules (SMARTER) Act of 2015''; and H.R. 3490, the ''Strengthening State and Local Cyber Crime Fighting Act''. H.R. 2745 was ordered reported, without amendment. H.R. 3490 was ordered reported, as amended.

RESPECTING STATE AUTHORITY, RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPERTISE REGARDING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Committee on Natural Resources: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Respecting State Authority, Responsibilities and Expertise Regarding Resource Management and Energy Development''. Testimony was heard from Steve Bullock, Governor, State of Montana; Dennis Daugaard, Governor, State of South Dakota; Gary Herbert, Governor, State of Utah; and Matt Mead, Governor, State of Wyoming.

STATUS OF TOLL INTEROPERABILITY

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Transportation and Public Assets held a hearing entitled ''Status of Toll Interoperability''. Testimony was heard from Jeffrey Lindley, Associate Administrator, Office of Operations, Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation; and public witnesses.

CONFERENCE REPORT TO ACCOMPANY NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016; CONCURRENT RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN THE ENROLLMENT OF H.R. 719; JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF IRANIAN TERRORISM ACT; AND SENATE AMENDMENT TO TSA OFFICE OF INSPECTION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on the conference report to accompany H.R. 1735, the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016"; H. Con. Res. 79, directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make corrections in the enrollment of H.R. 719; H.R. 3457, the "Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act" [rule markup and reporting only]; and senate amendment to H.R. 719, the "TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act of 2015". The committee granted, by record vote of 8–3, a closed rule for H. Con. Res. 79. The rule provides 20 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled by the Majority Leader and Minority Leader or their respective designees. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the concurrent resolution. The rule provides that the concurrent resolution shall be considered as read and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the concurrent resolution. Additionally, the rule Provides for the consideration of the Senate amendment to H.R. 719. The rule makes in order a motion offered by the chair of the Committee on Appropriations or his designee that the House concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 719. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the motion and provides that the Senate amendment and the motion shall be considered as read. The rule provides one hour of debate on the motion equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. The Committee granted, by record vote of 8–3, a closed rule for H.R. 3457. The rule provides one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that the amendment printed in the Rules Committee report shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. In section 2, the rule provides for consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1735, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016. The rule waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration. The rule provides that the conference report shall be considered as read. The rule provides that the previous question be considered as ordered without intervention of any motion except one hour of debate and one motion to recommit if applicable. The rule divides debate on the conference report pursuant to clause 8(d) of rule XXII. In section 3, the rule provides that it shall be in order at any time on the legislative day of October 1, 2015, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules and that the Speaker or his designee shall consult with the Minority Leader or her designee on the designation of any matter for consideration pursuant to this section. Testimony was heard from Chairman Thornberry, Chairman Rogers of Kentucky, and Representatives Smith of Washington, Lowey, and Mulvaney.

DYSLEXIA AND THE NEED TO READ: H.R. 3033, THE RESEARCH EXCELLENCE AND ADVANCEMENTS FOR DYSLEXIA ACT

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "Dyslexia and the Need to READ: H.R. 3033, the Research Excellence and Advancements for Dyslexia Act". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

THE GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE: A REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES IN RESTORING THE GREAT LAKES

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment held a hearing entitled "The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative: A Review of the Progress and Challenges in Restoring the Great Lakes". Testimony was heard from Chris Korleski, Director, Great Lakes National Program Office, Environmental Protection Agency; Jose Alfredo Gomez, Director, Natural Resources and Environment, Government Accountability Office; and Tony Kramer, Acting Regional Conservationist, Northeast Region, Natural Resource Conservation Service; John Dickert, Mayor of the City of Racine, Wisconsin; and public witnesses.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR'S PROPOSED FIDUCIARY RULE

Committee on Ways and Means: Subcommittee on Oversight held a hearing on the Department of Labor's proposed fiduciary rule. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

FINANCING HIGHER EDUCATION

Joint Economic Committee: Committee concluded a hearing to examine financing higher education, focusing on exploring current challenges and potential alternatives, after receiving testimony from Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr., Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana; and Andrew P. Kelly, American Enterprise Institute Center on Higher Education Reform, and

Rohit Chopra, Center for American Progress, both of Washington, D.C.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2015

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine the procurement, acquisition, testing, and oversight of the Navy's *Gerald R. Ford*-class aircraft carrier program, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: business meeting to markup an original bill entitled, ''American Crude Oil Export Equality Act'', 10 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining, to hold hearings to examine S. 2031, to reduce temporarily the royalty required to be paid for sodium produced on Federal lands, 2:30 p.m., SD–366.

Committee on Finance: to hold hearings to examine improper payments in Federal programs, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: business meeting to consider the nominations of Scott Allen, of Maryland, to be United States Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Ann Calvaresi Barr, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, United States Agency for International Development, Barbara Lee, of California, and Christopher H. Smith, of New Jersey, both to be a Representative of the United States of America to the Seventieth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and Carolyn Patricia Alsup, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of The Gambia, John L. Estrada, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, David R. Gilmour, of Texas, to be Ambassador to the Togolese Republic, Jeffrey J. Hawkins, Jr., of California, to be Ambassador to the Central African Republic, Edwin Richard Nolan, Jr., of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Suriname, David Malcolm Robinson, of Connecticut, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Conflict and Stabilization Operations), and to be Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, Daniel H. Rubinstein, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Tunisia, Lucy Tamlyn, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Benin, Jennifer Ann Haverkamp, of Indiana, to be Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, and Roberta S. Jacobson, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the United Mexican States, all of the Department of State; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine the civil nuclear agreement with the Republic of South Korea, 10 a.m., SD–419.

Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Robert Porter Jackson, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana, Harry K. Thomas, Jr., of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Zimbabwe, Julie Furuta-Toy, of Wyoming, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, and Dennis B. Hankins, of Minnesota, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea, all of the Department of State, and Linda I. Etim, of Wisconsin, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, 2 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: to hold hearings to examine achieving the promise of health information technology, 10 a.m., SD–430.

Committee on Judiciary: Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest, to hold an oversight hearing to examine the Administration's FY 2016 refugee resettlement program, including fiscal and security implications, 2 p.m., SD–226.

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: to hold hearings to examine the significant costs and related burdens for small businesses resulting from the Gold King Mine waste water spill near Silverton, Colorado, 10 a.m., SR–428A.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness, hearing entitled ''Improving Public Shipyards to More Effectively Meet Navy Operational Requirements'', 8 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled ''Examining Potential Ways to Improve the Medicare Program'', 10 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy, hearing entitled ''Transporting Nuclear Materials: Design, Logistics, and Shipment'', 10:15 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:30 a.m., Thursday, October 1

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond one hour), Senate will continue consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 2029, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. At 1:45 p.m., Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 a.m., Thursday, October 1

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1735—National Defense Authorization Act for FY2016 (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of H.R. 3457—Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act (Subject to a Rule). Possible consideration of measures under suspension of the rules.

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