women are currently putting their lives in jeopardy every day for us and our families. We cannot fail them. This bipartisan Federal funding bill does a lot of important things for our Nation, but most importantly it supports our American heroes. Like most of my colleagues, I have traveled this year and met with our fighting women and men on frontlines. The very best of Americans are in uniform today, and they deserve our full support.

Today I call on my colleagues across the aisle to stop blocking these important bills. Let's get them on the floor and negotiate—compromise if we have to but get to a conclusion where we can fund the men and women defending our freedom. We now have 72 days to return to regular order and debate these important appropriations bills so the priorities of our veterans, our military, and the American people can once and for all be restored. I sincerely hope that all the colleagues in this body will not disappoint the American people yet again.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask the Chair to lay before the Senate the conference report to accompany H.R. 1735.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The report will be stated by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

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

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the conference report.

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

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 conference report to accompany H.R. 1735, a bill 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.

John McCain, Bob Corker, John Hoeven, Ron Johnson, Dan Sullivan, Steve Daines, Richard Burr, Joni Ernst, Deb Fischer, Tim Scott, Orrin G. Hatch, Shelley Moore Capito, Mike Crapo, Tom Cotton, Cory Gardner, Kelly Ayotte, Mitch McConnell.

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

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

SHOOTING AT UMPQUA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, before I proceed to the consideration of a colloquy with my colleague from Wisconsin, I just wanted to take a moment. My colleague from Wisconsin brought to my attention that there are news reports that have just come out of a tragic mass shooting at a community college in Oregon. I believe it is called Umpqua Community College.

I just wanted to ask all who might be watching or are with us in the Chamber to keep in your thoughts and prayers the families of the victims, which number somewhere around 10, and of the wounded, somewhere around 20, and to also keep the first responders and students and faculty and our colleagues who represent the State of Oregon and all who have been affected by this tragedy in Oregon in your thoughts and prayers. It is just now being reported.

I appreciate the forbearance of my colleague and the Chair and the other Members present for my taking a moment just to bring that to everyone's attention.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I might enter into a colloquy with my colleague from Wisconsin.

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

NATIONAL MANUFACTURING DAY

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues in marking National Manufacturing Day, which will be celebrated across the country tomorrow.

The simple fact is that manufacturing has been and continues to be a vital part of our economy. But coming from the State of Delaware, I know firsthand the challenges manufacturing has faced in the 20th century and the challenges it continues to face today.

Almost every day I ride the Amtrak train from Wilmington, DE, to Washington, DC, and as I look out the window as we pass through the city of Newark, DE, I see the site of the old Chrysler assembly plant. Each time I see it, I think about what it was like going to the plant gates and visiting with friends and family and the thousands of men and women who worked shifts for decades at this tremendous automobile manufacturing plant that made the Durango and, for decades before that, other models.

Every time I see that site, which has now been leveled and is now being rebuilt, I am reminded that for decades there were men and women there who had one thing in common—good-paying, steady, high-quality manufacturing jobs. Chrysler, General Motors, and other manufacturers, which used to be at the center of my State's economy, each employing thousands of Delawareans, are today gone, and many families and many of our communities still feel the impact of those losses. But for the thousands of Delawareans who grew up with friends and family working every day at GM, Chrysler, the steel mill, the Avon plant or other now-gone manufacturing sites across our State, it is easy to be skeptical about the prospects for a revival of American manufacturing.

I am here today with my colleague from the State of Wisconsin to tell our fellow Americans that despite those harsh realities, there are real reasons for hope. Manufacturing still supports 25,000 jobs in my State. Since 2010, our economy, the growing American manufacturing sector, has created 870,000 new jobs. As production costs have gone up in our competitors—countries such as China—and as the key input cost of energy has steadily come down, businesses have seen over the last decade that more reliable financial, legal, and engineering structures and resources, and cheaper energy here in the United States have made American manufacturing more competitive than it has been in decades.

Just as important as the number of jobs created in the manufacturing sector is the quality and compensation for those jobs. American manufacturing is also responsible today for three-quarters of all private sector research and development, just illustrating once again how innovative this sector has always been. To stay ahead and to thrive in the modern-world economy, manufacturing has to be on the cutting edge.

While American manufacturing is resurgent today, there is much more we can do together to build on this momentum. That is why Senator BALDWIN and I are leading a campaign called Manufacturing Jobs for America, to focus on four key areas where we together can strengthen American manufacturing—first by investing in America's workforce; second, by expanding access to capital; third, by opening up markets abroad; and fourth, by creating the conditions necessary for growth.

In the last Congress, the Manufacturing Jobs for America Initiative brought together 27 Senators to introduce 36 different manufacturing bills, half of which were bipartisan. Provisions from eight of those bills are now law, including our bill to create a national manufacturing strategy that will, for the first time, lay out a proactive, comprehensive long-term policy for investing and strengthening American manufacturing, something that all of our major competitors have long had.

The administration has also come forward with strong ideas and initiatives from their investment in nine new manufacturing hubs, innovation institutes around the country, to new Department of Labor jobs skills programs that would strengthen apprenticeships and job training. It is our hope that Manufacturing Jobs for America can continue to play an important role in investing and scaling up these ideas so they have national impact.

We are optimistic that we can continue together to build on the progress we made and pass more of these bills in this Congress. Already, for example, the Career Ready Act has passed the Senate and is waiting to be taken up by the House. This bill would help prepare students for advanced manufacturing jobs by strengthening school counseling programs and educator professional development. Another important bill is the Innovators Job Creation Act, which recently passed the Senate Finance Committee, and if passed into law, would help small manufacturers to invest in and scale up their R&D.

Still, as we know all too well, passing legislation is never easy, and it could take months or even years to get these commonsense bipartisan bills passed into law. But there is something Congress can do right now to help support our manufacturing sector.

Just last week I stood on this floor and urged my colleagues to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank that was allowed to expire earlier this year. The Ex-Im Bank has helped American companies, many of them manufacturers, to sell their goods around the world for more than 80 years, supporting 150,000 American jobs in just this past year. Each day we fail to reauthorize this critical tool for American manufacturers who are exporters, we put more and more American jobs at risk.

Manufacturers, such as Boeing and GE, are already moving good American jobs overseas. GE's announcement that it is moving 350 jobs from Wisconsin to Canada is a stark example of this new reality, and the reason is simple. GE, and similar companies, can't risk staying in a country that doesn't have a reliable export credit agency, a tool all of our competitors provide, often with much more robust resources than Ex-Im used to enjoy. Without the backing of such an agency, other countries won't even consider accepting project bids from GE, Boeing or others. I think that is unacceptable, and it should be unacceptable to all of our colleagues. It is time for Congress to recognize what is at stake for our economy, our manufacturing sector, and American workers if we continue to fail to step up and reauthorize the Ex-Im Bank.

Finally, I wish to briefly address a broader issue we face with American manufacturing, and that is its reputation and its public relations image.

While the changing face of manufacturing is a great thing, it is also a challenge because too often perceptions about manufacturing are stuck in the past. I have personally heard from parents and guidance counselors who tell me that they are reluctant to encourage their kids and their best students to pursue a career in manufacturing. Why? Because to them, folks from an older generation, manufacturing brings to mind dirty factory floors, dangerous work environments, and lower wages. Understandably, they don't see these as the viable, promising career paths that today's advanced manufacturing truly offers.

Their worries don't match up with today's reality, where manufacturing jobs require higher skills than ever before, from hard math and engineering skills to the ability to think critically and work as part of a team. Most modern manufacturing jobs require a 2-year college degree, and many require more.

In my 5 years as a Senator, I have had the opportunity to visit dozens of manufacturers up and down my State of Delaware that are creating new high-quality, high-paying jobs, and I am certain my colleague from Wisconsin has had the same insight.

In Delaware, one of those manufacturers is M. Davis, a woman-run, family owned manufacturer that has been around for over 140 years. They produce sophisticated equipment for industrial companies, such as Philips 66, Air Liquide, and DuPont. Jobs at that manufacturing plant require high-skilled workers.

Another advanced manufacturer in my State is Accudyne, which is far more than a typical company. They produce products, not for average consumers, but they solve highly complex engineering and design problems for some of the world's most prominent firms, from Boeing to Airbus to Rolls Royce.

Both of these companies understand that the only way to remain successful is to develop a highly skilled workforce by encouraging and supporting professional development and recruiting graduates from schools such as Delaware Technical Community College and the University of Delaware.

Unfortunately, it is not just public perception that hasn't kept up with manufacturing's transformation. Job training programs have also lagged behind in preparing people with the skills they need to succeed in the advanced manufacturing jobs of today.

While I have more I would like to say on that topic, at this moment I would like to invite my colleague from the State of Wisconsin to add her views and comments to this important conversation about manufacturing in America.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I thank my good friend from Delaware. As did he, I wish to start my remarks by taking a moment to say that my thoughts and prayers are with the community of Roseburg, OR, as we heard word of yet another senseless act of gun violence. I hope all who are listening join us in our thoughts and prayers.

I rise today to join my good friend from Delaware and to lend my voice in calling attention to an important day in America. Tomorrow, across the country, the hard-working Americans who get up every day to move our economy forward will create a collective chorus in celebration of National Manufacturing Day.

At thousands of events in villages, towns, and cities throughout our Nation, manufacturers will open their doors Friday and show, in a coordinated effort, what manufacturing is today and what it isn't. I am so proud to join this effort because by working together during and after National Manufacturing Day, we can shine a spotlight on the need for America to address workforce readiness issues, connect with future generations, and recognize the important role manufacturing plays in creating an economy that works for everyone.

In Wisconsin, we have a long and proud tradition of making things—paper, engines, tools, ships, and, yes, cheese, brauts, and beer. We possess one of the largest manufacturing sectors in the Nation, supporting a very significant share of our workforce and exporting products and goods all over America and, in fact, the world. Manufacturing has long been the backbone of our ''made in Wisconsin'' economy—so much so that we actually celebrate October as Manufacturing Month in Wisconsin. In my State and across our country, manufacturing is increasingly an engine of economic growth and innovation and a source of good-paying jobs with high wages and solid benefits. That is why I strongly believe middle-class families and small businesses and manufacturers who are working so hard to move our economy forward deserve to have both parties in Washington working together to grow our manufacturing economy and create jobs.

I am so proud to join my colleague Senator COONS on the floor today to highlight National Manufacturing Day. I thank him for his leadership and his partnership on our Manufacturing Jobs for America Initiative. Our effort aims to build bipartisan support for legislation that will modernize America's manufacturing sector and help American manufacturers grow and create jobs and assist American workers in getting the skills they need to succeed

in the next generation of manufacturing jobs.

Working together, we are trying to do our part to get Washington to focus on manufacturing jobs. This shouldn't be a difficult task, but unfortunately Congress has shown itself better at manufacturing one crisis after another instead of working across party lines to strengthen American manufacturing. The fact is, governing by crisis has distracted us from the important work of moving our manufacturing economy forward.

Before we all pat ourselves on the back for simply doing our job and keeping the government open for business, let's address one crisis that has not been addressed.

Two months ago the Senate did its job and passed a long-term transportation bill with bipartisan support. That legislation sought to end this constant cycle of short-term measures. It put people to work rebuilding our roads and bridges and ports and creates jobs and will boost our economy. It is also important to manufacturers because it makes an investment in a 21st-century American infrastructure that provides businesses with the quality transportation system they need to move their goods to market.

This legislation also includes another measure that is vital to manufacturers and businesses in Wisconsin and across America. We reauthorized the Export-Import Bank, which is an important tool that helps us create that level playing field, bringing fairness to global trade and giving American manufacturers the resources they need to fight and win against their global competition. However, after we included that in our long-term transportation and infrastructure package in the Senate, the House adjourned for the August recess without passing that legislation to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank and has failed to take action on it for 2 full months. Just this week, Republicans on the House Financial Services Committee voted in lockstep to block an amendment to reauthorize the Bank. These actions and inactions have real impacts on workers, and they are being felt by Wisconsin workers and families right now.

GE Power & Water announced this week that it plans to stop manufacturing gas engines in Waukesha, WI, and blamed the closure on the House of Representatives for not reauthorizing the Export-Import Bank. It is a stark reminder that when Congress fails to do its job, hard-working people can lose their jobs as a result. It is my hope that this reminder will be heard by Congress. It is also my hope that National Manufacturing Day will provide an opportunity for my colleagues to rally around on the need for us to come together and address the challenges we face to grow our manufacturing economy.

The Wisconsin families for whom I work depend on our manufacturing jobs, and I believe that if we work to give our workers a fair shot, we can compete against anyone. But one of the challenges we must meet is making sure our workers have the skills they need for the manufacturing jobs of the future. We are fortunate to have a very strong technical college system that is working to provide Wisconsin businesses a skilled workforce so they can compete and grow.

American manufacturing took a huge hit as a result of the 2008 financial collapse and ensuing recession, but through sheer grit and determination, we are coming back. U.S. manufacturing added 876,000 jobs over the past 66 months. Over the past 12 months, manufacturing has added 124,000 jobs. But despite this positive trend, we need to do more. The sector needs to add 1.7 million jobs overall just to return to pre-recession levels.

In Wisconsin, our economy isn't growing as strong as we need to create true shared prosperity. In fact, it is lagging behind national growth. The manufacturing sector that sustained our economy in Wisconsin for generations must move forward at a stronger pace if middle-class families are going to get ahead.

One of the most important things we can do is to put a stronger focus on investing in STEM programs and career and technical education. I am proud to have cofounded the Career and Technical Education Caucus—otherwise known as the CTE Caucus—and worked with cochairs Senators KAINE and PORTMAN to advocate for career and technical education. I believe CTE is one of the most effective vehicles for responding to labor market changes and the workforce readiness needs of businesses, particularly our manufacturers.

We need to do more to ensure that students are better trained and better equipped for the highly skilled jobs of the future, especially in advanced manufacturing. Our business communities have been clear on the need for a highly trained workforce for in-demand fields, and CTE provides the knowledge and skills that can help drive stronger economic growth for our ''made in America'' manufacturing economy.

In closing, I would like to urge my colleagues to join us tomorrow by visiting a local manufacturer in their State.

National Manufacturing Day provides our Nation with an important opportunity for us to show our commitment to the idea that manufacturing does not represent the jobs of yesterday. Senator COONS was talking about the branding issues. Well, today's manufacturing economy isn't your father's manufacturing economy, and today's factory isn't your grandfather's factory. It is a growing industry that has changed from the assembly lines of the past to high-tech innovation that will drive our future. Today, American manufacturing represents the jobs of tomorrow, providing a range of job opportunities in the area of skilled production, information technology, design, engineering, and science. Our next generation of manufacturers need more skilled workers, and it is our job to work together to make sure our economy has them.

Let's join together and celebrate National Manufacturing Day and show that our commitment is a celebration of American manufacturing, and let's inspire the next generation of manufacturers.

Again, I thank my colleague from Delaware and my colleague from Minnesota for their dedication to this vital issue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Wisconsin, Senator BALDWIN, for her hard work on manufacturing and for her deep and broad experience in what it takes for manufacturing to continue to grow in the State of Wisconsin, in the State of Delaware, and across our country.

Let me pick up on a theme through both of our previous comments, which is that skills are a key challenge for us. If we are going to take advantage of the enormous opportunities, the hundreds of thousands of unfilled jobs in this sector, one of the key issues is a mismatch in skills.

One other theme across both of our comments was how we can't work together across the aisle. Bad things happen, such as the Export-Import Bank going unauthorized, but when we can team up and work together, we can make remarkable progress.

Let me briefly reference two of the bills we have worked on in the past which enjoy strong bipartisan support and which I hope can move forward in this Congress.

One is the Manufacturing Skills Act, and the lead sponsor is Senator AYOTTE of New Hampshire. It would help cities and States to modernize their job-training programs and equip workers with the skills they need.

Another bill, the Manufacturing Universities Act of 2015, of which Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM is the lead cosponsor, would designate 25 manufacturing universities across the country and invest up to $5 million per year, per school to redesign their engineering programs so they are focused on the needs of modern manufacturing.

Many of the other ideas that have been brought to the floor by colleagues also focus on skills, and let me briefly reference two.

Senator MERKLEY has drafted and introduced the BUILD Career and Technical Education Act to focus on some of the issues the Senator from Wisconsin was just speaking to—finding innovative ways to improve CTE education in our K–12 system to draw more talented students into the pipeline for these unfilled but lucrative manufacturing careers.

Last but certainly not least, Senator FRANKEN of Minnesota has tirelessly worked to promote greater cooperation

between community colleges and their local manufacturing partners. I know in a moment he will share with us his vision for how we can improve skills training in manufacturing.

Let me close by simply saying that tomorrow, as we celebrate National Manufacturing Day, I will be honored to welcome U.S. Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker to Delaware to look at and visit several of the manufacturers I mentioned—Accudyne and M. Davis—and to talk about how, working together at the State and the Federal level, private sector and public sector, we can create and maintain strong 21st-century manufacturing jobs.

We see the revitalization that is going on in American manufacturing, and we see the opportunity we have in front of us and we want to seize it. By enacting bipartisan bills that tackle the challenges I have discussed, we hope to have the opportunity to make the very difference our Nation requires.

With that, I yield the floor to the Senator from Minnesota for his remarks on National Manufacturing Day.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I thank the good Senator from Delaware and the Senator from Wisconsin for organizing today's celebration of manufacturing.

As my colleague from Delaware mentioned and as I think the Presiding Officer knows, I have talked a lot about the role of community and technical colleges and training for students for highly skilled jobs in manufacturing, and I will talk about that role in these remarks.

SHOOTING AT UMPQUA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

But first, I heard a few minutes ago about a shooting at a college in Oregon. I just want to say something about that.

First, all of our hearts in the Senate go out to the victims of that shooting at Umpqua Community College in Oregon and to their families, their friends, and loved ones.

Students at community colleges are often young people who are getting education to prepare them for the future. Very often they are people midcareer who are going back for training to get the kind of skills Senator COONS talked about in a new career. The resurgence of manufacturing in the United States and my State of Minnesota should inspire us to invest more in training more Americans for these good manufacturing jobs.

I don't know what the focus of Umpqua is, but again I believe I speak for everyone in this body that our hearts go out to all the victims and their loved ones. I don't know whether they are like some community and technical colleges in Minnesota preparing individuals for jobs in manufacturing.

NATIONAL MANUFACTURING DAY

Manufacturing jobs—we have heard my other colleagues talk about how these are not the old manufacturing jobs. I have heard a manufacturer refer to it as dark, dirty, and dangerous, and it is what a lot of people think of.

I go to junior highs and high schools with manufacturers to talk about the high skills and the high-paying jobs that go with today's manufacturing. The most recent data available as of 2010, the average annual wage for a manufacturing job in the United States was over $56,000—about 22 percent higher than the average wage for all industries. In Minnesota, manufacturing supports jobs for more than 300,000 Minnesotans. That is about 13 percent of the jobs in our State, and manufacturing is responsible for 14 percent of the GDP. Manufacturing is a huge driver in our economy. We manufacture great things. We did the HVAC system for the new World Trade Center Freedom Tower.

This is why I want to talk about one of the greatest problems our manufacturing States have today; that is, the skills gap. Manufacturers cannot find enough skilled workers to help them compete in a global economy. According to Enterprise Minnesota, an organization that supports manufacturers in my State, there are over 6,500 open manufacturing jobs in Minnesota waiting to be filled. My experience talking with manufacturers confirms that they are desperate to hire good people with the right skills for jobs that can support a middle-class life for workers and their families.

In the words of just one manufacturer, Kimberly Arrigoni of Haberman Machine in Oakdale, MN:

> We are still suffering from a skills gap. . . . For my company specifically, it no longer is a capacity issue because of equipment, but one with people. We are limited in what we can produce and ship out the door because we don't have enough master level machinists. . . . Imagine what this very ripple effect is causing my State and our country as a whole.

So how can we help our manufacturing industry meet this challenge? Well, we took a good first step last year when we passed the bipartisan Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, WIOA. It was the first reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act in over a decade—almost two. It modernized our workforce development system and improved coordination between workforce boards, education, training programs, and local businesses. I think we need to do more to go further, and that is why I will be reintroducing legislation very soon to increase Federal investment in workforce training partnerships between employers and community and technical colleges.

I call it the Community College to Career Fund Act. It would create grants that help businesses and community colleges train workers for high-skill, good-paying jobs. Businesses and community and tech colleges across my State support the Community College to Career Fund Act because they know firsthand—and I have seen firsthand the differences that these programs can make. Under this program, community colleges and businesses together would apply for grants based on how many jobs their partnership would create, what the value of those jobs would be to the community and, very importantly, how much skin in the game the State, the community or the businesses have.

I hope my colleagues will take this up and pass it this year. This is a great way to address a number of things such as the cost of college. I have talked to so many manufacturers who have hired someone who has just a credential from a community technological college, hires them and then pays them to go back to school while they are working, and pays for their tuition to finish their associate's degree. They bring them back and say: Go get your bachelor's degree. Go get your 4-year college degree while you are working, and I will pay for it. These are—time and time again, I have seen people, workers who have had their education paid for, no debt, a couple degrees, and a good job—a very good job.

I would like to close with the words of John Johnston from States Manufacturing in Golden Valley, CO. He writes:

> When my son was young he used to say, ''My daddy works with big machines that go boom, boom, boom.'' My son is now 17 years old and planning a career in manufacturing. He grew up around those machines that go boom.

Unfortunately, most students these days think manufacturing is not for them. If they could only get in to see how remarkable it is to see how things are really made, they would change their perspective.

He goes on:

> Each night at dinner we talk about his ''high of the school day'' and he is so excited to tell me about the new equipment or his next project in manufacturing class. Now it is time to light that fire inside of other students and show them today's manufacturing companies are a great place to have a career.

A great place to have a career. This story illustrates perfectly why promoting manufacturing careers with young people is so important. We have a lot of advantages in this country because of natural gas. We have cheap energy relative to the rest of the world. Because of the nature of manufacturing, the main cost now is the technology, and low-skilled wages are a much smaller piece. What this country needs are high-skilled wages. We need more people, more young people especially, to take advantage of the opportunities available in manufacturing so we will continue to compete globally and expand as we compete globally.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). The majority whip.

OBSTRUCTION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I continue to read in the newspaper and the press—particularly that which covers our activities in Congress—talk about the shutdown that was averted because we were able to pass a continuing resolution before the midnight end of the

fiscal year on Wednesday night. I would like to reflect just a few minutes on what the cause of this drama is and where the responsibility actually lies for all of this shutdown drama, which would be completely unnecessary if the Senate and the Congress were permitted to basically do our job.

For example, just this afternoon our Democratic friends decided to filibuster legislation that would help our veterans and our men and women in uniform because it would fund the full range of services to veterans and the construction of military facilities. If you think about that for a moment, it becomes even more outrageous because the idea that in order to force this side of the aisle to the table, in order to spend more money and raise taxes, that you would hold our veterans and our military hostage is really remarkable, certainly nothing to be proud of, and something that needs to be called out and identified for what it is.

The only reason we have had to go through this process on a continuing resolution—and, by the way, for those who are not familiar with the continuing resolution, what that means is we are continuing for a period of time now—until December 11—the current spending policies of the Federal Government. That means we are side-stepping the Appropriations Committee, where outdated or obsolete programs are discarded or if there are multiple government programs that could be consolidated that could be made more effective or efficient, or if, heaven forbid, we could actually save some money and apply it to priorities or maybe help reduce our deficit—that is where that should be happening, but the obstruction of our friends across the aisle who are dead set on forcing us to the negotiating table so they can force the Federal Government to spend more money is outrageous.

We have had two previous votes on the Defense appropriations bill, which is even more immediately directed to help support our families and the men and women in uniform, many of whom are serving in harm's way. It is amazing to me how many people will come to the Senate floor or in the other body, the House of Representatives, and talk about their devotion and dedication to our military and our veterans—and they should. Our military and our veterans deserve our devotion and appreciation and every honor we can bestow on them. But the idea that you would on one hand talk like that and then come to the floor and block legislation that funds their paycheck or pays for their benefits if they are a veteran and keeps the commitment we have made to them—it really is outrageous and is just another reason why the American people—everybody outside of the beltway—hold Congress and Washington in such low regard. We are, after all, a self-governing people, and when people hold their government in low regard and lose confidence in their government, basically they lose confidence in themselves and in our country and in our ability to control our destiny or at least try to point us in a better direction.

Earlier on, I believe it was the senior Senator from New York who gave an interview to the New York Times. He talked about the fact that the Democrats were going to have a ''filibuster summer,'' and now that has sort of slopped over into a filibuster fall, apparently. Why? For what reason? What is the good reason? Well, it is not for a good reason, but it is for this reason: so they can force Republicans, the majority, to the negotiating table to spend more money.

Then there is the White House. There is no leadership out of the White House on fiscal matters whatsoever. This morning the White House threatened to veto this very bill, assuming it would pass the Congress. Again, why? Well, because it complies with the current law and budgetary restrictions under the Budget Control Act. You might ask, well, why are they offended by that? Why is that a problem? Well, that is a good question, actually, because the President himself signed the Budget Control Act into law, and the very caps on spending that have kept discretionary spending at 2007 levels are caps he signed into law.

The idea that you would hold our troops and veterans hostage is incredible. Why? Because the President and the minority, the Democrats, refuse to adhere to budget spending caps the President signed into law.

You know, we hear a lot of discussion about these caps and sequestration. These are the automatic spending caps on discretionary spending. They were actually proposed by the President and his team at the White House in the first place. So it would require a certain degree of cognitive dissonance or maybe willing suspension of disbelief to read over the White House's veto threat on this particular bill and to take it seriously.

We are going to continue to press our Democratic colleagues to return this body to what we like to call regular order around here—in other words, doing our job, what we were elected to do.

This whole idea of holding our troops and veterans hostage in order to force more government spending is beyond outrageous. With everything happening in the world, I don't doubt it is hard for this message to penetrate, but the reason we continue to operate on continuing resolutions and temporary patches, such as the one that was just passed that goes to December 11, is because of the obstruction on the other side of the aisle, these filibusters.

We have a lot of work cut out for us by that December 11 deadline. Before that deadline, we have to deal with an expiring highway bill. We passed a multiyear highway bill here in the Senate and sent it to the House. My hope is that they will use this time up until October 29 to pass a highway bill and that we can get to a conference and work out the differences and settle that one important piece of business. I come from a big State. We need those resources in order to maintain and build our highway system, for public safety, for the environment, and for the economy. So I hope we can get that done.

We are going to have another big drama here as a result of the Democrats filibustering these appropriations bills called an Omnibus appropriations bill. In other words, what is set up to happen as a result of the obstruction on the other side of the aisle by blocking all of these appropriations bills is we are going to have to consider all of the funding for the Federal Government for perhaps the next year. We are going to have to vote on that one big bill—probably $1 trillion or more—in December. That is a horrible way to do business. First of all, it is not transparent. Our constituents cannot hope to read that legislation and understand all of the ramifications of it and what it might mean. It also, frankly, is susceptible to being larded with things that really aren't necessary, that would not pass under other circumstances but are put on a must-pass piece of legislation.

So you are going to hear more drumbeats—I will close with this—about shutdowns and cliffs and the irresponsibility of Congress in not meeting our basic obligations. There is one reason for that under the present circumstances; it is because our Democratic friends have chosen to filibuster and to stop the Senate from doing its business the way we should be doing our business in an orderly, transparent, responsible, and accountable sort of way. The way we do that is by taking up individual appropriations bills and passing them. If we did it that way, there would be no government shutdown drama if one or two appropriations bills did not get passed for some reason, if there was some delay. So this is really the source of all of this shutdown drama—the obstruction of our Democratic colleagues, preventing us from doing our basic business of governing and making sure we are doing what we promised to do when each of us stood for election in front of our voters.

I see the junior Senator from Montana is here. I know one of the things that motivated many of our new Senators is the desire to come here and put our fiscal house in order. We are not even talking about doing some of the things we should do, some of the things we need to do to reduce the deficit—the difference between what we spend and what comes in—much less the debt, which is in the $18 trillion range, which is unbelievable.

So these young men and women who are serving as pages—we are leaving behind for them a financial burden which is simply immoral. It is just not right. The promises that were made back when Social Security and Medicare were passed—that they would be

there for you in your later years—I have not met a young person today who thinks Social Security or Medicare is going to be there for them because, frankly, they are going to run out of money on the current path they are on.

So we have a lot to do. Believe me, the country is upset. People are angry. They are scared. They are worried about their families and about their future. They are worried about their security. When they look at the TV set or read the newspaper and see how a willful minority can simply shut down our ability to do our job and conduct the Nation's business, their anger and their frustration and their fear are justified.

We can do better. I hope and pray we will.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

REMEMBERING JEAN TURNAGE

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of Jean Turnage, the former Montana Supreme Court chief justice and a State senate president who passed away earlier this week.

Chief Justice Turnage was a true public servant who always put Montana and this Nation first. He is remembered as a fair and tolerant judge and a true gentleman legislator. As both a legislator and judge, he had a genius for solving conflicts and bridging differences—a quality that is far too rare in public service.

Chief Justice Turnage was part of a dying breed of the ''greatest generation'' and was a true statesman. As a World War II veteran, a State legislator, and chief justice of the Montana Supreme Court, Justice Turnage truly exemplified our State's strong legacy of service. His passing is a great loss for Montana.

On behalf of all Montanans, I wish to recognize Jean for his decades of service to Montana and to this Nation. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Turnage family during this time of loss.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

(The remarks of Mr. GRASSLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. 2123 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. GRASSLEY. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, last week I came to the floor to speak on the subject of religious liberty in America. I explained why religious liberty matters, why it is important, and why it deserves special protection from government interference.

I also used my remarks to welcome Pope Francis to Washington and to recognize the historic nature of his visit. I was struck by the Pope's emphasis on religious liberty while he was here and by his concern for the state of religious liberty, not just around the world, but in the United States as well.

In his address at the White House, Pope Francis said that many American Catholics are ''concerned that efforts to build a just and wisely ordered society respect . . . the right to religious liberty,'' and he called on all Americans to ''be vigilant . . . to preserve and defend [religious] freedom from everything that would threaten or compromise it.''

Before Congress, Pope Francis, spoke of the delicate balance required to combat violence and extremism while at the same time safeguarding religious liberty. And in Philadelphia, he declared that the right of religious exercise extends well beyond the church door. He said:

> Religious freedom certainly means the right to worship God, individually and in community, as consciences dictate. But religious liberty, by its nature, transcends places of worship and the private sphere of individuals and families.

Like Pope Francis, I too am concerned about threats to religious freedom in the United States. Last week, I announced my intention to give a series of speeches on the subject of religious liberty, and I continue with that purpose today by speaking about the history of religious liberty in America.

As my remarks will show, concern for religious liberty has been a critical feature of our Nation from the beginning. The desire to enjoy the freedom to live one's faith was a motivating factor for many of our earliest settlers. Once here, they set about creating societies in which religion could have full room to flourish. At times they fell prey to the same sectarian narrowmindedness that bedeviled the nations of Europe, but on the whole our forebears enjoyed and permitted a broader range of religious freedom than could be found most anywhere in the world or the planet at that time.

As the heirs of their efforts, we have the obligation to continue their commitment to religious liberty. Freedom of religion is part of the very fabric of our Nation. It is not only enshrined in the text of our First Amendment, it also permeates our history, our very identity as a nation. Protecting and promoting freedom of religion is at the heart of the American project.

Let's begin at the beginning. The first permanent European settlers here in America were Pilgrims seeking to escape religious oppression. Leaders such as John Winthrop guided Puritans and other groups of Pilgrims from Europe to the New World in search of a place where they could practice their religious beliefs according to their own conscience.

The Pilgrims' journey to Massachusetts Bay is considered such an important part of the American story that a mural depicting the embarkation of the Pilgrims hangs in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol. This great painting stands as a symbol and constant reminder of America's place as a safe harbor for those seeking religious liberty.

Following the success of the Puritans, other religious minorities, including the Quakers, Congregationalists, Baptists, Jews, Methodists, Presbyterians, and a host of German and Dutch sects, came to the American Colonies to practice their faith in peace. Unfortunately, many of these minorities did not find the religious tolerance they had hoped for. The Massachusetts Bay Colony, for example, punished heretics and adopted the Old World view that nonadherence to the state religion was a crime against the state. True to the American ideal, however, these religious minorities did not give in. Instead, they pressed on in search of new locales where the promise of religious freedom could be found full bloom.

Roger Williams, the founder of the first Baptist church in America, was among the most notable dissenters from religious orthodoxy. Williams believed that the church in Massachusetts was not sufficiently separated from the church of England and openly questioned the legitimacy of the Colony's charter.

Forced to flee his home in Boston for fear of being arrested, Williams found refuge among the Natives. He went on to purchase land from the Massasoit tribe and established a new settlement that he gave the rather auspicious name ''Providence.'' A few years later, Providence and several other communities joined together to form the Rhode Island Colony—the first Colony in the New World—to offer religious liberty to all sects. Citizens in Rhode Island could attend the church of their choice without fear of government reprisal.

Mr. President, we see in the founding of Rhode Island the seed of the idea that all people should be free to practice their faith. If Massachusetts represented the flight of persecution, then Rhode Island constituted the next step in the path toward religious freedom—the extension of free exercise.

Rhode Island was not the only safe harbor in the New World for religious minorities. There was also Pennsylvania, which was named for William Penn, a Quaker. English authorities imprisoned Penn in the Tower of London for writing pamphlets critical of the Church of England. After he was released, Penn established the Pennsylvania Colony as a refuge for practitioners of his own Quaker faith.

Another example is the Dutch Colony of New Netherland, later known as New

Amsterdam and today known as New York. When New Amsterdam was founded in 1625, its Articles of Transfer assured New Netherlanders that they could ''keep and enjoy the liberty of their consciences in religion.'' No city better symbolizes the religious diversity of America than New York City, which should be unsurprising given that New York was one of America's earliest havens of religious liberty and tolerance.

It bears mention that although many of the early American Colonies aspired to provide religious liberty to all citizens, colonial America often fell short of this ideal. In 1689, for example, England's Parliament enacted the Act of Toleration, which granted freedom to non-Anglicans to hold their own religious services provided they properly registered their ministers and places of worship. However, the act did not extend the right to hold public office to nonconformists and explicitly excluded Catholics and Unitarians from all benefits provided by the act. Moreover, ministers of minority sects could be imprisoned for failing to apply for licenses or for preaching outside of authorized locations. In 1774, Virginia authorities imprisoned some 50 Baptist ministers for failing to heed the Toleration Act's requirements.

That the trajectory of religious liberty in America has not always been a straight line, however, does not diminish the centrality of religious freedom to the American ideal or to the history and growth of our Nation. Looking back centuries later, we rightly criticize colonial leaders for failing to give full freedom to religious practitioners. But the initial failure of some colonial leaders to live up to the ideal was ultimately overwhelmed by the success of later colonists and by the significance of religious liberty through the entire American project.

As I said last week, our Nation exists because of religious liberty. The freedom to practice one's faith was central to the founding and growth of the American Colonies. Furthermore, the guarantees of religious liberty found in the colonial charters, coupled with the breadth of religious diversity in prerevolution America, are nothing short of remarkable. As Stanford professor Michael McConnell—one of the great constitutional experts in our country—has noted, in the years leading up to the Revolution, America had ''already experienced 150 years of a higher degree of religious diversity than had existed anywhere else in the world.''

I come now to the American Revolution and subsequent ratification of the Constitution. It was through these crucial events that the ideal of religious liberty had so long motivated the colonists to become part of our fundamental charter of government.

George Washington, while leader of the Continental Army, issued a command concerning religious liberty to the revolutionary troops: ''[A]s far as lies in your power, you are to protect and support the free exercise of the religion of the Country, and the undisturbed enjoyment of the rights of conscience in religious matters, with your utmost influence and authority.''

That was George Washington.

Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, likewise emphasized the centrality of religious freedom for our new Nation. In 1786, the Virginia Legislature adopted a statute on religious freedom written by none other than Thomas Jefferson. This law said that ''all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matter of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities.''

Jefferson's words in the Statute for Religious Freedom had a profound influence on James Madison, whom we revere today as the father of the Constitution. Madison reflected Jefferson's vision in his own writings, declaring that ''[t]he religion of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man to exercise it as these may dictate.''

The original Constitution, ratified in 1788, did not contain a bill of rights because the Framers believed the structure they had created would effectively guard against tyranny. They also worried that enumerating rights could lead to mischief, as officials might argue that any right not enumerated did not exist. But the Framers eventually reversed course, and a few years later Madison drafted and the States ratified the first 10 amendments to the Constitution.

The first of these amendments formalized the guarantee of religious liberty already found in many State constitutions and deeply embedded in the fabric of American society. The words are familiar to all Americans: ''Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.'' The principle that had motivated the initial settlement of America and that had grown and matured in concert with the growth and maturation of the Colonies themselves had found expression in our fundamental charter.

Of course, ratification of the First Amendment is not the end of the story. From the founding generation down to the present day, the importance of religious liberty to the American ideal has continued to manifest itself in a variety of ways.

Consider the experience of the Ursuline nuns of New Orleans. These French sisters were the first congregation of Roman Catholic nuns in the United States. They came to America in the early 1700s and settled in New France, which later became Louisiana.

Following the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the sisters of the Ursuline Convent grew concerned that they would lose their rights to their property and mission now that their charter was under the jurisdiction of the United States.

The mother superior of the Ursulines petitioned President Thomas Jefferson to ask that the sisters be allowed to keep their property in New Orleans. President Jefferson responded powerfully, telling the Sisters: ''The principles of the Constitution and government of the United States are a sure guarantee to you that [your property] will be preserved to you sacred and inviolate and that your institution will be permitted to govern itself according to its own rules, without interference from the civil authority.''

President Jefferson spoke the truth. Indeed, the Old Ursuline Convent and Mission survives to this day. It is located in New Orleans' famous French Quarter and is the oldest building in the Mississippi River Valley. The Old Ursuline Convent is an emblem of the vitality and centrality of religious liberty in American life. A persecuted religious minority, unpopular in its day and even reviled in some backward segments of society, received a personal guarantee from the President of the United States that their rights and property would remain secure under the protection of the U.S. Government. Here we see religious liberty not only as ideal but as reality.

To return to my earlier formulation, Massachusetts represented the flight from religious persecution, Rhode Island and other Colonies the extension of free exercise. Now in the Constitution we have the guarantee of religious liberty to all people in all places within the jurisdiction of our great land.

The Constitution and its guarantee of free exercise is the culmination of the process that began when the Pilgrims first set foot on the Mayflower way back in 1620. But the Constitution is only as effective as we, through our fidelity, make it. Regrettably, the guarantee of free exercise has at times been undermined or even abridged by narrowminded sectarianism or fear of new creeds. Such divergence from the promise of religious liberty is not cause to question the continuing value of religion or to claim that the promise of religious freedom is a false promise. Rather, it is reason to dedicate ourselves to the ideal enshrined in our Constitution that all men and women have an inalienable right to choose for themselves what they believe and how they will practice their beliefs.

As many of my colleagues know, I am a descendent of the early Mormon pioneers who, much like the Pilgrims of the Mayflower, fled persecution and discrimination by abandoning their homes for a new place of refuge. In the case of the Mormon pioneers, they migrated, many by foot and in harsh conditions, in a mass exodus across the Great Plains over the Rocky Mountains, and, finally, into Salt Lake Valley and other settlements throughout the Intermountain West. Brigham Young was a great colonizer and sent people all over the West to settle the West. One of the attributes of the Mormon pioneers that I admire most is

that after having endured mob violence, the martyr of their prophet, the burning of their homes and places of worship, and their forced flight into the American wilderness, they never lost their deep love of the United States and our Constitution. I am very pleased the people of Utah remain a deeply patriotic people, with a profound respect and admiration for our Constitution.

In more recent years, our leaders have continued to reaffirm the importance of religious liberty in American life. In 1948, the United States was one of the original signers of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims that every person has the right to freedom of religion, including the right to ''manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship or observance.''

Four decades later, in 1990, Congress passed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, or RFRA, a crucially important piece of legislation that prohibits government from substantially burdening a person's exercise of religion unless doing so is necessary to further a ''compelling government interest.'' I was honored to be one of the principal authors of RFRA and count its passage of one of the greatest moments of our time in this body. The bill passed the Senate 97 to 3 and passed the House without recorded opposition. An enormous coalition of groups from across the ideological spectrum—including the ALCU, the American Muslim Council, the Anti-Defamation League, the Christian Legal Society, and the National Council of Churches—came together in support of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The breadth and depth of support for RFRA was a sign of the enduring importance of religious liberty in American life. Indeed, RFRA demonstrated that religious liberty is the rare issue that unites Americans of all stripes.

One other recent marker of the continuing significance of religious freedom in America is found, interestingly enough, in a bill aimed at protecting religious freedom in other countries. In 1998, Congress unanimously passed the International Religious Freedom Act, which created an ambassador-at-large for International Religious Freedom within the State Department and a bipartisan U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. The very first words of the act proclaim that ''[t]he right to freedom of religion undergirds the very origin and existence of the United States.''

This statement, approved by all 535 Members of Congress and signed into law by the President, encapsulates the overarching theme of my remarks today. Freedom of religion is central to the American ideal and to the history and development of our Nation. From the earliest settlers to the revolutionary generation, to the 19th century, to the modern day, religious freedom has been a driving force in American life. Without the quest for religious liberty, there would be no United States, and without the continued guarantee of religious freedom, there can be no American ideal. This is the fundamental rule in our society, a fundamental maxim, a fundamental part of the Constitution, a fundamental belief for virtually everyone in America who has any religious inclinations at all.

I am proud to be a citizen of this great Nation. I don't want to see religious liberty infringed upon, abused, not tolerated or denigrated. We have to stand up for it. We have to make sure everybody knows we are not going to change one of the basic precepts of the American experience—one of the basic precepts, from the beginning of this country until today.

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. COONS. 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 JAMES H. GILLIAM, SR.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart that today I rise to honor a friend and a true force for good in my home State of Delaware who recently passed away but whose impact will be felt for many years to come. He was, first and foremost, a loving husband, father, and grandfather. He was married to his wife Louise for 68 years and had always been the rock of his family. He was incredibly proud of the many accomplishments of his son Jim, Jr., and his daughter Dr. Patrice Gilliam-Johnson, after instilling in them his own passion of service to others. This man stood as a great leader in the First State. He was a veteran, a trailblazer, a mentor, and to so many of us a trusted adviser and friend.

It was Mr. James H. Gilliam, Sr.—or Mr. G., as he was known to so many of us—who left our world early Wednesday morning on September 10, but before he left us, he made a profound impact on thousands of Delawareans from every walk of life, as a teacher, as a mentor, and a leader. His 95 years on this Earth marked a life well lived. Whether he was helping communities to heal and to grow together or helping to establish local and national organizations committed to social justice and equity, advising Governors, Members of Congress or even the Vice President, he never wasted an opportunity to make the case for our community.

Jim Gilliam, though, actually didn't grow up in Delaware. He was originally raised in Baltimore and earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from Morgan State and a master's degree in social work from Howard University. From 1944 to 1948, he served his country with honor as a member of the Army's 92nd Infantry Division, the famed Buffalo Soldiers, where he became a decorated soldier during the Second World War and beyond. He was actually recalled to duty again as a captain during the Korean war, and for all his service, he received many awards, including two Bronze Star Medals and the Combat Infantryman Badge. I will never forget the opportunity I had last year when I was able to help him retrieve a number of his missing or, in several cases, never awarded medals, and to reissue them to him in a public ceremony. Hundreds of Delawareans from across our community came together at that event—hundreds whose lives he touched, and I don't think there was a dry eye in the house.

Jim Gilliam didn't come to Wilmington for good until 1965, when he was hired as director of neighborhood and housing services for the Greater Wilmington Development Council. Shortly after, in 1968, he was one of the few trusted to walk the Wilmington streets promoting reconciliation during the riots in our city and the National Guard occupation that lasted too long after the assassination of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Mr. G. went on to hold positions of leadership with private and public sector entities, including vice president of the development company Leon N. Weiner & Associates, working to build affordable, low-income housing; or as the director of New Castle County's Department of Community Development and Housing, where he served for many years; or in 1970 when Governor Peterson asked him to overhaul a then-failing Delaware family court. He touched many lives through many institutions.

His constant involvement in the community led to many honors and accolades, but through it all he never rested on his laurels or slowed down in his efforts to serve others. In 1999, at an age when most others would have been beginning retirement, he spent 9 months raising $1 million and securing hundreds of political, business, and community supporters to launch the Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League. The Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League quickly rose to prominence and 4 years later received the National Urban League's highest honor. Since that time, as MWUL chairman, Jim led countless efforts in educational opportunity, economic development, supplier diversity, fighting racial profiling, and promoting equity in the arts. I was honored to be able to call him a mentor and an adviser.

Whether working with him 15 years ago when I was a newly elected countywide official or in recent years as a U.S. Senator, I called on Mr. G. time and again when making tough decisions. His counsel was not always easy to receive. He pulled no punches, but he always gave advice keeping the best interests of our community in mind. I consider myself hugely blessed for the many opportunities when he shared his knowledge and perspective of what we needed to do. But I am far from the only person who long relied upon his advice.

Mr. G. mentored countless young men and women from throughout the State and throughout his life and truly fostered an entire generation of civic and community leaders. One of them is Paul Calistro, the executive director of the West End Neighborhood House, whose organization has supported thousands youth in our city. A sentiment he recently related to me was that ''Mr. G. was a man who could command the entire room, but could also speak to you as if you were the only one in the room.''

Another person whose career he helped launch was Jea Street. He is now a county councilman, and for decades he was executive director of Hilltop Lutheran—another important youth-serving organization in a tough neighborhood in our city. He was hired at the tender age of 22, some 40 years ago, by Mr. G. to help in preparation for school desegregation. Jea recently commented: He did not tell me it was a job for life, but he helped me to do it and to stay on the battlefield for justice these many years.

Any elected official or civic community leader who sat down with Mr. G. also knew that he meant business. He wasn't shy about telling you what you needed to do, what you needed to do better, what you needed to do to make an impact. Whether it was fighting crime or investing in education or a growing opportunity, he was better than anyone I have ever known at delivering hard and pointed messages with a smile but with an intensity that made you listen and made you want to be a better man. The News Journal, our home paper in Wilmington, recently said: ''Mr. Gilliam's fight for racial justice, his efforts to correct the wrongs of our society and his willingness to mentor countless others, sent forth thousands of ripples of hope that have benefited us in the past and will serve us well in the future.''

I think that is exactly right. No problem was too small or insignificant for him to embrace and to attend to and to set right. He was Wilmington's pied piper, leading all kinds of people into a better place. He was a natural leader, and everyone who knew him is better off for it.

My good friend Dr. Tony Allen counted Mr. G. as his best friend. Tony put it this way:

> He was the conscience of our community. He often said to me that the great challenges of life are in the moments when it is our turn. When there is an opportunity for us to speak up or to be quiet, to rise up or to lie down, to take arms or to take cover, most of us take the path of least resistance and miss the moment to make a difference in our own lives and in the lives of others. He taught everyone to never, ever miss their moment to act, to do the right thing, and to make the world a better place.

For 95 years, Mr. G. never missed the moments that required him to act and to lead. He acted, he led, and his legacy lives on not only in his family but among so many other people and institutions throughout our State that he touched.

As for me, I will always remember Jim Gilliam as a man who challenged me to be better. He viewed himself as a servant to our community, but he knew that his service alone wasn't enough. That is why his lasting legacy will be in those whom he has inspired and whom he challenged to continue his work, to follow his example, to take our turn and our moment to fight for justice.

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

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

The Senator from Michigan wishes to be recognized, I presume.

Mr. PETERS. I do, indeed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

PIPELINE IMPROVEMENT AND PREVENTING SPILLS ACT

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about an issue that is of particular importance in my State of Michigan—preventing an oilspill in the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes are a part of our way of life in Michigan, supporting our multibillion dollar agricultural, shipping, and tourism industries. An oilspill on this precious resource would be catastrophic for Michigan and for all surrounding Great Lakes States. The Great Lakes are a critical drinking water source for 40 million people, and they contain 84 percent of North America's surface freshwater. Vessels moving through the Great Lakes carry goods and passengers across the region, and tourists in Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York take in their beautiful coastlines each year. Unfortunately, Michiganders know all too well the devastating consequences of a pipeline break and what it can do to an economy and to its natural resources.

Five years ago we experienced one of the largest inland oilspills in U.S. history with a 6-foot break in the Line 6–B pipeline in Marshall, MI. Oil flowed for nearly 17 hours before it was eventually shut off, spilling more than 800,000 gallons of heavy crude, contaminating 35 miles of the Kalamazoo River, and ultimately racking up a cleanup cost of $1.2 billion. An independent investigation after the spill concluded that the pipeline operator's inadequate procedures, as well as ''weak Federal regulations,'' all played a major role in this disastrous spill.

The Kalamazoo disaster, along with several other devastating pipeline explosions and spills, prompted a sweeping pipeline safety bill to be signed into law in early 2012. Unfortunately, many of those rules and regulations have yet to be finalized by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, or PHMSA.

I am very concerned about the potential for future spills in Michigan, especially from a pair of 60-year old pipelines carrying oil and natural gas liquids through the Straits of Mackinac, the place where Lake Michigan and Lake Huron meet. The Straits of Mackinac have been called the ''worst possible place'' for an oilspill in the entire Great Lakes Basin. The strong currents in the straits tend to reverse direction every few days, and they move water at a rate at over 10 times greater than the flow over Niagara Falls. A professor at the University of Michigan used computer modeling to estimate that a worst case scenario oil slick moving east through the Straits could reach the shores of Mackinac City and Mackinac Island—our number one tourist attraction—in just 3 hours.

Even more troubling is the fact that Coast Guard officials have acknowledged that current oilspill response techniques are not adequate for open freshwater, let alone freshwater with heavy, thick ice—the ice we find every season in the Straits of Mackinac.

To make matters worse, response plan requirements for pipelines overseen by PHMSA at the Federal level are seriously lacking. The information related to safety procedures, inspection reports, and worst case scenarios are unavailable to the public. Even local emergency responders have been left in the dark. That is why I, along with my Michigan colleague and good friend DEBBIE STABENOW, introduced the Pipeline Improvement and Preventing Spills Act, which includes several commonsense provisions to prevent pipeline accidents and protect the Great Lakes from catastrophic crude oil spills. Our bill requires the U.S. Coast Guard and other agencies to independently assess oilspill response and cleanup activities and techniques for the Great Lakes, specifically taking into account the cleanup response of an oilspill under solid, thick ice or ice-choke waters.

My legislation requires the Department of Transportation and the National Academies to examine risks associated with pipelines in the Great Lakes and other waterways in the region, including an analysis of alternatives to the Straits oil pipeline. This bill would also increase transparency by ensuring residents are notified about pipelines near their property and compels operators and regulators to make information publicly available.

My legislation will also expand safety features to pipelines in high-consequence areas—creating jobs for pipefitters and other professions—while protecting dense population centers, drinking water, and environmentally sensitive areas. Finally, this bill will eliminate the future risk of a disastrous crude oil spill from tanker vessels on the Great Lakes.

Currently crude oil is not shipped by tankers on the Great Lakes. However, it is increasingly being looked at as an option. Given the difficulty of cleaning

up heavy oil in open freshwater, my bill will take that option off the table to ensure that we will not jeopardize our $7 billion Great Lakes fishing industry. The Pipeline Improvement and Preventing Spills Act is endorsed and supported by a number of groups, including the Michigan League of Conservation Voters; the Pipefitters, Plumbers and HVAC Techs Local 111; Traverse City Tourism; the Great Lakes Fishing Commission; Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association; National Wildlife Federation; and the Alliance for the Great Lakes—to name a few.

The Senate committee on commerce, which has jurisdiction over pipeline safety, will be considering pipeline legislation in the next few weeks. I look forward to building support for provisions in my bill. Our country continues to record record highs in domestic energy production, but we must remain vigilant when it comes to energy transportation. Through strong oversight, leadership from the industry, and technological innovation, I firmly believe that we can and we must continue to meet our energy needs in the safest way possible while preserving treasures such as the Great Lakes for future generations.

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. 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.

PROTECTING AFFORDABLE COVERAGE FOR EMPLOYEES ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of H.R. 1624, which is at the desk, and that the bill be read a third time and the Senate vote on passage of the bill with no intervening action or debate.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1624) to amend title I of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to revise the definition of small employer.

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

The bill was ordered to a third reading, and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate on the measure, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 1624) was passed.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be made and laid upon the table.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to say a few words about the Protecting Affordable Coverage For Employees—or PACE—Act.

The PACE Act is smart legislation from my colleague, Senator TIM SCOTT, and my Kentucky colleague over in the House, Congressman BRETT GUTHRIE, that will help protect small- and medium-sized businesses that provide health care to their employees. It would give States more flexibility to define what constitutes a small business for health insurance purposes so as to protect health benefits for workers, lower health premiums, and reduce costs for taxpayers.

So let me repeat that. The PACE Act is a smart health care bill aimed at protecting workers' benefits, lowering premiums, and reducing costs to taxpayers.

I hope colleagues will join me in applauding the bill's lead sponsors, our colleague, Senator TIM SCOTT, and his counterpart over in the House, Congressman BRETT GUTHRIE, for their hard work in developing this very important proposal.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I wish to join the majority leader in complimenting Senator SCOTT, a new Member of the Senate, on a significant accomplishment. It is not that easy to pass a bill in the House and in the Senate. It takes a lot of work, and there is good reason for that. We want to make sure that whatever passes in the Senate has a thorough amount of consideration.

Senator SCOTT has come to the Senate as a member of the HELP Committee. He is one of its most diligent members. I am chairman of that committee. He took this initiative on his own, working with Members of the House, where he formerly served, and he has brought the bill to the Senate, and within a few days he has gotten its unanimous approval. To me, that suggests the kind of U.S. Senator that we need more of—someone who is quiet, effective, scholarly, and gets results.

So TIM SCOTT today, on behalf of the people of South Carolina and this country, has helped workers, has improved benefits, and has lowered premiums. He deserves our thanks. He has certainly earned my respect and the respect of his colleagues on both sides of the aisle by this significant accomplishment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I wish to thank my cosponsor, Senator SHAHEEN, for working with me on the PACE Act, without any question. I also would like to thank Senator ALEXANDER for his kind remarks and specifically thank our leader, Senator MCCONNELL, for making sure this bill had an expeditious path to the floor of the Senate.

So often we hear in America that we can't get things done in the Senate, and because of your leadership, Senator MCCONNELL, and because of the good work of Congressman GUTHRIE on the House side, as well as Senator SHAHEEN, we see we are going to have an opportunity to make sure that small business owners all across America are not more negatively impacted by ObamaCare.

The decision we have made today to move this legislation forward actually will save, on average, about 18 percent—18 percent—of higher premiums that will not have to be paid by small businesses owners.

Senator MCCONNELL, thank you for your leadership. Senator ALEXANDER, thank you for working with us on this very interesting process to get it to the floor as expeditiously as we have been able to do.

With that, I thank both Senators for their hard work and dedication to this issue.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I want to thank my friend and colleague Senator SCOTT for his leadership in protecting many Americans and small businesses from more needless suffering under ObamaCare. While I am glad for this outcome, a piecemeal approach to this terrible law is less valuable than a strategic approach. We must help the millions of other victims who are already suffering or will soon suffer from the law's flawed policies but lack an effective lobbying voice. In the future, we should set the stage for a serious repeal and replace debate by delaying Obamacare's onerous burdens, rather than merely working to make a terrible law 12 percent less bad.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016—CONFERENCE REPORT—Continued

REMEMBERING OFFICER GREG ALIA

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I rise to speak about one of South Carolina's most amazing heroes, Greg Alia. I am here today to recognize that this young man—32 years young—lost his life yesterday. Yesterday morning, Officer Greg Alia was killed in Columbia, SC.

I will tell my colleagues that Greg served his community with distinction. Yesterday afternoon, I had an opportunity to talk with Greg's wife, Kassy. Kassy's strength, as she spoke with someone she has never met about the love of her life—about her husband, the father of her little boy, Sal—was quite remarkable. Her thoughtfulness in this tragic time truly struck a chord with me and brought tears to my eyes as I listened to a wife describe the man she loves, a community leader, and someone who runs into danger when others are running away from danger.

Greg was born and raised in Columbia, SC. He was a Columbia native. He went to high school at Richland Northeast High School. He graduated from the University of South Carolina. If Greg were here, I would say ''Go, Cocks'' because we understand and appreciate the importance of the University of South Carolina, especially in the Columbia footprint.