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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We pray for the gift of wisdom to all with great responsibility in this people's House for the leadership of our Nation.

Along with millions of men and women around the world, we join in praying for those in leadership in our world. Those You have entrusted to lead in local and national governments in this Nation and all the nations of the world, guide them, Lord, with wisdom and truth.

May they seek You in the decisions they make and in the way they live. In praying for them, we are also reminded to pray this morning for those on life's margins who are affected by extreme poverty, poor health care, polluted and diseased water, unjust societies, division and terror, and those who do not have the opportunity to receive a quality education.

Lord, the suffering of our world is all around us. Stimulate our hearts and minds so that everything we may do this day would be for Your greater honor and glory.

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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. BRIDENSTINE 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

GHIDOTTI HIGH NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

(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, I rise today to congratulate William and Mary Ghidotti High School in Grass Valley for being one of the 335 schools to be recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School this year.

First established by President Reagan in 1982, the Blue Ribbon Schools program recognizes excellence in K–12 public and private schools who demonstrate a commitment to closing achievement gaps among student subgroups.

This award is certainly fitting for Ghidotti. As a small school in Nevada County in northern California, with an emphasis on personalized learning, students are challenged daily to excel in leadership, technology, and critical thinking, helping them prepare to be college and career ready.

To the students, teachers, and administrators: Congratulations on this distinct honor and thank you for your work in setting the standard of excellence in education for our students in northern California.

END THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, in a FOX News interview yesterday, the Republican speaker-in-waiting admitted to something that we have all known all along, and that is that the real motive of the Select Committee on Benghazi was simply to politically attack and drive down the poll numbers for Hillary Clinton, spending millions of taxpayer dollars for a political mission.

And, unbelievably, the speaker-in-waiting mentioned this in response to a question as to what were the accomplishments of the Republican Congress, the accomplishments of this Congress. The number one accomplishment that he came up with was to use taxpayer dollars to create a committee for the specific purpose of affecting the Presidential campaign and driving down the polling numbers of a Democratic candidate.

Is that your job when it took until yesterday to get a budget for just 2 months to the floor of this House, but you spend millions of dollars, thousands of hours, specifically for the purposes of driving down the polling numbers of a Presidential candidate in the Democratic Party?

Give me a break. This has gone too far. Something needs to change in this House of Representatives.

CONGRATULATING COLONEL DAVE ''CHEESE'' BURGY

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

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Colonel Dave ''Cheese'' Burgy on his outstanding

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leadership as commander of the Oklahoma Air National Guard's 138th Fighter Wing located at the Tulsa Air National Guard Base. He relinquishes command this Saturday.

Colonel Burgy received his Air Force ROTC commission at Arizona State University. He transitioned to the Oklahoma National Guard as a C–26 inspector pilot before retraining in the F–16. Colonel Burgy has logged over 3,800 military flight hours and deployed five times to fight our Nation's wars.

As the 138th commander since December 2012, Colonel Burgy led the Air National Guard's best fighter wing of over 1,200 airmen. He exemplifies the self-sacrifice and patriotism of the citizen warriors in the National Guard.

Colonel Burgy, thank you for your outstanding service to the 138th, the National Guard, and our country.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

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

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, we always knew that KEVIN MCCARTHY and the Republican Caucus had gotten together to set up this Benghazi task force in order to do a political stunt, but I never thought they would admit it. I was shocked.

I mean, could you imagine me or any Member of this House setting up a $4.5 million task force for the sole purpose of electioneering? Everyone in that task force, every staffer, was essentially a campaign staffer and, yet, paid for with government money to impact a Presidential election.

This is a scandal, people. I cannot believe what I heard. We all knew it was going on, but we couldn't prove it. Now it is documentary proof in front of literally millions of Americans, bragged about and set out as: Yeah. We did it, and it is an achievement we are proud of.

Now, if one Member were to use their Congressional office to campaign, that would be an ethics complaint. What if a whole caucus does it?

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE JAMES A. LOVELL FEDERAL HEALTH CARE CENTER

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center on its 5-year anniversary.

The Lovell Federal Health Center is the Nation's first and only integrated Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense medical center. In just 5 years, the Center has demonstrated the merits of combining two different healthcare systems.

Through hard work and dedication, the Lovell staff has shown that one healthcare facility can annually provide excellent care to over 90,000 military personnel, their families, military retirees, and veterans.

I would like to personally congratulate Director Stephan Holt and Deputy Director Navy Captain Bob Buckley. Their vision and enthusiasm facilitated the integration tremendously.

I look forward to celebrating many more anniversaries of the Lovell Federal Health Care Center, and I would like to again congratulate and thank them for their hard work on behalf of our veterans and military personnel.

HANFORD LAND TRANSFER

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a significant milestone in Richland, Kennewick, and Pasco, Washington.

While the Tri-Cities led the way in ending World War II and the cold war and was very proud to do so, the Federal Government has a legal and moral obligation to clean up the legacy nuclear waste at Hanford. This week we celebrate a cleanup milestone and the transfer of more than 1,600 acres of land back to these communities.

This transfer represents the culmination of years of local efforts as well as bipartisan, bicameral cooperation. I commend the work of Doc Hastings and Senators MURRAY and CANTWELL that laid the groundwork for this achievement.

As Hanford's cleanup mission is completed, this unneeded Federal land should continue to be returned to the local community for the goals of conservation, preservation, public access, and economic development to be achieved.

This long anticipated land transfer will be used for industrial and energy production and creates jobs and boosts economic development in the mid-Columbia region. This week's transfer is an exciting step for the post-Hanford future. I will continue to work with all parties to have more land returned to the community.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DOLD). Pursuant to clause 4 of rule I, the following enrolled bill was signed by the Speaker on Wednesday, September 30, 2015:

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.

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. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 449 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 449

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House 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. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider 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. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the conference report to its adoption without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate; and (2) one motion to recommit if applicable.

SEC. 3. 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 as though under clause 1 of rule XV. 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.

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS), 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.

□ 0915

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BYRNE. 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 Alabama?

There was no objection.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 449 provides a rule for the consideration of H.R. 3457, the Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act, and the conference report to accompany H.R. 1735, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016.

Mr. Speaker, these two bills are directly related to one of the most important functions of Congress, which is to provide for the national security of our country. For 53 straight years, Congress has come together in a bipartisan fashion to pass a National Defense Authorization Act to ensure that our military men and women have the resources and the policies they need to do their job. Even in an era of deep partisanship in Congress, we have still been able to keep the tradition alive and pass an NDAA each year. This rule would allow us to keep that tradition alive.

The NDAA process has been a great example of following regular order and doing congressional business the way it is supposed to be done. In both the House and the Senate, the respective Armed Services Committees held multiple hearings and markups that allowed all Members to have a role in the process.

Here in the House, the NDAA came up for a vote on the floor with a record number of amendments—135, to be exact. It passed with bipartisan support by a vote of 269–151. The Senate followed a very similar process and was able to approve their version of the bill by a vote of 71–125, a veto-proof majority.

Since our bills were different, the last few months have been spent in a conference committee to iron out the differences. The bill doesn't include everything I would like, but it is the true definition of a bipartisan collaborative work product. This NDAA is a textbook example of how Congress should work.

Despite all of that, I am shocked to learn that some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are not supporting this critical legislation. Even worse, the President has threatened to veto this bill.

Mr. Speaker, let's take a quick look at what is going on in the world today. North Korea is trying to develop an ability to deliver a nuclear warhead to our allies in South Korea and to other places. China is building new islands in the western Pacific and daring America to come into what they now claim is their new sea space and airspace. Russia has pushed into Crimea, is consolidating its gains in the Donbass; Iran has just now been given the ability to get a nuclear weapon; ISIS and other terrorist groups are running wild in the area that used to be Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya. Now we have Russia coming into that same area in Syria and using their jets for military purposes and daring us to get in those skies with them.

In the middle of all of this, we should be having a bipartisan, unified front to tell the world, to tell our adversaries, to tell our allies, and to tell our service men and women that we are united. There is no Republican, there is no Democrat when it comes to the defense policy of this country.

Instead, we are going to have a debate not about the defense policy of our country, but about whether we are going to fund other functions of government, whether we are going to fund the IRS at a high level that the President wants, whether we are going to fund the Environmental Protection Agency that is attacking businesses across this country. We are going to talk about all those domestic issues and not talk about the defense of the country at this critical juncture.

If there ever was a time when we should continue that tradition of standing together, it would be today. And for our President, our Commander in Chief, to threaten to veto this bipartisan bill is simply beyond belief.

Now, I expect my friend from Colorado will argue that they oppose this bill because we should be spending more money on nondefense programs, and that is a debate worth having, but this is not the time for that debate. There is nothing more important for us to do today than to make sure that we are standing tall and standing unified for the defense of our country, and we should never ever use the military as a pawn in some political game to increase controversial nondefense spending.

Today's debate should be about providing for our Nation's military men and women and their families, and I hope my colleagues and the President will reconsider their objections.

This rule also provides for consideration of H.R. 3457, the Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act.

A lot has been said on this floor recently about the threat and dangers posed to the United States and our allies by the Islamic Republic of Iran. I don't want to rehash that debate, but I do think it is important to remember that Iran is the top state sponsor of terrorism on the globe.

Over the past 15 years, more than 80 judgments have been handed down against Iran under the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act exception for state sponsors of terrorism. These judgments add up to over $43.5 billion in unpaid damages. This straightforward bill would simply require Iran to pay each of these Federal court judgments before the President can lift, waive, or suspend any sanctions currently in place against Iran. Let me briefly highlight a few examples of these judgments.

In 1985, a Navy petty officer named Robert Stethem was killed during the hijacking of TWA flight 847. Hezbollah, an Iran-financed terrorist organization, was found responsible for the hijacking and his family is now owed $329 million, and that is in a Federal court judgment.

My friend from Colorado might be particularly interested in this one. Thomas Sutherland, a teacher at Colorado State University for 26 years, was the former dean of agriculture at the American University of Beirut. He was kidnapped on June 9, 1985, after Iran directed terrorists to kidnap Americans in Lebanon. He was held in prison until November 18, 1991. His judgment is for $323.5 million.

There is the story of Alan Beer, an American living in Israel who was tragically killed after the Iranian-backed terrorist organization Hamas blew up a bus in Jerusalem. There is a $300 million judgment against Iran for Alan's death.

These are just a few stories of Americans who have been tragically injured, killed, tortured, and kidnapped by Iranian-sponsored terrorist organizations.

I simply can't understand why some of my colleagues and the President won't support this bill. This shouldn't be a partisan debate. American courts have already ruled that Iran owes money to these individuals and their families, citizens of the United States. So why is it controversial to require that these payments are made before rewarding Iran with billions of dollars in sanctions relief?

This bill is really pretty simple to me. You can either stand with American citizens or you can stand with the Islamic Republic of Iran. You can stand with the Ayatollah or the families of servicemembers who were killed by Iran-backed terrorists. To me, this is an obvious choice.

Mr. Speaker, both of these bills are more than deserving of broad, bipartisan support, and I hope that they receive just that. So I urge my colleagues to support this rule.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Alabama for yielding me 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition today to this rule and to both of the underlying bills.

Both of these bills, the conference report to accompany the annual National Defense Authorization Act and the so-called Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act, are simply partisan political charades. They are not a serious effort at the lawmaking process. They are not a serious effort at improving our national defense, nor do they even attempt to solve the problems that the American people want this Congress to take up.

I would first like to acknowledge that at least these two bills are somewhat related under this rule. In the past, we have had bills in vastly disparate areas.

A couple of points about these bills:

The National Defense Authorization bill is not a version of the bill that is going anywhere. It contorts the budget

process in a way that doesn't make sense to anybody. It doesn't make sense to budget hawks or defense hawks, and it is a way that many Members of the majority party don't even seem to understand.

Neither bill will be signed into law. The President has indicated he will veto them, nor will consideration of them today here on the floor of the House advance national security one iota.

Even after knowing the budget plans on National Defense Authorization for months, here we have a convoluted bill that won't make us any safer or financially secure. What it does is it takes the emergency account, the overseas contingency operations fund, and turns it into a slush fund to temporarily fund all kinds of other programs. So effectively, it is a deficit spending bill by fudging the different pots of money that we have for defense.

Now, I should point out this doesn't even appeal to the Pentagon or to the military. The Pentagon strongly dislikes this plan of using overseas contingency money to fund items in the base budget.

So the question I pose, Mr. Speaker, is, if it is not being done to satisfy defense hawks and the Pentagon and it is not being done to satisfy budget hawks because it is an increased spending proposal, who is the constituency for this and why are people even proposing this?

Now, it is completely fiscally irresponsible to disregard budget caps in a way that anybody who cares about our deficit should find maddening, and it is why so many of our colleagues on the majority, from what we have heard, had to be pushed to even go along with this highly flawed plan

As I mentioned, it doesn't make sense to the defense hawk contingency in this body either. The Pentagon does not like the plan. Using short-term money for base funding and long-term problems makes planning and procurement nearly impossible on the ground. This budget plan hurts national security, and it damages our fiscal responsibility in our country.

Like many bills, it is simply not going anywhere. The President said he opposes a version of the NDAA with this budget gimmick in it.

Congress, of course, needs to pass a National Defense Authorization bill. Unfortunately, the time that we are spending on this today gets us no closer.

Passing a National Defense Authorization Act is very important, and it seems like an obvious and routine thing to do; but with this Congress, nothing is surprising. Even routine matters are made infinitely more difficult as we jump through these self-created hoops to appeal to whoever is yelling loudest at the time, and that seems to be what we are doing today on the floor of this body is turning our national defense into a political football and missing yet another opportunity to provide the stability that our national defense needs to defend our country.

Now, this could have been an opportunity to address what voters want us to address. We could have talked about an Authorization for Use of Military Force. I have heard from so many of my constituents regarding that.

We could be talking about the fact that just yesterday Russia is supposedly bombing targets in Syria in support of Assad, and we have been conducting military operations in that part of the world for over a year without a specific Authorization for Use of Military Force.

We could have talked about Guantanamo Bay and how we can approach finally leaving that chapter behind and closing down our extra-legal detention facility there.

We could have debated how we can save money by right-sizing our massive nuclear arsenal that would allow us to blow up the world several times over to meet our needs here in the 21st century. Perhaps being able to blow up the world once might be enough for our nuclear arsenal, and that would save a lot of money that we could reduce the deficit with.

Instead, this bill would have us spend billions upon billions of dollars, reassign money to a slush fund, blow through budget caps that we put in place to reduce the deficit in support of a war we have never debated, never voted on, and in support of a failed policy in continuing to fight wars that we have not approved and the military arsenal that was meant to fight a cold war which ended decades ago.

This is simply a charade that does not advance our national security, and I urge my colleagues to reject it.

The other bill under consideration is another charade. It is another symbol of the failure of this body to take up the issues that matter to the American people. It is a bill, as we talked about in our Rules Committee, that had zero hearings, no markup, no amendments, and was rushed to the floor for unknown reasons. This bill serves as nothing more than another attempt to undermine the agreement that prevents Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

Now, Members on my side of the aisle were on varied sides of that Iran agreement. Some felt that the agreement was the best way to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Others felt that there were other ways. But nearly everybody on my side agrees that this bill is simply a terrible idea.

□ 0930

Now we are in the stage of implementing the Iran Nuclear Review Act, consistent with the agreement that was reached to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. If we want to advance national security, let's have a discussion about how to enforce the agreement to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

If there is a problem with the compensation of victims of state terrorism, we should have a broad bipartisan bill that addresses that. Iran is one of the countries, but there are certainly other sponsors of state terrorism; and if there is a problem collecting court judgments, let's add some teeth to that in a bipartisan proposal to do that rather than attach it to sanctions that were put in place for the specific purpose of deterring Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

Congress said that was the purpose of those sanctions. They were part of that discussion for Iran to open themselves up to inspections and agree not to develop nuclear weapons. This is a separate and legitimate issue that there are judgments against Iran that are not being enforced.

There are probably judgments against a number of other nation-states that are not being enforced. That is a perfectly fine issue and one that there is no reason in the world for it to be partisan. We should have a thoughtful, deliberative process with hearings and markup in committee with the opportunity to take good ideas from both sides and simply address that problem to make sure that we add some teeth to the ability to make sure that payments are made to victims of terrorism, a concept that this bill wouldn't even come close to accomplishing.

This bill adds no teeth to making sure that terrorist victims actually get their money. It merely tries to reinstate sanctions that are tied to the development of Iran's nuclear problem. It makes it no more likely that a single victim of terrorism will ever see any kind of restitution.

Now, if we are serious about national defense, what in the world have we been doing the last few days? Because of this body's inaction in maintaining government funding, you know what the Pentagon has been doing the last few days? They have been focused on planning for a shutdown, because we were just hours away from a shutdown when finally this body figured out how to continue funding national defense. We should have done that weeks ago.

Why did we put the Pentagon through the exercise these last few days of figuring out who had to go home and what missions had to be grounded? Do you think ISIS or Moscow or the Assad regime spent yesterday wondering if they would have the money when they showed up for work today? Well, that is what this Congress has done to our military and risks doing again in December when we face another government shutdown. We might as well be telling our generals: ''Okay, keep doing what you are doing, but don't make any plans to combat ISIS on December 12.''

Well done, Congress. I am sure America and the rest of the world is impressed with your work.

It is completely incongruous to be discussing a budget trick for defense authorization just a day after we risked closing down many parts of our

military. Just yesterday, 151 Republicans voted to shut down the Pentagon and the military. They voted to shut down the Department of Homeland Security. They voted to shut down the State Department just because they couldn't get their way on an unrelated healthcare provision for low-income women. Now, suddenly, the Republicans support national security? I don't think so.

I urge my colleagues to reject this rule and both of the underlying bills.

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

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

The gentleman from Colorado made some interesting points. He said this is not serious, that the President is going to veto it. If we go back over the vote total in the Senate, this bill was passed in the Senate by a veto-proof majority. It passed in this House by a near veto-proof majority. If a couple more people from the other side will join with us, we can override that veto, and we would stand united behind our servicemen and -women. So it is, indeed, serious. If the President were serious, he wouldn't be threatening a veto. He would understand the importance at this point in time for the Congress and the President to stand together across party lines.

We also heard about what is happening in Syria. I am a member of the House Armed Services Committee. I served on the conference committee that brought this report to us. Let me assure you, Mr. Speaker, this bill contains things that are critical to what we are doing in Syria.

He talked about Guantanamo Bay. One of the main items that I was appointed to the conference committee for was for the provision that regards Guantanamo Bay and what we are going to do and not do with the prisoners there. He talked about the military's view of this. I have talked to dozens of generals and admirals about this very issue, and they would like for us to find a different way, but they understand and agree that this way gets us where we need to go. What is important to them is really not which way we get there but the fact that we get there. This gets us there.

He talks about the fact that there is a failed policy here. There is a failed policy here. It is a failed policy of this administration in the Middle East. If we had done what we should have done in the Middle East, we wouldn't have Iran nuclearized. We wouldn't have Russia there flying sorties with their jets and daring the United States. The failure of policy here is the failure of the policy of the President of the United States.

The House Armed Services Committee, the Senate Armed Services Committee, Democrats and Republicans from both sides here have tried to work together to give the President the authorization he needed to do the right thing, to make sure we don't have the instability we have today in the Middle East. Instead, we have seen a President that seems to be inert, doing nothing. Russia comes in, makes this big play. What is the President doing? Nothing.

We were asked this time last year to authorize the training of certain Syrian troops to combat ISIS. Well, they trained 50-some-odd. We have about six left. After all that, a year, all this time, all this money, that is what the failed policy is. The whole idea was not going to work, but we gave him the authorization because we are trying to stand behind our President. We are trying to push him to do the right thing. Still, nothing happens, except he threatens to veto this bill.

If he wants to be the Commander in Chief that we need, he needs to stand with us. He needs to stand with the Congress. We need to stand together as Republicans and Democrats—we support our men and women in uniform—and do what needs to be done.

Now, my friend from Colorado referenced the Iran bill and called it a charade. Let me assure him, this is not a charade to the people who have these judgments. To the people who are victims or the families of victims, this is far from a charade. This will get them real compensation.

He says that there are no teeth here. Well, guess what. The sanctions don't get lifted unless Iran pays this money. I call that real teeth, because Iran wants that money more than anything else in the world right now because, with that money, they will go out and fund terrorism throughout the Middle East.

What we will do here is not only get money to American people who have been victimized, but we will deny that money to Iran that will use it to fund Hamas and Hezbollah and the Houthis in Yemen. That is what this is all about. This is dead serious. This is as serious as you can possibly get. I wish my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would come together with us so we can do right by the American military and the men and women that wear our uniform and do right by American citizens who have been victimized by the largest sponsor of state terrorism.

I have said this before, and I am going to say it again, that Iran bill is real clear. You stand with the Ayatollah or you stand with the United States citizens. It is one or the other. If you stand with the Ayatollah, you stand with the Ayatollah. I am going to stand with the citizens of the United States that have these judgments. They deserve to be paid.

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to bring up legislation that would protect jobs in America to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment in the RECORD along with extraneous material immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) to discuss our proposal to save American jobs.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join with me in defeating the previous question so that this body can immediately take up reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank and, in fact, immediately take up legislation offered by Mr. FINCHER, a Republican who, like many Republicans in this House and every Democrat, supports the reauthorization of an institution that has been reauthorized by this body for eight decades, routinely, that is essential to supporting small American manufacturers that I represent back home in Michigan.

During the recess, I spent some time with my local manufacturers. I did a couple manufacturing roundtables; one in Flint, my hometown, and one up in the Tri-Cities. These are small manufacturers. They are not big companies. No one would recognize their names. They are small manufacturers that have found that they have products that the world wants, but they didn't feel comfortable entering into that kind of global trade without some help, without some support, without their own government standing behind them where they can. That was what the Export-Import Bank provided for them. They told me, without exception, that the failure of this Congress to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank puts that kind of trade in jeopardy, puts the company itself in jeopardy, and puts the workers who build great American products that we can sell to the world in a position of some jeopardy as well.

We don't agree on a lot of things in this body, and that is the way it is supposed to be; but when we do agree, the American people expect us to do something about it. We agree in this body on the Export-Import Bank, Democrats and Republicans. Why can't we see a bill come to the floor to simply reauthorize something that is essential to supporting American manufacturers, supporting American exports, supporting American workers?

Sadly, almost ironically, there are more Republicans in this Congress that support the Export-Import Bank than supported keeping the government open itself. You would think—you would think—that somehow we would figure out a way.

There is all this talk of bipartisanship. It is just a word unless we do something about it. It doesn't mean anything unless it translates to something that helps the American worker. Here is a chance to do that. We should bring up the Export-Import Bank reauthorization, a Republican bill, which I

will vote for, and we should do it today.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I just observed that the gentleman from Michigan talked about something that had nothing to do with the defense of this country or getting these judgments paid for American citizens who were victims at the hands of Iran. What he is talking about may be important at a time down the road, but it is not relevant to what we are talking about today.

The bipartisanship we need today is to stand up for the American people and defend the American people and to provide for our servicemen and -women, to make the victims of Iranian tyranny, make them whole. Let's get together and be bipartisan about that, and maybe there will be more opportunities to be bipartisan about these other issues. Let's not confuse what is on the floor today with what people want to talk about down the road. Let's have a bipartisan majority, a big bipartisan majority, a veto-proof majority, pass both of these bills.

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

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

Just to be clear, what we are offering as a previous question, if we win the previous question vote, this bill will then be amended and sent back to include a reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank, so the Democrats are choosing to focus on protecting American jobs rather than partisan games.

Unfortunately, I wish either of these two bills under this rule had something to do with national defense. They don't. One of them diverts money from the overseas contingency fund to a slush fund, which the military says will weaken their ability to prepare for conflict around the world. The other one is another attempt to undermine a deal that prevents Iran from developing nuclear weapons and won't lead to American victims seeing money.

If they were serious about making sure American victims were compensated, we would be talking about putting teeth in the ability of American courts to impound assets and make sure that judgments are paid for victims of state terrorism. Why, instead, are we seeing a deal that relates only to one particular sponsor of state terrorism and deals with a set of tariffs that were put in place to prevent them from developing nuclear weapons? The tariffs that are in place with regard to Iranian sponsorship of state terrorism are still in place and weren't even on the table during the discussions around the nuclear agreement.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HECK), who wants to discuss our amendment that will protect and save American jobs.

Mr. HECK of Washington. Mr. Speaker, one of the previous speakers, the gentleman and my friend from Alabama, said today is not the time, it is not now. I want to remind him that in my effort here to defeat the previous question so that we may take up reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank, the charter for the Bank expired 3 months ago yesterday. You are right, the time isn't now; it was 3 months ago. The fact is, in the ensuing 90 days, there has begun a drumbeat of job loss, concrete and measurable. It is real.

□ 0945

But I want to start over. Today is the first day of the new fiscal year for the Federal Government. We can all give at least some thanks that we avoided a government shutdown. So let's take a fresh start to this thing. Take a step back.

The truth is, when I am home in the district talking with people, an amazing number have a consciousness, an awareness, about the termination of the charter of the Export-Import Bank and its impact. The most frequently asked question I get is, ''How can anybody do that?''

How can anybody do away with an institution that, as my friend, the gentleman from Michigan, Congressman KILDEE, so eloquently said, has in 81 years been almost unanimously reauthorized 16 times by 13 different Presidents and has a track record of reducing the deficit and creating jobs? How can anybody do that?

That is a very challenging question for me to answer. Adherence to ideological purity is just not something somebody can compete with when it stands up against the real-life job loss that we have begun to experience.

So, in my effort—which I just digressed from—of taking a fresh start, I want to say that this Chamber will take up later today the National Defense Authorization Act. It is not unrelated to our effort to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank.

Some people actually support what we call the NDAA because it creates jobs. I frankly don't think that that is a good reason to support the NDAA. One should support or oppose it because of how it reinforces us and helps us fulfill our national security objectives and goals and missions. That is why you support or don't support the NDAA. But some people do support it because of the jobs it helps create.

Well, the truth of the matter is, as we have said so often, the Export-Import Bank also creates jobs. In fact, for the last year for which we have data, it supported 164,000 jobs.

We have an existential threat to those jobs. The fact is, as you all have heard, both General Electric and The Boeing Company have announced layoffs directly attributable to the demise of the Export-Import Bank. People are not concluding negotiations for foreign sales as a consequence of us not having that arrow in our quiver.

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

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

Mr. HECK of Washington. Because the fact of the matter is the Chinese are developing a wide-body aircraft to compete in the international market, code name C919. They think it will be online in 2 years. I think it is more like 10 years.

They will take business away from us. When they do, they will take jobs away from us. And I remind you that China has not one, but four, export credit authorities.

It is also a relevant issue to the subject we take up later today—the NDAA—because the truth of the matter is the Export-Import Bank helps protect the homeland very directly.

There is a lot of talk about rebalancing the Pacific and Asia and the pivot. But the fact of the matter is, in order for us to compete with China, we have to retain the heart of our manufacturing base.

And, frankly, the production of aircraft, in the aggregate, constitutes the largest concentration of engineers and manufacturing capacity within that base.

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

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

Mr. HECK of Washington. This is vital to our national security. Imagine a world 20, 30, 40 years from now in which The Boeing Company no longer exists. I don't want to imagine that future, but think of what it would it would do to our national security circumstance. It would be devastating to our national security. And we are ceding this territory. We are literally ceding this territory.

The irony of this debate and why, again, I find it so challenging to answer the question of why would anybody do this is, truly, if we had never had an Export-Import Bank, we would all be sitting around asking ourselves, ''How do we compete with those other countries, all of whom have export credit authorities?''

We would be devising and standing up an Export-Import Bank and we would say, ''What do we want that to look like?'' First of all, we want it to support American jobs. Secondly, we would say we want it to protect American taxpayers and not have them on the hook. Well, guess what, my friends. We already have—or had—that institution.

The Export-Import Bank in the last generation has transferred billions of dollars to the Treasury and reduced the deficit. The Export-Import Bank has helped create and support millions of jobs.

If you want to compete in the global economy, you need an export credit authority that creates jobs. Please defeat the previous question and take up the issue of reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank.

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

I appreciate the words of my good friend from the State of Washington,

my co-chair for the Singapore Caucus. I know that he feels those words deeply. I agree with him that manufacturing is very important to this country.

Manufacturing aircraft is very important to my district. We just opened up 3 weeks ago an Airbus facility that will make competing aircraft against Boeing. It is good for America to have competition. So I certainly agree with him about that.

It has nothing to do with these two bills. We are here today again, amazingly, talking about the most important thing we do in our government, and we get off on a side issue. It is a side issue today. It may be a big issue tomorrow. But today we are here to talk about these two bills.

My friend from Colorado for the second time has referred to the overseas contingency fund as a slush fund. The President of the United States, President Obama, has asked for that fund every year that he has been President, and we, the Congress, have given him that fund every year that he has been President.

I don't think when the President asked for it or when the Congress gave it to him either side thought we were giving a slush fund. It has been used to protect the people of the United States. Everyone has agreed on that. It only became a slush fund when they didn't want it to be used for a particular purpose. It is not a slush fund.

The purposes for which it will be used are spelled out in detail in the National Defense Authorization Act, an act, as I said, we have gone through in both Houses, through committees and floor debate and this very lengthy process of trying to get to this conference report. This is not a slush fund. This is something that is necessary to defending the country.

So I hope, instead of using terms like that, which, quite frankly, does not reflect very well on President Obama, who asked for it, I think we should use other terms.

And let's get back to the heart of this argument: Are we going to stand together for the defense of this country or are we not? Are we going to stand with Ayatollah or are we going to stand with the people who have been harmed by the Ayatollah.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We haven't even passed an Authorization for Use of Military Force to establish the legal way for who we are supposed to be fighting against. We are still operating under the post-9/11 Authorization for Use of Military Force that names al Qaeda. But if you talk to most military experts, al Qaeda is not the preeminent threat today.

There are a lot of threats in the world, including ISIS, including threats in the Syrian civil war, including threats of the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and this body needs to take up an Authorization for Use of Military Force to ensure that funds that we appropriate for defense are used in a way that Congress is aware of and has oversight of.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me thank my good friend from Colorado for managing this bill.

Let me also thank the majority manager as well for coming to the floor and doing the people's bidding.

Although we disagree in both the purpose of the underlying bill and its effectiveness, there is no doubt that this bill has a good cause. None of us take a backseat to protecting the American people, to seeking compensation, to bringing those who are missing or those who have been captured on false terms back home to American soil. And I stand here to make that commitment.

As well, I recognize that we are going down the trail, Mr. Speaker, that we have done for the Affordable Care Act, one more attempt to undermine a legitimately debated initiative—the Iran nonnuclear proliferation—where Members made a conscious decision, personal decision, on reflecting on the best direction for the American people.

In both the Senate and the procedures set out for this Congress to determine whether this bill, this initiative, will be turned back, it did not work. So it is the law of the land. It is an effort to ensure peace, to reconcile in the area, to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons by Iran. It does not in any way diminish the United States' stance on Iran's terrorist activities. It does none of that.

But this legislation, under the pretense of not allowing the sanctions to be relieved, has a very key component and a number of measures in that initiative. It has a number of measures, another roadblock, before those sanctions will be removed. It is under the pretense of dealing with the individuals who we all want to be brought home.

I don't know how this Congress does not know of the negotiations and the engagement that is going on, but they know that this is legislation that will be vetoed by the President.

I say this in the backdrop of the Madison Papers, No. 51, that says, ''Justice is the end of government.'' It means that we on this floor must do things that really get us in the direction of justice, the end result for the American people.

The reason why I am so disappointed is I listened to my two colleagues speak eloquently about the Export-Import Bank. I can tell them that I was in Africa with the President, and an American stood up and pleaded that he was going to lose 400 jobs if we could not get that Export-Import Bank. I hesitate to think that his contract and his engagement—what we asked him to do—has collapsed.

Mr. Speaker, let me repeat again, ''Justice is the end of government.'' So here we are on a bill that is going to be a copycat of what we are doing with the Affordable Care Act.

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

Mr. POLIS. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I am so disappointed, Mr. Speaker, because here I am on the floor discussing justice and we have yet another disappointing representation of this Congress when a leader of the Congress can speak and say that the Benghazi Committee is only a farce, it was only used to besmirch a public servant.

That is not what Madison wanted for this Nation. They didn't want us to stop the economic engine for the Export-Import Bank. They didn't want us to over and over attack the Affordable Care Act that has been passed and upheld by the Supreme Court. They didn't want us to pass a bill like the underlying deal blocking the Iran sanctions process of the bill that we passed to stop nuclear proliferation.

They didn't want us to do that, Mr. Speaker. They wanted us to have justice established, and they wanted us to do what is right for the American people.

I ask for a vote against the rule and the underlying bill. Justice should be the end of government, not what we are doing here today.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would just note that the gentlewoman from Texas talked about justice. One of the bills that is in this rule is the Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act.

It is about justice for the victims and for the families, victims of state-sponsored terrorism by Iran. This doesn't undo the Iranian deal. If Iran pays the judgments, the deal goes forward. That is the law.

So I would disagree with the gentlewoman with regard to the whole concept of justice. This rule contains a bill that is directly about justice.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

It is remarkable the gentleman from Alabama hasn't been able to find any other Republicans to support these bills and come down and help him argue. I think that that speaks volumes about how these bills are simply not consistent with promoting our national defense and are fiscally irresponsible. They don't please the defense hawks or the budget hawks. So my poor colleague, Mr. BYRNE, is left alone to fend for himself.

Here we are, trying to use the contingency funding as base funding and use it to somehow form the base from which our military must fund its everyday operations. The commanders and generals all agree this is a bad idea, and the gentleman from Alabama has even acknowledged that.

Here we are, discussing a bill that won't result in any of the victims of

state-sponsored terrorism actually seeing their settlement, when there is another path and we certainly could have a deliberative process around a bill that empowers the impoundment and collection of assets from state sponsors of terrorism States here in our country to ensure that victims see their judgments.

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What this bill does is it ties it to an unrelated set of sanctions that were put in place to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons to settlement of these claims when, actually, we should be giving our courts, or if we are concerned about this issue with regard to settlements against sponsors of state terrorism, we should give courts the increased ability to make sure that they can see that restitution and impound assets from sponsors of state terrorism.

Now, Democrats have come down and offered something, if we defeat the previous question, that actually will improve our national defense. It will ensure that we have a strong aerospace industry here in our country.

The gentleman from Alabama has mentioned that Airbus is in his district. Well, Airbus is a company that will do very well if we fail to authorize the Export-Import Bank because it will put American competitors like Boeing and Lockheed at a significant disadvantage.

Now, I hope that we are fighting to ensure that America maintains its aerospace capacity and leadership and we don't cede all of that to European companies like Airbus that are welcome to compete on a level playing field. It is critical for our national security that we have the ability to lead the world as we have in the aerospace industry.

I also want to bring up that we should be discussing an Authorization for Use of Military Force. The National Defense Authorization Act does contain some parameters about how money is used, but it is not a substitute for an Authorization for Use of Military Force, and we should be having that debate.

Who are we even fighting? Who are we even fighting? I don't think that most people believe that it is still al Qaeda from the post-9/11 Authorization for Use of Military Force.

Now, I don't know what to call what we are doing in Iraq and Syria. Maybe it is a war. Maybe it is a security operation. Maybe it is occasional support to some Syrian rebels or support to the Iraqi Government or on-and-off commitment to the Kurds. But whatever it is, I don't think it is what Congress voted for in 2001 or 2003, before I was here, before Mr. BYRNE was here, before the vast majority of this body that currently serves was even here.

Those authorizations should be in the history books, not being invoked as legal justification for conducting operations in a world, in 2015, which is vastly different than the world of 2001 and 2003. And who knows how much longer or how many different wars or security operations will continue to be administered if Congress doesn't finally specify and do our job with regard to an Authorization for Use of Military Force.

Now, that is a hard debate. It is a hard issue. It is not a partisan debate. There are Democrats and Republicans on all sides; and many Members, when we have that debate, will make sure that we have the very best information to act on.

But since we authorized military force against al Qaeda and ''affiliated'' groups in 2001, there have been over 300 new Members of Congress elected, so the vast majority of this body, including myself and Mr. BYRNE, including Mr. HECK, including Mr. KILDEE—I believe, of all of us. I believe Ms. JACKSON LEE was the only one who was actually here when we even had that discussion. The rest of us talking about defense and NDAA didn't even play any role in choosing what the target and what our focus of our national security operations are.

The American people deserve and demand this debate. They don't want yet another fight with Congresspeople playing budget tricks around defense. They want to know what our Nation's plan is for the operations that have been ongoing. They want to see Congress take its constitutional responsibilities for actions in the world.

And whether any one of us ultimately votes in favor or against an Authorization for Use of Military Force, we all, I hope, are for the debate, and we should join in demanding one.

On the conference report, Madam Speaker, this plan will not work, will not become law. The President will veto it. The generals oppose it. The budget hawks oppose it. No one even came down to join Mr. BYRNE in arguing for it. It is a terrible plan. It will hurt our national defense. We need to defeat it.

The Iran bill tries to get at a legitimate issue in completely the wrong way. It is not a partisan issue that we want to see restitution for victims of state terrorism. Let's get into that act and look at the enforcement mechanisms rather than try to use these victims as yet another attempt to go after the deal that prevents Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

I think it is clear from our Rules Committee debate that everyone supports efforts for American victims of terrorism to pursue compensation. The Iran nuclear agreement has nothing to do with that, and it certainly doesn't prevent that from happening.

No matter what country, whether it is Iran or other sponsors of state terrorism, we all remain committed to this process of seeing justice. Undermining the ability to enforce a nuclear agreement is not the proper way or even a relevant way to achieve this goal.

The reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank is ready to go. If we defeat the previous question, we will bring it to the floor. We have the votes in the House. I hope my colleague, Mr. BYRNE from Alabama, will join us in that vote if we can defeat the previous question. We have the votes in the Senate, the President. We can stop this unnecessary loss of jobs every single day in districts across our country solely due to our inability to act.

Hopefully, we can move to take up highway authorization, ESEA, immigration reform, raising the minimum wage. These are some of the issues that I hear from my constituents about every day that we need to act on. So rather than waste time, waste money, hurt our national defense, let's get to work and accomplish something.

I urge my colleagues to defeat the previous question and defeat the rule.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I appreciate Mr. POLIS being concerned that I am here by myself. I think it has been a good debate, and I know I have the full support of my colleagues behind me, and there will be a number of them here to debate the bill when it comes up after we adopt this rule.

It is extremely important that we understand what we are about in these two bills. It is not about the Export-Import Bank. It is not about immigration. It is not about any of the other issues that he brought up. It is about defending the American people and making victims of Iran terrorism whole. That is what it is about.

Now, I have seen the public opinion polls on national security. National security has rocketed up to be the number one issue for the people of America. I didn't need to see those polls. I have done 18 townhall meetings in the last several weeks in my district, and I have looked my constituents in the eyes and heard their concerns.

They don't bring up the Export-Import Bank to me. They bring up the fact that they are worried about what is happening to our country's standing abroad. They are worried about what is going on with these brutal terrorists in the Middle East. They are worried about the fact that we have just given Iran a nuclear weapon. They are worried about whether we are going to have an adequate defense to continue to protect them, as we have for decades now, in a bipartisan fashion. That is what they are worried about, and that is what they expect us to come here and do something about.

These two bills do something very important. The National Defense Authorization Act, for 53 years, has been passed in a bipartisan fashion, which has said to the world, which has said to our allies, which has said to our enemies, which has said to the men and women in uniform in the United States of America, we stand as one.

Now this President and some—not all of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—some of my colleagues on

the other side of the aisle are going to break that, after five decades, at this critical time. I find that hard to believe, but I accept the fact that it is nonetheless true.

I would plead with them to reconsider that. I would plead with the President, who is our Commander in Chief, not to veto this bill. This is critically important at a critically important time.

On the Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act, you know, we don't get very many opportunities where we in this body can do something that will directly bring some measure of compensation to people, citizens of the United States, who have been victimized by the largest state sponsor of terrorism in the world. We don't get very many opportunities like that, and we have it right now this with this bill. We have the opportunity to make them whole, or come close to making them whole.

They have got judgments from courts, valid judgments; and with the passage of this bill, which should truly be a bipartisan thing, and if the President signs it, with passage of this bill, we could give it to them. What a wonderful thing we could give to them after all the suffering they have been through. We would deny them that because we want to stand with the Ayatollah, because we think Iran is more important than they are?

If we think for one second that Iran is going to take this money that is going to be released and use it for good and peaceful purposes, we are excessively naive. They are going to take this money, based upon what they have done in the past and what they are doing today, and they will use it to fund Hezbollah, Hamas, the Houthis, and other terrorist groups around the Middle East and perhaps around the world not just against other people outside the United States, against people in the United States. So by passing that bill, we deny them tens of billions of dollars. They won't be able to use it for that.

I wish that, for once, we could come into this room, on something of this magnitude and stand shoulder to shoulder, not as Democrats, not as Republicans, but as Americans, which we have done for decades. It saddens me that the President and some of the members of his own party in this House would not do that.

So I beg my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to reconsider, and I beg the President of the United States to reconsider. There has never been a more important time for us to stand together for the defense of this country and for the men and women in uniform.

The material previously referred to by Mr. POLIS is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 449 OFFERED BY MR. POLIS OF COLORADO

At the end of the resolution, add the following new sections:

SEC. 4. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3611) to reauthorize and reform the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 5. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 3611.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (VI, 308–311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as "a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge." To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that "the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition" in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R–Illinois) said: "The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition."

The Republican majority may say "the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever." But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: "Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule. . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment."

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled "Amending Special Rules" states: "a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate." (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: "Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon."

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN). The question is on ordering the previous question.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of adoption of the resolution.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 237, nays 180, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 529]

YEAS—237

Abraham	Comstock	Goodlatte
Aderholt	Conaway	Gosar
Allen	Cook	Gowdy
Amash	Costello (PA)	Granger
Amodei	Cramer	Graves (GA)
Babin	Crawford	Graves (LA)
Barletta	Crenshaw	Graves (MO)
Barr	Curbelo (FL)	Griffith
Barton	Davis, Rodney	Grothman
Benishek	Denham	Guinta
Bilirakis	Dent	Guthrie
Bishop (MI)	DeSantis	Hanna
Bishop (UT)	DesJarlais	Hardy
Black	Diaz-Balart	Harper
Blackburn	Dold	Harris
Blum	Donovan	Hartzler
Bost	Duffy	Heck (NV)
Boustany	Duncan (SC)	Hensarling
Brat	Duncan (TN)	Herrera Beutler
Bridenstine	Ellmers (NC)	Hice, Jody B.
Brooks (IN)	Emmer (MN)	Hill
Buchanan	Farenthold	Holding
Buck	Fincher	Huelskamp
Bucshon	Fitzpatrick	Huizenga (MI)
Burgess	Fleischmann	Hultgren
Byrne	Fleming	Hunter
Calvert	Flores	Hurd (TX)
Carter (GA)	Forbes	Hurt (VA)
Carter (TX)	Fortenberry	Issa
Chabot	Foxx	Jenkins (KS)
Chaffetz	Franks (AZ)	Jenkins (WV)
Clawson (FL)	Frelinghuysen	Johnson (OH)
Coffman	Garrett	Johnson, Sam
Cole	Gibbs	Jolly
Collins (GA)	Gibson	Jones
Collins (NY)	Gohmert	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
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
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
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
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—180

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
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
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
Hahn
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
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Pelosi
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
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

NOT VOTING—17

Bishop (GA)
Brady (TX)
Brooks (AL)
Brown (FL)
Conyers
Culberson
Gutiérrez
Hudson
Kelly (IL)
Neal
Nunes
Payne
Perlmutter
Pompeo
Reichert
Whitfield
Yoho

□ 1039

Messrs. CONNOLLY and HOYER changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

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

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 529, had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

Stated against:

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, earlier today, I was unavoidably detained and was not able to vote on the Motion Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule for H.R. 3457, rollcall vote 529. Had I been able to vote, I would have voted "nay."

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.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 241, noes 181, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 530]

AYES—241

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
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
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
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vela
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOES—181

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
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
Grijalva
Hahn
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
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Massie
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
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
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—12

Brady (TX)
Brown (FL)
Culberson
Gutiérrez
Hudson
Kelly (IL)
Neal
Perlmutter
Pompeo
Reichert
Whitfield
Yoho

□ 1049

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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2617. An act to amend the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 to postpone a scheduled increase in the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 2078. An act to reauthorize the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, and for other purposes.

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF IRANIAN TERRORISM ACT

Mr. ROYCE. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 449, I call up 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, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 449, the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in House Report 114–273, is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 3457

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 ''Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act''.

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON LIFTING OF SANCTIONS ON IRAN PENDING PAYMENT OF CERTAIN JUDGMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the President may not take any of the actions described in subsection (b) until the President has certified to the Congress that the Government of Iran has paid each judgment against Iran that is described in subsection (c).

(b) ACTIONS DESCRIBED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The actions described in this subsection are the following:

(A) To waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of sanctions described in paragraph (2) or refrain from applying any such sanctions.

(B) To remove a foreign person listed in Attachment 3 or Attachment 4 to Annex II of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action from the list of specially designated nationals and blocked persons maintained by the Office of Foreign Asset Control of the Department of the Treasury.

(2) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—The sanctions described in this paragraph are—

(A) the sanctions described in sections 4 through 7.9 of Annex II of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action; and

(B) the sanctions described in any other agreement related to the nuclear program of Iran that includes the United States, commits the United States to take action, or pursuant to which the United States commits or otherwise agrees to take action, regardless of the form it takes, whether a political commitment or otherwise, and regardless of whether it is legally binding or not.

(c) JUDGMENTS.—A judgment is a judgment described in this subsection if it is a final judgment entered by the courts of the United States or of the States—

(1) that relates to a claim—

(A) that was brought against Iran or its political subdivisions, agencies, or instrumentalities (regardless of whether the claim was also brought, or the resulting judgment was also entered, against another defendant); and

(B) for which the court determined that Iran (or its political subdivisions, agencies, or instrumentalities, as the case may be) was not immune from the jurisdiction of the courts of the United States or of the States under section 1605A, or section 1605(a)(7) (as such section was in effect on January 27, 2008), of title 28, United States Code; and

(2) that was entered during the period beginning on April 24, 1996, and ending on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF ACTION DESCRIBED.—In this section, the term ''Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action'' means the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, agreed to at Vienna on July 14, 2015, by Iran and by the People's Republic of China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and all implementing materials and agreements related to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to submit extraneous materials on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in strong support of this bill. This is the Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act.

I appreciate the work of the bill's author, Mr. MEEHAN of Pennsylvania. He has worked very hard on this. There are about 100 cosponsors in this House.

On the Foreign Affairs Committee, we have made Iran the central focus of our work. As a matter of fact, we have had over 30 hearings and briefings so far on Iran and on the dangerous nuclear agreement that was struck with this state sponsor of terrorism.

Madam Speaker, since coming to power in the late 1970s—well, 1979—the Iranian regime has funded terrorist groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas and directed their operations.

Now, the way they do that is they have a special force. It is called the Quds Force. It is headed up by General Soleimani. He is in charge of assassinations outside the country, assassinations of U.S. targets, by the way, besides other targets.

Recently you will have heard of General Soleimani because—by the way, European sanctions are going to be lifted on him under this agreement, but you will have read or heard that he traveled—he traveled—to Moscow to meet with Putin. As a result of those meetings, you will notice the discussions about weapons coming from Russia into Syria into the hands of the Quds Forces.

So we look at what he has done and what U.S. courts have done as a result. There have been 80 separate attacks on U.S. installations and U.S. individuals. We remember the 1983 bombing of the U.S. marine barracks in Beirut, the 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia. Those two attacks killed 260 American servicemen and left their widows and left children to be raised by one parent.

There are judgments that have been rendered that direct payment from Iran to these families, to the victims' families. Unfortunately, under the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act, even though this reward has been given, even though U.S. victims of state-sponsored terrorism got their day in court, and even though they have brought the suits in U.S. courts and had the right to collect these damages, Iran has not as of yet paid.

U.S. courts have held Iran liable for the attacks carried out by its terrorist proxies when those attacks were orchestrated and paid for by the Iranian regime. The judgments that remain outstanding are $43.5 billion in unpaid damages for those 80 cases over the last decade and a half.

In one case, $9 billion was awarded to the victims of the bombing of the marine barracks in 1983. Again, the Government of Iran was found responsible through lawful proceedings in a U.S. court. That judgment remains unpaid.

Madam Speaker, the Obama administration during its negotiations with Iran did not seek for Iran to compensate the families of those whose

lives were taken by Iranian terrorism despite these U.S. court judgments. That is very much in contrast with our past procedure.

In the case of Libya, for example, a decade ago, when we reached that agreement with Libya, the U.S. secured the right or the demand that the Qadhafi regime compensate the victims of the attacks, such as the bombing of Pan Am 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. That was $2.5 billion. That was done. That is our procedure.

Iran will soon obtain $100 billion, approximately, in unfrozen assets as well as immeasurable economic and financial benefits by escaping the sanctions regime and reintegrating into the global economy. Iran will get sanctions lifted and American victims will still be out in the cold. That is not right.

This legislation would address that injustice. It is straightforward. It would say that, of the $100 billion and some in sanctions relief, those judgments will be paid out of that. That $43 billion will be paid to the survivors of those families of those 80 attacks orchestrated, paid for, by Iran.

I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, September 30, 2015.

Hon. EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing with respect to H.R. 3457, the ''Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act,'' which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

H.R. 3457 involves issues that fall within Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means. As a result of your having consulted with the Committee and in order to expedite the House's consideration of H.R. 3457, the Committee on Ways and Means will not assert its jurisdictional claim over this bill by seeking a sequential referral. However, this is conditional on our mutual understanding and agreement that doing so will in no way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation.

I would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 3457, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration of H.R. 3457.

Sincerely,

PAUL D. RYAN,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, September 30, 2015.

Hon. PAUL RYAN,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN RYAN: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs on H.R. 3457, the Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act, which involves issues within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means, and for agreeing to forgo a sequential referral request so that it may proceed expeditiously to the Floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 3457 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with the Committee on Ways and Means as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, September 28, 2015.

Hon. ED ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: I am writing with respect to H.R. 3457, the ''Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act,'' which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

H.R. 3457 involves issues that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary. As a result of your having consulted with the Committee and in order to expedite the House's consideration of H.R. 3457, the Committee on the Judiciary will not assert is jurisdictional claim over this bill by seeking a sequential referral. However, this is conditional on our mutual understanding and agreement that doing so will in no way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary with respect to the appointment of conferees or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation.

I would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 3457, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration of H.R. 3457.

Sincerely,

BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, September 28, 2015.

Hon. BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs on H.R. 3457, the Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act, which involves issues within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, and for agreeing to forgo a sequential referral request so that it may proceed expeditiously to the Floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 3457 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with the Committee on the Judiciary as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

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

I rise in opposition to the bill.

Let me start by acknowledging my friend, Chairman ROYCE. The Committee on Foreign Affairs is the most bipartisan committee in Congress. We are collaborative, we are productive, and we have built a record advancing bipartisan legislation that promotes American interests abroad and keeps the American people safe. I want to state that Chairman ROYCE's leadership is to thank for much of our committee's good work.

So I am disappointed that the House Republican leadership decided to ignore regular order on this bill. They have rushed it to the floor without any consideration by the Foreign Affairs Committee. As has been pointed out, we have had 30 hearings. We know a little bit about Iran on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

So rushing it to the floor without any consideration by the Foreign Affairs Committee is wrong. I think it is a shame. Because I think, left to our own volition, we could have sent forward a bill that could make a difference for the victims of Iranian-sponsored terrorism. Iranian-sponsored terrorism is there, it is palpable, and we should do something to try to help the victims.

But this bill, on the other hand, would not do that. Let me explain why. American courts have awarded roughly $46 billion to about 1,300 victims and their families. We all want justice for these families. We all want to hold Iran accountable for its act of terrorism against Americans. Iran should pay these claims. But this bill does nothing for the victims of Iranian terror.

Here is the problem. Let's assume for argument that Iran's leaders did change course and decide to pay the claims. This bill would actually make it more difficult for Iran to pay these judgments.

Iran owes American claimants $46 billion, but Iran has access to $20 billion of its cash reserves, not $46 billion. The rest—$95 billion—is frozen in bank accounts in Europe and Asia.

On top of that, Iran's oil revenues are frozen. When Iran sells oil, the payments are kept frozen under the threat of American sanctions, which I support. Iran can access these funds only for certain purposes. Paying court judgments is not one of them. Current U.S. sanctions don't allow it.

□ 1100

And under this bill, all U.S. sanctions are kept in effect, absolutely no changes allowed, until Iran pays the full $46 billion.

So where would Iran get the money to pay the American claims?

The bill says: Iran, pay the claims, but you can't have any of the funds to pay them. So it is a catch-22. And who does it hurt? Not Iran. It hurts the victims. Not a single claim would be paid under this bill. So, in my opinion, this bill offers nothing but false hope.

Now, I have heard some Members say, well, we can pay the claims by

seizing Iran's frozen assets, but that is really not the case. Virtually all of Iran's funds frozen under our sanctions are overseas, not in the U.S. Though they are frozen by U.S. sanctions, they are beyond the jurisdiction of our courts to seize them.

Another false promise: virtually all of Iran's assets will stay overseas. Under this bill, they would be required to be kept overseas because all U.S. sanctions would be kept in effect by law with no change allowed.

So let's be honest. This bill is not really about helping these victims. It is about exploiting their plight and their tragedy to make a political splash.

Look, everyone here knows I am no fan of the Iran nuclear agreement. I voted against it, but the other side won. Whether you are for or against the deal, it is time to be realistic about what happens next.

In my opinion, there were two potential courses. The first is to do everything we can to strengthen enforcement of the agreement and hold Iran to its commitments. We should double down on our support for friends and allies in the region. We should crack down on Iran's support for terrorist organizations. We should push leaders in Tehran to release detained Americans and improve its abysmal record on human rights. That is the course I hope we will take. I will soon introduce legislation to pursue those aims, and I will work with members of both parties to get these measures to the President's desk.

The other course would be doing to the Iran agreement what leaders on the other side have tried to do to the Affordable Care Act, and that is what I am afraid of here: vote after vote after vote after vote, whether we like it or not, on an issue that has already been voted on by this Chamber many, many times. I don't want the dispute on Iran to turn into the Affordable Care Act where we try to kill it 60 different ways.

We should not be using this for political purposes. We should be passing legislation, which I know we can get out of the Foreign Affairs Committee in a collaborative way, that would really do something to help these victims, that would really do something to hold Iran accountable for all its reprehensible acts. So I hope that what we are doing today is not the path we are going down not only now, but in the future with other things.

There was a measure in the Senate that was very similar to this, which tried to hold Iran to certain things and say that the funds couldn't be released unless Iran did this or did that. We could do this another 60 times; it would be counterproductive. Let's put our heads together. Let's figure out a way that we can continue to hold Iran accountable, and let's move on that way.

So I hope we can move past this bill and start working on measures to ensure that the Iran agreement is implemented as strongly and stringently as possible. I hope we can get back to our regular practice in the Foreign Affairs Committee of which we have been so proud and focus on making policy that leaves politics at the water's edge.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. The administration is arguing, Mr. Speaker, that although the Iranian regime has access to over $20 billion and that this judgment is $43 billion, there isn't enough money there to make payment. In addition to the 20-some billion, Iran is in the process right now of negotiation and paying and supporting in transfers to other regimes.

For example, a report out this week says Iran is purchasing $21 billion of airplanes and satellites from Russia. That is $21 billion. Iran somehow has the money to do that, but it doesn't have the money for this claim.

A report out about a month ago says that Iran's annual support for Hezbollah is over $100 million per year. Somehow they have got the spending cash for that.

It is providing the Syrian regime, one estimate of one of the think tanks here in town is that they have provided them a little over $10 billion a year.

So Iran somehow has the discretionary money for these other purposes, but not for the purpose of the judgments won in U.S. court for over 1,000 victims or family members of the victims of their attacks.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. MEEHAN for this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the Iranian ayatollah has preached and practiced ''Death to America'' since the 1970s.

Iran is a state sponsor of terrorism. Iran has been sued in Federal courts by the families of the murdered victims. Iran is guilty of the murder of 421 Americans in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1983. Iran is guilty of the murder of 19 servicemembers and injuring 372 others in Saudi Arabia in 1996. Iran is guilty of murdering a thousand other Americans, including some in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Federal courts have awarded the victim and families over $40 billion for these crimes, but Iran will not pay. It laughs at the death of the innocent it has murdered. It laughs at American justice.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is about time for the long arm of American justice to hold Iran accountable for its sins—make them pay.

I don't understand why some appeasers are more concerned about the murderous Iranian regime than they are about justice, justice for the victims that were murdered by this regime.

Let the ayatollah know he cannot get a diplomatic pass or sanctions relief until he pays for his crimes. The ayatollah has sown the seeds of murder, and now it is time for Iran to reap the consequences of their crimes.

It seems to me that the voices of the murdered cry out for us to do something for justice, justice for them that has been too long waiting. This bill, in my opinion, will do it.

It is about time we have justice because justice is what we are supposed to do in this country.

And that is just the way it is.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to vote ''no'' on this particular bill.

You know, once we were able to secure this negotiation and once the deal was put in place, the focus of our attention should shift to making sure that Iran lives up to its commitments, and we should use this prior negotiation as a template for negotiating other issues, including the captives, including the interests of these victims talked about here today.

What this bill does is it handcuffs the President and says that the President doesn't have any discretion to do his end of this bargain, to exercise his discretion to forward and help America and the P5+1 live up to our end of the bargain. That is the wrong way to go.

So I can credit the authors of this bill with having good intentions, but I think that the method that they are going about it is just wrong.

Let's use the template that has been developed through the negotiation process to go back and say, ''Okay, now we got other things we want to talk to you about,'' rather than pass legislation on this floor that will do nothing other than hamstring the President. It is the wrong way to do it. It is a mistake, and it should be voted down.

Mr. ROYCE. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, in 1983, 241 American servicemen in Beirut were killed and another 60 injured by a car bomb.

One of the Marines murdered was my constituent, Paul Innocenzi III, who lived with his young family in my hometown of Hamilton. In my second term as Congressman, I joined mourners at his funeral. I will never forget the agony and the sorrow of his family. Iranian terrorism killed Paul Innocenzi and, over the decades, has killed or maimed thousands of other Americans.

A Federal court, Mr. Speaker, found that the 1983 bombing was ''beyond question'' perpetrated by ''Hezbollah and its agent who received massive material and technical support from the Iranian Government.'' Later a three-judge Federal appeals court panel approved $1.75 billion in judgment against Iran for the 1983 bombing and some other Iranian acts of terror.

Today Iran is poised to get billions of dollars through so-called sanctions relief for an egregiously flawed comprehensive plan of action, money that will procure for Iran a significantly larger arsenal of sophisticated weapons

and an enhanced capability to terrorize, murder, and destabilize.

The chairman talked about Iran's $21 billion weapons purchase from Russia. Billions more to Iran will exponentially increase weapons buys. The Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act authored by PAT MEEHAN says not so fast.

The President has said he will veto this bill. That is wrong, Mr. Speaker. That is uncaring, it is unacceptable, it is unconscionable. And does a grave disservice to American victims of Iranian terrorism.

Support court-ordered victim payments by the terrorist State of Iran. Fundamental justice demands that this bill become law.

Mr. Speaker, what was previously unacceptable—an Iranian nuclear state—is now inevitable under the terms and conditions of what is officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Tragically, the deal is riddled with serious flaws, gaps, and huge concessions to Iran. Taken as a whole, this egregiously flawed deal poses an existential threat to Israel, our allies in the region—and poses significant risks to the United States.

Today Iran is poised to get billions of dollars through so-called sanctions relief—money that will procure for Iran a significantly larger arsenal of sophisticated weapons and an enhanced capability to terrorize, murder and destabilize.

The Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act (H.R. 3457) authored by Pat Meehan says not so fast.

The bill prohibits the President from waiving sanctions until Iran pays its more than $44.5 billion in court ordered damages to thousands of victims and survivors of Iranian terror attacks.

To date, the U.S. Department of State has refused to release funds ordered by the courts to victims and surviving families in more than 80 cases despite clear authority to do so under the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act (FSIA).

In 1983, 241 American servicemen in Beirut were killed and another 60 injured by a car bomb. One of the Marines murdered was my constituent WO1 Paul Innocenzi III who lived with his young family in my hometown of Hamilton. In my second term as congressman, I joined mourners at his funeral. I will never forget the agony and sorrow of his family. Iranian terrorism killed Paul Innocenzi and over the decades, has killed or maimed thousands of other Americans.

A federal district court found that the 1983 bombing was ''beyond question'' perpetrated by ''Hezbollah and its agents (who) received massive material and technical support from the Iranian government''. Later a three judge federal appeals court panel approved a $1.75 billion judgement against Iran for the 1983 bombing and other Iranian acts of terror.

The President has said he will veto this bill. That's wrong. That's uncaring, unacceptable, and unconscionable. Support court-ordered victim payments by the terror state of Iran. Fundamental justice demands that this bill becomes law.

Mr. ENGEL. I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY), our colleague on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from New York (Mr. ENGEL) for his leadership on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

This bill prohibits any waivers, reductions, or other relief from U.S. sanctions on Iran until Iran pays all court-ordered damage claims to U.S. victims. Those claims total about $46 billion.

This bill would prevent the U.S. from implementing its commitments under the Iran deal, which is really what my friends on the other side are trying to do. Not being able to win directly, let's get at it indirectly and let's cover it with the patina of respectability. But the real issue is, cynically, how we use the plight of U.S. victims for another partisan shot.

We all want to help American victims of Iran's terrorism and lack of justice, but this is not the way to help them. It would have the opposite effect by reducing the chance that any claims, in fact, would be paid because, by freezing assets, Iran wouldn't have the wherewithal to do what this bill says it should do before sanctions are lifted.

Think about this: Iran owes $46 billion in U.S. claims, but it doesn't have the money right now, even if it wanted to pay. Iran only has access to about $20 billion of its own reserves.

Realistically, the only funds that could be used are the frozen funds under U.S. sanctions held in banks around the world. Under this bill, the frozen funds couldn't be used to pay the claims, and all the money remains frozen until Iran pays the claims. It is a catch-22 if there ever was one. It couldn't sell any oil to use to free up cash because those funds, too, would be frozen.

Another clue about what is really behind this bill is that all of the 76 sponsors are my friends on the other side of the aisle, not a single Democrat.

Regardless of one's position on the Iran deal, a deal I probably supported because it keeps Iran from becoming a nuclear state, opposing this cynical bill is, in fact, the right vote if you care about the victims of Iranian injustice and terrorism.

Mr. ROYCE. I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEEHAN), a member of the Committee on Ways and Means and author of this bill.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, $21 billion for Russian jets, but not a penny for the victims of their own acts of terror. That is what my colleagues are trying to say? In fact, the President can negotiate it. Let him reach an installment plan, but let's make sure that these dollars are paid.

Look, this is a fundamental question: Should Iran receive relief from the U.S. sanctions before it pays the victims of terrorism the $43 billion that U.S. courts say these victims are owed?

When we say ''terrorism,'' what are we talking about? We are talking about Iranian-backed assassinations, bombings, and attacks across time zones, from Paris to Jerusalem, to New York, to Beirut, to East Africa, to Buenos Aires.

I say not one cent.

These victims are United States citizens. They are wives, brothers and sisters, children who hail from all across the Nation, and they were killed in hijackings and suicide attacks and bombings of buses and planes and buildings and embassies and shopping malls and pizza parlors.

□ 1115

In fact, I met with one of those victims this morning and yesterday, the widow of Kenneth Welch and his child. They are here in Washington today. They have been waiting 30 years for the opportunity to see this issue addressed.

My friends, by voting against this legislation, you are saying that Iran and the perpetrators of these atrocities deserve U.S. sanctions relief before the victims deserve the court-ordered compensation. Let me say it again. By voting ''no,'' you are putting the interests of Iran's terror machine before the American victims of that terror. I say not 1 cent.

To those who say Iran can't afford to pay these damages, let me remind you of a few facts. Iran has a yearly gross domestic product in excess of $1.3 trillion, and they just spent $21 billion on Russian jets. The facts show that Iran has the money and will have much more if the sanctions are lifted, money that our own administration freely admits will go to finance even more terror.

I sat yesterday with Ken Stethem, the brother of Robert Stethem, the United States Navy diver who was executed on Beirut Flight 847. His brother Ken, himself a retired Navy SEAL, said to me yesterday, ''If the President doesn't take this opportunity and Congress doesn't take the opportunity to hold Iran accountable for their terrorist acts now, I have to ask them when will they. Thirty years for one family, more than 15 for another. When will they?''

He is talking to us. Let's answer him. Let's today stand up for the standards of U.S. Navy Petty Officer Robert Stethem. Let's today vote as one House to say we will put Robert Stethem and the many victims of Iran's terrorism before—before—the criminals who conspired to kill them.

Until they pay these victims what they are owed, let's say no to Iran, not 1 cent.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy in permitting me to speak on this issue. I listened to the impassioned pleas from my friends on the other side of the aisle about horrific acts of the thugs who run Iran. Nobody disputes that, and nothing before us would take away the sanctions that we have against their terrorist activity.

We are all committed to justice for those victims, but bear in mind what this legislation seeks to do is to unwind another critical objective of the United States, of our allies, to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran.

That agreement was a signal achievement of diplomacy not just of the Obama administration, but of Russia, China, Germany, France, Great Britain, working with us to secure the strongest agreement that we have seen to contain these thugs' nuclear ambitions. The world is united with us to restrain a nuclear Iran.

Now, we have had testimony from our partners that, if the United States walks away from that agreement, we are on our own. They are not going to continue to enforce nuclear sanctions against Iran, and, ultimately, Iran will get its money and a free hand to develop nuclear weapons unencumbered by the allies that we have assembled and the pressure that we have put on them.

Now, my friends, Mr. ENGEL and Mr. CONNOLLY, are correct. The construct here is very difficult, even if this were to be approved, to actually work out on paper. But take it a step further. These elements have been in place for years and have not resulted in any movement for the victims.

We have had what the rest of the world thinks is a significant breakthrough with Iran. We have got an area of cooperation, and the world is united with us to keep the pressure on them. I would suggest, rather than throwing this agreement in the trash can and allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons and make them stronger—and, ultimately, they will get their money because India and China are going to go ahead and start buying oil from Iran again as the sanctions collapse. It will be the United States against the world again.

We couldn't even sanction itty-bitty Cuba to change their regime. It takes multinational efforts to be able to make changes. This agreement is an important first step, and I would suggest it gives us an opportunity to continue putting pressure on Iran to be able to obtain the justice that we all want for those victims.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN), a member of the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. MEEHAN and Mr. ROYCE for their leadership. I oppose the Iranian deal for many reasons. Among the reasons is the over $100 billion windfall Iran will receive in unfrozen assets and sanctions relief.

The administration has acknowledged that some of this money will be certainly distributed to the Iranian military, its global terrorist network, and to the Quds Force, an organization with American blood on its hands.

We remember the marines and sailors killed in the bombing of the barracks in Beirut in 1983 and civilians in that embassy in Beirut, the airmen who died in Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1995. And what about the victims of the Iranian-financed attacks, like Alisa Flatow of West Orange, New Jersey, who died in a bus bombing in Gaza in 1995 and Sara Duker of Teaneck, New Jersey, who was murdered on a bus in Jerusalem in 1996? Who speaks for them, for those innocents and their families? This bill does.

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

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD), a member of the Committee on Homeland Security.

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation. Justice is a powerful word. For those who have been wronged, justice can bring peace and closure. For those guilty of harming the innocent, justice is absolutely necessary to ensure the authority of our laws. Without justice, truth becomes irrelevant.

If America is going to continue to be the greatest nation in the world, it is imperative that we pursue justice. But the Iran nuclear deal does the exact opposite. It rewards lawlessness and corruption. It tells Iran that they can be unjust to our own citizens and the current administration will allow them to get away with it.

Iran is responsible for sponsoring terrorism that has led to the death of thousands of Americans. When the families of these Americans sought justice in the court, Iran was found guilty and ordered to make reparations. The family of Cyrus Elahi from Dallas, Texas, was awarded more than $300 million after Cyrus was assassinated for criticizing the Iranian Government.

Judgments like this have added up to billions of dollars that Iran owes the families of American victims. But is this administration forcing Iran to pay? Are they demanding justice for Americans like Cyrus? No. Instead, this administration is handing over an estimated $100 billion to Iran. That is not justice. That is outrageous.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP).

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, this bill would respond to one of many significant problems with President Obama's disastrous Iran deal, which gives Iran sanctions relief without requiring it to make reparations for the crimes it has committed against Americans.

Anne Dammerell, who was born in Cincinnati near my district, was working at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut in 1983. A bomb exploded while she was in the embassy cafeteria, breaking 19 of her bones. She received a judgment against Iran for $6.8 million because of the physical and mental suffering she endured. Anne is one tragic story among many.

Over the past 15 years, U.S. courts have handed down 80 judgments against Iran, adding up to more than $43.5 billion in unpaid damages. Iran refuses to pay. Yet, the President's nuclear agreement provides Iran with $150 billion in sanctions relief. Those that have destroyed innocent American lives, Iranian terrorists, are being chosen over the American victims themselves.

This bill would prohibit the President from removing any sanctions in place against Iran until the President has certified to Congress that Iran has paid each Federal court judgment.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEEHAN) for introducing this good bill. It is a compassionate bill. It is a bill that tells victims of terrorism that they are not forgotten.

I chair the task force in the House Committee on Financial Services to investigate terrorism finance, and we had a hearing specifically on the joint plan of action, the so-called P5+1. That was back in July.

There was an attorney who testified at the hearing about the $43 billion in judgments and how this deal, then not approved yet, was likely going to sidestep the ability of victims who did all the right things through the legal process, who hired lawyers, who went to court, who got the judgments, legitimate judgments, how these judgments would not be paid.

On July 29, I wrote a letter to Secretary Lew—Secretary of the Treasury—and Secretary Kerry of the State Department asking whether or not they had addressed the issue as part of the negotiations. That was July 29. I have yet to receive a response from the Treasury Department, from the Department of State, in any way.

Mr. Speaker, the deafening silence of this administration has led me to believe that they completely overlooked the victims of terrorism.

What we are going to do is we are going to give the money to the Islamic Republic of Iran and not to American victims, and that is wrong. This bill is right. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, as the chair of the bipartisan Task Force to Investigate Terrorism Financing, I analyzed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) put forward by this Administration at length.

After numerous hearings and research, I opposed the deal for a number of reasons—not the least of which is because of its potential impact on terrorism financing by Iran. At hearing after hearing, members heard directly from foreign policy experts about this threat and the danger of the influx of cash provided by this agreement finding its way to terrorist organizations threatening Iran's neighboring states as well as those planning strikes in the United States.

At a hearing specifically on this deal and its impact on Tehran's state sponsorship of terror, one witness, a practicing attorney, testified to

the fact that American citizens and families who were victims of Iranian sponsored terrorist attacks—including families in my district in Pennsylvania—are owed over $43 billion in compensation as awarded by United States.

Following the Task Force's fourth hearing I wrote this letter to both Secretaries John Kerry and Jack Lew asking if this nuclear deal would strip victims of Iranian terrorism the right to this compensation.

That was July 29. I have yet to receive any sort of response from either the Treasury or State departments. The deafening silence from the Administration has led me to believe they completely overlooked these families when they rushed to finalize this bad deal with Iran.

Mr. Speaker, it is unconscionable to think that—as a nation—we would allow the world's largest state sponsor of terror access to billions of dollars in sanctions relief and unfreezing of held assets while victims of Iranian terrorism are left with nothing.

These victims are Americans from all around the country—from my home and yours. They've lost loved ones and suffered irreparable damages because of Iran's long, sordid history with terrorism. By failing to take this situation into account throughout the negotiation process, the administration has failed these victims and their families.

The Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act we are considering today rights that wrong. It says simply: Not one cent in sanctions relief for Iran until these families are payed. That's not a partisan demand—that's common sense.

I strongly support this legislation and ask for my colleagues to join me in standing up for our constituents impacted by Iranian terror and pass this bill in the bipartisan fashion it deserves.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING), a member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, Iran is shortly set to receive over $100 billion when President Obama uses his pen to lift our sanctions against the world's largest sponsor of terrorism. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, Iran owes U.S. victims of terror it sponsored and supported $43.5 billion.

One of these victims was Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Wagner of Columbia, North Carolina. He was serving in the American Embassy in Beirut in 1984 when a car bomb filled with explosives paid for by Iran detonated outside his office, killing him and 23 other people. In the case of Petty Officer Wagner and Tehran's other victims, our courts have found Iran guilty and ordered Iran to pay restitution, but Iran has not paid a penny.

Mr. Speaker, we should require Iran to pay every penny it owes to the victims of terrorism before sanctions are lifted, period.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. HARPER), a member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I am and will remain opposed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran. It represents Iran's ability to build a nuclear weapon at a future date while reaping the financial benefits of immediate relief from international sanctions. By removing sanctions, the agreement injects almost $100 billion into the Iranian regime.

Iran is the single largest state sponsor of terrorism in the world, funding—even with sanctions in place—Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. Over $43 billion in judgments have been awarded to Americans who have been the victims of Iranian terrorism. The agreement fails to clear those judgments.

The agreement, at best, delays Iran's ability to build nuclear weapons. At worst, it gives the regime more money to engage in more terrorism while providing no justice to Americans already harmed by the regime.

The Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act is timely. It is appropriate, and it should be supported by every member of this body who believe in the validity of U.S. courts and the Federal Sovereign Immunities Act.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL), a member of the Committee on Financial Services.

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Mr. HILL. I thank Mr. MEEHAN for his leadership on this, and I thank the ranking member and the chairman for their opposition to the Iranian agreement, which I believe was ill-conceived and not enough time given for those negotiations to bear true fruit. In fact, that is the whole point of our debate today. The maximum amount of negotiating clout that the United States had over these sanctions was during these negotiations, before we released sanctions, before Iran gets access to their monthly oil flow and their $100 billion.

We have $44 billion and 85 judgments. The number of intelligence agents that have worked day and night to adjudicate these claims in court, the number of FBI agents involved, the Federal Government's obligation to generate awards for these victims, and yet this administration has never raised it in public in regard to the Iranian agreement.

Under the 1996 and 2008 Federal Sovereign Immunities Act, the President of the United States is obligated to seek resolution for these claims.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana). The time of the gentleman has expired.

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

Mr. HILL. He is obligated to adjudicate these claims and seek restitution for these victims under the Federal Sovereign Immunities Act. President Bush did his duty. When he had leverage over Libya, he got the claims paid for the victims of terror in Libya.

For every day we come to work in this House and we ask, ''What can we do to help this country? How can we right a wrong?'' today is that day.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support Mr. MEEHAN's outstanding bill. Let's right the wrong. Let's adjudicate these claims. Let's get this money back for the victims of terrorism.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO).

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. A majority of this House thinks this deal is bad, a majority of the Senate thinks this deal is bad, and a majority of the American people think this deal is bad. We have not had any input, and the effort here today is to simply make a bad deal a little less bad.

The idea behind Mr. MEEHAN's bill is to provide restitution to American victims. It is not just any American victims. It is the victims of Iranian terror. $150 billion is going to flow to Iran. It seems to be common sense that the first $43 billion should instead be paid to the victims of Iranian terror.

Joseph Cicippio was one of those victims. He lived right outside my congressional district. He spent 5 years in brutal captivity before being released in 1991.

A vote for this bill today is a vote for the victims of Iranian terror.

I also want to say Congressman MEEHAN's congressional district is right next to mine. I want to thank him for his thoughtful, creative approach and his leadership in this country and in this House on this bill.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN).

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, in 1982, I was with the United States Marine Corps off the coast of Beirut, Lebanon, waiting on orders to do evacuations of the U.S. Embassy and U.S. citizens and their families. Our assignment was done in August of 1982. We returned to the United States. I finished my 2 years with the battalion.

The battalion went back out. This time, they took positions in the airport in Beirut, Lebanon. On October 23, 1983, a suicide bomber drove a truck laden with explosives into the marine barracks; 241 marines were killed that day.

To my friends who died there—First Lieutenant Bill Zimmerman, Captain Bill Winter, Captain Joe Boccia, Master Sergeant Roy Edwards, Captain Mike Haskell—today is your day. Today is your day for justice. God bless you. God remember all of you.

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

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. COFFMAN. Today is the day for justice for these marines—and their families—who were lost on that day by the Iranian-backed Hezbollah bomber.

So I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for bringing this measure forward. I urge my colleagues not to forget those who have died and

to remember this: when the Iranians say ''death to Americans,'' they mean death to Americans.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. ROYCE. I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues to support this legislation. I want to thank the gentleman for his sponsorship. I am proud to be a cosponsor.

Thirty-one years ago, one Michigan family's sleepless worry became a heartbreaking reality. Their son, brother, and father, U.S. Army Warrant Officer Kenneth Welch, was one of two U.S. servicemen to lose his life in the bombing in Beirut, Lebanon.

U.S. judgments later found that the act of terrorism was sponsored by the Iranian regime. For its crimes, that regime was ordered to pay damages to the family of Kenneth Welch. Not surprisingly, however, not one dime has been paid to the family. Yet today, in this country, we find ourselves dealing with an administration that wants to lift sanctions.

Mr. Speaker, I am beside myself to think that this is the Nation that we have become. America is built on bravery and freedom, and that is because of the unwavering strength and sacrifice of men and women in the military. I am forever proud of our soldiers, and I know my colleagues here today are, too. That is why we cannot let the Iran terror continue. We need to do whatever we can to address the victims like Ken Welch.

Mr. ROYCE. I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD).

Mr. DOLD. I thank my good friend from California, the chairman, for yielding me the time. I also want to thank my good friend from Pennsylvania for bringing this piece of legislation.

Supporting victims of Iranian terrorism is a cause that every single Member of this body should be able to support, regardless of where they stand on the Iranian nuclear agreement. Under no circumstances should we be ignoring the victims of Iran's terrorism while simultaneously rewarding the greatest state sponsor of terror the world has seen.

Make no mistake, under this administration's agreement with Iran, Iran will be receiving approximately $150 billion in sanctions relief—in new funding—almost immediately, while American victims of Iranian terrorism, whether it be bombings, kidnappings, murder, and the like, are basically going without resources.

Where are our priorities? Where are our priorities in this Chamber when the victims of Iranian terror are being ignored while Iran is being rewarded with new funds that will inevitably be used to fund new terror—Hezbollah, Hamas, and those around the globe?

Iran's terror proxies have killed Americans and continue to do so to this day. This is a fact that cannot be ignored. I certainly hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will support this piece of legislation.

Mr. ROYCE. I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS).

Mr. ROTHFUS. I thank my colleague, Mr. MEEHAN from Pennsylvania, for introducing this very important piece of legislation.

The President's nuclear agreement with Iran provides them with billions in frozen assets and sanctions relief. One needs only to look at recent history to know exactly what Iran will do with this financial windfall.

While pursuing a nuclear bomb, Iran has been engaged in a decades-long campaign of terror that resulted in the deaths of many, many Americans. They continue to bankroll proxies like Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthi rebels.

Atrocities like the Beirut marine barracks bombing, the murder of Bobby Stethem on TWA flight 847, Khobar Towers, and the kidnapping of CIA Agent William Buckley, are just a small taste of what Iranian state-sponsored terrorism has wrought.

This bill is about everyday Americans getting justice. Americans like the family of Beaver County native Major John Macroglou, the highest ranking officer killed in the attack on the Beirut marine barracks.

Victims of Iranian terrorism have successfully brought suit in U.S. courts, yet billions in judgments remain unpaid. The Obama administration failed to secure restitution for the victims of Iran in its negotiations with this country, but this legislation can rectify this wrong.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 2½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from New York has 17½ minutes remaining.

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

In closing, let me say to my friends on the other side of the aisle, and they know this, no one has been more of an adversary of the Iranian regime than I have, but a number of us found the deal with Iran wanting. We voted ''no,'' but it didn't prevail, and now we have to figure out the best way forward. The best way forward, I sincerely believe, is not to keep trotting out these bills.

No one is condoning anything that Iran has done, particularly with terrorism. It is a matter of how we combat it. The way I see it is that we have two paths forward: we can choose to mirror what we did with the Affordable Care Act, voting and revoting on an issue that has been settled to some degree, or we can choose the path that suits our Nation's interests the best. This path includes doing everything we can to strengthen the enforcement mechanisms of this agreement.

The path also includes holding Iran accountable for its nefarious activities that destabilize the region, as well as pushing Tehran to release detained Americans and improve their human rights records in the interim, and, of course, taking care of the victims of terrorism and their families. This path requires the strengthening of bilateral partnerships and supporting our allies in the region, both of which help us in the long term.

This is the course I hope we take. We cannot let this opportunity go to waste. So that is why I won't be supporting H.R. 3457. After that, we need to work together on measures that strengthen implementation of the agreement as much as possible.

I hope we can do that in a bipartisan way, as we have for the past 3 years in the Foreign Affairs Committee. This path promises to bring us back to making foreign policy rather than using political bills that deflect from the important issues at hand.

I do not doubt the sincerity of anyone who spoke today. We all are sincere and we all feel the same way: Iran is a bad actor and must be held accountable. But this bill is not the correct mechanism to do so, so I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, consider the case of Anne Dammarell, a USAID worker who was posted in the U.S. Embassy in Beirut in 1983. At 1 p.m. on April 18, a suicide bomber in a delivery van drove 2,000 pounds of explosives into the front door of our U.S. Embassy and the blast demolished the front of the building and caused the upper floors to collapse on top of each other.

When that went off, she was eating lunch in the Embassy cafeteria until suddenly she awoke outside, covered in cement, with 19 bones broken. Sixty-three people were killed in that blast.

Now we have a moral obligation to ensure that these judgments for these victims, which represent Iran's legal debt to the victims of its official policy of terrorism, are paid. There have been 90 such attacks on Americans, and this legislation helps us fulfill that moral obligation we have to our constituents and to all Americans.

What I will share with you is that it is not going to work to release the $100 billion first, because that $100 billion goes into the hands of the IRGC. They are the ones who have taken over the companies in Iran as of 1979, and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard forces and the Quds forces are the ones that carried out these attacks.

So the only leverage we are going to have in this negotiation is if we pass legislation that says, first, you have got $20 billion in reserves. Start the process of paying the victims of that attack.

□ 1145

If we don't get them paid now, if we don't get the survivors and the family

members of those who were killed paid now, it will never happen later.

But more importantly, at least we would do this. If we are going to give $100 billion out of escrow into the hands of the IRGC, what do you think they are going to do with it?

They have already announced $20 billion in sales to Russia for fighter planes. They have already announced the money, $100 million, that they are going to give to Hezbollah.

Why not at least get our own civilians paid the judgments that they earned up front?

That is exactly what we did with the Lockerbie agreement. We were going to lift the sanctions or allow the return of the escrowed money to Libya. Right?

$2.5 billion had to go to the victims and the family members killed in the Pan Am 103 bombing because of the judgment in U.S. courts.

This needs to be done under that procedure. That is why this legislation is necessary.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 3457, the "Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act."

If enacted into law, H.R. 3457 would prevent the United States from implementing its sanctions relief commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) reached between the P5+1 countries, the European Union (EU), and Iran by tying the Administration's ability to fulfill its commitments to nonnuclear issues that are outside the scope of the JCPOA.

Mr. Speaker, this bill has absolutely no chance of becoming law because President Obama has already announced he will veto it if presented to him for signature.

And that is as it should be since this ill-considered and unwise bill comes to floor without being vetted by any of the committees of jurisdiction.

The bill was not considered by the Judiciary Committee or its Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, of which I serve as Ranking Member and which has jurisdiction over issues federal lawsuits and compensation involving victims of terrorist acts.

Nor was the bill considered by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, even though that committee has held several hearings relating to violent extremism and terrorists acts.

In the month of September alone, the Committee on Foreign Affairs held six hearings that addressed some aspect of terrorism and violent extremism, not one of which involved H.R. 3457 or the subject matter raised in the legislation.

Given its adverse impact on the JCPOA, one would have thought that this legislation would have been fully vetted before being rushed to the floor, and this lack of careful scrutiny is sufficient in itself to vote against this bill.

Mr. Speaker, let me be clear: I am, and long have been, a strong supporter and advocate for adequate compensation for victims of terrorism sponsored or supported by foreign states.

For example, I have fought for compensation for the victims of Boko Haram, the Lord's Resistance Army, ISIL and Al-Shabaab from Nigeria, to Syria, to Kenya, to name just a few.

I have requested the Attorney General of the United States to take action to secure relief for thousands of victims of terror from different regions of the world.

But I have never advocated or supported actions to achieve this result that puts the national security at risk.

And that is why I cannot support H.R. 3457.

By obstructing implementation of the JCPOA, H.R. 3457 would greatly undermine our national security interests and likely would result in the collapse of the comprehensive diplomatic arrangement that peacefully and verifiably prevents Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

This would in turn allow for the resumption of a significantly less constrained Iranian nuclear program, lead to the unraveling of the international sanctions regime against Iran, and deal a devastating blow to America's credibility as a leader of international diplomacy.

This would have the collateral effect of jeopardizing both the hard work of sustaining a unified coalition to combat Iran's destabilizing activities in the region and America's ability to lead the world on nuclear non-proliferation.

Mr. Speaker, the Administration supports efforts by U.S. terrorism victims to pursue compensation, consistent with our national security.

It bears pointing out that nothing in the JCPOA prohibits or impedes those efforts.

Mr. Speaker, we have called Iran untrustworthy because it has not always lived up to its commitments.

What would it say about the United States and its reputation of being an honest broker and trustworthy partner if we reneged on a carefully and painstakingly negotiated agreement before the ink barely had time to dry?

The single and overriding purpose of the JCPOA was to address the international community's concern over Iran's nuclear program and the need to verifiably prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

This goal is achieved by the JCPOA this objective is undermined by H.R. 3457.

After all our hearings and thoughtful deliberations on the JCPOA, it defies reason to collapse the historic and landmark diplomatic success that created the framework for a peaceful and verifiable methodology to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I strongly oppose H.R. 3457 and urge all Members to join me in voting against this unwise measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 449, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

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

Mr. ROYCE. 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 question will be postponed.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1735, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 449, I call up the conference report on 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 ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 449, the conference report is considered read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of September 29, 2015, at page H6337.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on the conference report to accompany H.R. 1735.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, the first and most important thing I can say today is that this conference report is good for the troops and it is good for the country, and nothing that I or anybody else is going to say in this next hour is going to be more important than that one basic proposition.

Now, we may hear a variety of excuses, ifs, ands and buts about this, that or the other thing, and I certainly don't agree with every provision in this conference report.

But in pulling this bill together, I had to put aside personal preferences and party considerations and other things because getting a bill passed and enacted that is good for the troops and good for the country is more important than anything else.

The second point I want to make is that this bill is the product of work from Members from both sides of the aisle and both sides of the Capitol. About half of the amendments that were adopted in committee and on the floor were from Democratic Members.

Democratic conferees played a substantial role in shaping this final conference report. And if you look at the

substance of what is in the bill, you can see major contributions from both sides.

As a matter of fact, we hear a lot these days about regular order. Well, this bill went through regular order through the committee, with 211 amendments that were adopted on the floor, when 131 amendments were adopted through a regular conference, with a Senate-passed bill for the first time in years, and now it is back here for approval.

So after going through regular order and all that that entails, if there is still partisan opposition, it leads some to ask why. Why bother?

The third point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is just a reminder to Members that this is a dangerous world, and it is getting more dangerous by the minute. Just look at the headlines that are in today's papers.

Russia has conducted airstrikes in Syria not against ISIS, but against the moderate opposition forces, and Russia is telling us, the United States, when and where we can fly our airplanes in Syria.

Meanwhile, the Palestinians have decided they are going to back away from all the agreements that they have with Israel.

Meanwhile, the Taliban is on the move in Afghanistan, and U.S. American troops are sent in to help turn the tide. That doesn't even count the things that are happening in Ukraine, North Korea, Iran, China building islands out in the Pacific.

So the point of that is that this is no time for political games. This is the time to come together and pass a bill that helps provide for the country's security. I think that is exactly what this bill does.

Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes the exact amount of money that the President requested for national defense. Now, we did not agree with every single program request.

We made some different judgments, like preserving the A–10, and it is being used today in the Middle East. We thought we needed not to retire some of the ships that the President wanted to retire. So there were some adjustments. But at the end of the day, the total is exactly the amount the President asked for.

Now, some of those programs are under different labels. But, frankly, whether you call it base funding, OCO funding, or pumpernickel—it doesn't matter—it is money that goes to the troops.

If you are a U.S. soldier today on the ground in Iraq or Afghanistan or if you are a soldier, sailor, airman, or marine who are supporting them from the United States or anywhere else, do you really care what the label on the money is? What you care about is that the money to help for provide your operation and maintenance is provided.

Of course, there are many other parts of this bill, Mr. Speaker: acquisition reform, which is a significant first step to make sure the taxpayers get more value for the money they spend; personnel reform, including a new retirement system.

Today 83 percent of the people who serve in the military walk away with no retirement at all. That changes under this bill.

So Members who are going to vote against this bill are going to tell 83 percent of the people who serve in the military: You are going to continue to walk away with nothing.

This bill requires the DOD and VA to have a joint formulary for sleep disorders, pain management, and mental health issues. We have been told those are some of the most important steps we can take.

It takes additional steps to combat sexual assault. It authorizes defensive weapons for Ukraine. It gives the President more tools to battle ISIS in Iraq, to provide weapons directly to the Kurds and Sunni forces.

We take steps to help defend this country against missiles.

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

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself an additional 30 seconds.

We take steps in this bill to help defend our country against missile attacks, which is particularly important now that Iran is going to have a bunch more money to put into their missiles. But what we also do is support the Israeli missile defense program with more money than was asked for by the President.

So, Mr. Speaker, my point is this bill is good for the troops and it is good for the country, and that ought to override everything else. It should be passed today.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

First of all, let me agree on two points with the chairman. There is a lot that is good in this bill. There is no question about that. And I want to thank the chairman for his leadership in making that happen.

I think the conference committee process was a model for how the conference committee is supposed to go. The minority was included. There was robust debate about a large number of issues. There were points when we thought we couldn't resolve them and we did. And I think there is a lot that is good in this bill.

I also think, without question, without debate, that this is a very, very dangerous time for our country. No doubt about it. The chairman laid out some of the challenges—there are many, many more—with what is going on in the Middle East, certainly with Russia, with how we deal with China. It is a very challenging time for national security, and we need to be as strong as we possibly can.

But the one area where I disagree—and I think the chairman also correctly states the fundamental question: Is this good for our country? Is it good for our troops?

I don't believe that it is. It is not good for our country, and it is not good for our troops. It does, in fact, matter where the money comes from for a couple of reasons.

First of all, by the budget gimmick that the Budget Committee in the House and the Senate put together, by using overseas contingency operations funds for things that are not overseas contingency operations funds—and this was all done as a dodge to get around doing what we need to do, which is to lift the budget caps. Because, you see, the OCO funding, for some reason is not counted as real money. It is money. It is $38 billion.

But it enables the conservatives in the Republican Party to say that they have maintained the budget caps while still spending $38 billion more dollars, which is incredibly hypocritical and a terrible way to budget.

But here are two reasons why that is bad for our country and bad for our troops. Number one, it does not lift the budget caps. These budget caps are in place, I believe, for another 9 or 8 years. Unless we lift those budget caps, we are harming our troops and we are harming our country.

This bill dodging that issue is precisely a national security issue because, until we lift those caps, the Department of Defense has no idea how much money they are going to have. All right?

OCO is one-time money. That is why it is not as good as lifting the budget caps and giving the ability to do the 5- and 10-year planning that they do, to do multi-year projects so that they can actually have a plan going forward. That hurts national security.

The inability to raise the budget caps in this bill and appropriations process is a critical blow to our troops and to our national security.

The second reason this is important is because the OCO funding that is in this bill is not going to happen; all right?

Part of it is because the President is going to veto it. But the larger part of it is the Senate, as they have been unable to do for a number of years, has not passed any appropriations bills because they have rejected their own budget resolution.

So this $38 billion in OCO funding that we are going to hear about, all this great money, is not going to happen because the appropriators have said it is not going to happen.

So to have a national defense authorizing bill with $38 billion in imaginary money is not good for our troops and it is not good for our country. We need to lift the budget caps. We need to spend the money that we need to spend on national security.

I will also say that there are other pieces of national security, because the budget caps remain in place for the Department of Homeland Security. They remain in place for the Department of Justice. They remain in place for the Department of the Treasury, three

agencies that play a critical role in national security for this country, in tracking the money of terrorists, in protecting the homeland, in making sure that we can try and convict terrorists when we catch them.

So it is not good for the country to maintain those budget caps, and that is what this bill does. It also relies on money that simply isn't going to be there by having this imaginary OCO funding.

The second way I think this bill is not good for the troops and not good for the country is something that the chairman alluded to, and that is there are restrictions on what the Pentagon can do by way of saving money.

The chairman mentioned the A–10, but there are a whole host of other things the Pentagon has proposed as a way to save money and spend it more efficiently, which, over the course of the last 2 or 3 years, we have blocked almost every attempt, not every attempt.

On personnel savings, we have made changes in the retirement system. We have made changes in the healthcare system. We saved no money for 10 years. For 10 years we saved no money in personnel costs while the Pentagon tells us that, to be able to properly train our troops to get them ready to go to battle, they need personnel cost savings.

If we don't give them that savings, last year, next year, this year, in the future, they will not have the money for readiness that they need to train and equip our troops. So that is not good for the country.

There are a number of other provision areas—well, BRAC would be a big one. We have seen our Army and Marine Corps shrink substantially. We have seen our entire military shrink substantially. We haven't closed any bases. That is not good for the country, to not find savings there so that we can spend it on training our troops.

□ 1200

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

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I yield myself an additional 30 seconds.

Over the course of the last 2 or 3 years, we have wound up authorizing and appropriating here in Congress substantially less money for readiness than the President, now, not this year, assuming you imagine that this OCO money is actually going to appear.

The bulk of the OCO money makes up for the readiness gap. But, again, that OCO money isn't going to be there. So I don't think this bill is good for our country or good for our troops.

I do agree with the chairman that that is the criteria on which it should be judged. But I urge a ''no'' vote.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES), the chair of the Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces.

Mr. FORBES. I thank the chairman for his hard work on this bill and bringing it to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, as we listen today, one of the things that you really won't hear outside of this room is anybody challenging the substance of this bill. In fact, the opponents of this bill time and time again say what a really good bill it is.

You won't hear anyone challenging the partisanship of this bill because they will praise Chairman THORNBERRY for the bipartisan product he has brought to the floor.

You won't hear them saying it is not the right amount of money in here, that it is too much or too little, because it is almost exactly the dollar amount that the President requested.

And you won't hear them say that they took this money from another priority because they agree this is the amount of money that should be spent on national defense.

The sole reason this bill is being opposed today and the sole reason the President is going to veto it is because he wants to use national defense as a bartering chip to get everything he wants for the IRS, the EPA, and all of the other political agendas that he has.

Can you imagine, as Chairman THORNBERRY mentioned, how strong he looks around the globe when he says America is going to be strong, yet he vetoes the bill that authorizes the national defense of this country and gives him almost everything he wants.

The President and the opponents of this bill also need to realize that, if they defeat this bill, they will also defeat the construction of three destroyers, two attack subs, three small surface combatants, an amphibious ship, and they will delay the Air Force bomber and tanker programs.

Mr. Speaker, it is time we stop using national defense as some kind of political poker chip that can be gambled away. It is time we pass this bill.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

First of all, I very specifically challenge the substance of this bill. The OCO funding and the way it is funding is not good for national security and not good for our troops. The substance of the bill is precisely the issue and what it does for defense or does not do for defense. That is why using the OCO funding is the exact wrong way to go.

The other thing I will say is I am quite confident that we will get a bill. Because that is the interesting thing about this argument.

As I have pointed out, the appropriators in the Senate have already rejected the OCO funding. So this $38 billion that we have in here is gone, done, poof, not going to happen. All right?

We are going to have to have a further debate about that in the Appropriations Committee to actually fund any of the stuff that we are talking about in this bill. I am confident that we will have that debate. I wish I could be more confident that it will come out in a positive way.

We need to lift the budget caps. We actually need to pass appropriations bills and not shut the government down. We will see what happens on December 11.

But when that happens, we can pass this bill. We are not going to not pass the NDAA. We just need to pass it the right way so it actually helps our country and actually funds the programs that we are talking about.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, I think the gentleman from Washington really makes the case when he talks about appropriations, OCO will not happen that way.

This is not an appropriations bill. He is exactly right. There is more to do to figure all of that out. But that is not a reason to vote against this bill. This bill can't fix what he is complaining about. But it does do something. My point is why not do what it can.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), the distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. I thank the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to support the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 and also thank Chairman MAC THORNBERRY for his leadership and hard work in bringing this important bill and conference report to the floor with bipartisan support.

I appreciate serving as the chairman of the Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee to oversee some of the most important aspects of the Department of Defense. The subcommittee's portion of the bill represents a comprehensive and bipartisan product. For this reason, it is sad that some of our Democratic colleagues may vote against this bill and, worse, that the President is threatening a veto.

Mr. Speaker, a veto or a vote against this bipartisan bill is a vote against security for American families and a vote against every member of the armed services and its military families.

It would be a vote against authorizations that would strengthen our cyber defense capabilities. It would be a vote against counterterrorism programs and resources for our special operations forces currently fighting overseas. It would be a vote against reform efforts and programs that would ensure America maintains superiority in all areas of science and technology.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues across the aisle to support this bipartisan National Defense Authorization Act and for the President to sign this important piece of legislation that will soon cross his desk.

A vote or veto against this measure is, simply put, a vote endangering American families and a vote against the American-dedicated servicemembers who mean so much to our country.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I yield myself 1 minute just to make two quick points.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, we will have a motion to recommit that takes the money out of OCO and puts it into the base budget. So this is a problem that our bill could fix.

We didn't have to buy into the OCO dodge and put money in there that we knew wasn't going to exist. Our motion to recommit will make that obvious. We will simply take it out of OCO. We will put it in the base budget so that you can do long-term planning with it and so that we actually get out from under the budget caps.

The second point that I will make is that the previous speaker said that voting against the Defense bill was all of those bad things. Well, people have voted against the Defense bill.

In 2009 and 2010, all but seven or eight Members of the Republican Party voted against the Defense bill. They voted against the defense bill because they didn't like Don't Ask, Don't Tell in one instance and because they didn't like adding LGBT people to hate crimes in the other instance.

So they all were perfectly willing to vote against the troops and do all of the awful things that the previous speaker said for social policy reasons that had nothing to do with defense.

So voting against the defense bill does not mean that you don't support the troops, and that is proof because most of the people who are now saying that it does have voted against the bill in the past.

I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, this is my 35th year in the Congress of the United States. I don't know that I voted against, prior to this year, either a Defense Appropriation bill or a Defense Authorization bill.

I will vote against this bill. I regret that I will vote against this bill because I regret that we have not gotten ourselves on a fiscally sound path in a bipartisan way that makes this country more secure not only on the national defense side, but secure on the domestic side as well.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this conference report, which I believe does a disservice to our men and women in uniform and undermines our national security.

I do not believe this is the chairman's fault. I want to make that very clear. The chairman has been dealt a hand, and he is trying to play the best hand he can. I understand that.

I agree fully, however, with the ranking member, with his concerns and opposition to this bill not because of most of its substance, but because of the adverse impact it has on so much else.

This continues the Republican sequester sneak-around strategy. What do I mean by that? My Republican colleagues historically—since I have been here—talk about spending money. What they don't like to do is pay for things. That is, of course, what we do with taxes.

It is not for free: national security, education, health care, law enforcement. You have to pay for it. And if you want to put a level of doing something, you need to pay for that or you pass it along to the next generation.

This bill continues the sequester sneak-around strategy of blowing through their own defense spending cap by misusing emergency overseas contingency operations funding for nonemergency base defense spending. That is why the Pentagon is opposed to this. That is why the Joint Chiefs believe this is bad policy fiscal policy for the military.

As our military planners and Secretary Carter have made clear, such an approach to funding undermines the Pentagon's long-term planning process, which is based on multi-year budgets and predictable funding streams.

Unfortunately, the fiscal policies of the leadership of this House over the last 6 years have been anything but predictable.

We avoided a shutdown of government yesterday, notwithstanding the fact that 151 of my Republican colleagues voted not to fund government today. Only Democrats ensured the fact that we kept the government open. Ninety-one Republicans voted with us, but that was far less than half of their caucus.

This proposal undermines the chances for a bipartisan budget agreement to replace the sequester before the CR we passed yesterday expires on December 11. Mr. Speaker, 151 Republicans voted even against keeping government open for a short period of time, approximately 2 months.

This approach included in this bill also harms fundamental national security priorities by characterizing core defense items as part of contingency operations. That is not true. It is not fiscally helpful.

This includes the Iron Dome missile defense program and all other U.S.-Israel joint missile defense programs that help Israel protect civilians from Hamas and Hezbollah rockets.

Additionally, this report continues to prevent the administration from closing the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, which remains a recruiting tool for terrorists and undermines America's role as a beacon of constitutional rights and freedoms around the world. Meanwhile, we are spending $2.4 million per detainee every year for those we hold in Guantanamo.

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

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. HOYER. The ranking member of the Armed Services Committee opposes this bill strongly, as do members of that committee. The President has made it clear he is going to veto this bill not because he is against national security.

Ironically, Republicans have come to the number that the President proposed. There is a difference. The President paid for his number. He didn't pass it along to our children.

We must recognize this conference report for what it is: a vehicle for partisan messaging and an instrument for breaking with the Murray-Ryan principle of parity in defense and nondefense sequester relief. It is not a bill that makes America safer and a stronger force for justice around the world. Therefore, I will oppose it.

I thank my friend, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) once again for his work in trying to improve this bill in committee, on this floor and in conference, and for his untiring work in support of the men and women of our Nation's armed services.

I thank the chairman of the committee for the same thing. He was dealt a bad hand. I understand the hand he has to play. It is not good for our country.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, I would just make three brief points.

Number one, as this debate goes on, it is increasingly clear that the real debate is about budget and appropriations, not about this bill.

Secondly, I am one of those who voted to continue to fund the government because I think it is essential that we pay our troops and that there be no lapse in that. Unfortunately, we have today the White House playing politics with national security, and I think that is what makes an ultimate agreement harder.

□ 1215

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the President was short in funding Israeli missile defense. We fully fund Israeli missile defense in this bill, and it should be supported.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER), the distinguished chairman of the Tactical Air and Land Forces Subcommittee.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1735, what would be the 54th consecutive National Defense Authorization Act.

What we have here today is, unfortunately, partisan politics at its worst. You have people who are coming down to the House floor condemning a bill that they voted for, and now they are going to vote against it because the President has decided that he is going to veto it. He is not going to veto it because of what is in this bill. He is going to veto it because there is not enough spending on the bureaucracies of the IRS and the EPA. We know this because not only has the President said it, even Defense Secretary Ash Carter has said it in front of the Armed Services Committee.

Now, if this were such a bad bill, you would think that it would not have come out of our committee with full, almost unanimous, support by both sides of the aisle, bipartisan, unbelievable support for this bill in virtually

its same structure that is coming to this floor. Only when President Obama stepped forward and said, I am going to veto it because you are not funding the IRS and the EPA, did it suddenly lose its bipartisan support.

This is not an issue about Republicans and Democrats. This is an issue about this administration. This administration, the author of sequestration, President Obama, set forth a plan that has been dismantling our military and needs to be set aside. Now, what we have in this bill is a bill that fully funds national defense, even as Minority Leader STENY HOYER said, that fully funds it at the level that is requested by the President.

Now, you can say there are gimmicks, you can say there are tricks, but you can also say what is important; and as you go to the experts to determine whether or not this bill works, Chairman Dempsey of the Joint Chiefs of Staff stood in front of our committee, and when asked the question of does the structure of this bill fully fund national defense, he said, absolutely, that he could spend it and that it would be the number that is necessary. He also said it was the lower jagged edge of what is necessary for national security.

Mr. Speaker, if Chairman Dempsey says in front of our committee—and he certainly is the expert—that this works, it works. I urge everyone to support this bill. Set aside sequestration, set aside partisan politics, and support our men and women in uniform.

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

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS), the distinguished chair of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee, for the purpose of a colloquy.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for your leadership in getting us here today. I would like to ask the chairman a question if I might.

Does the legislation provide the President the exact amount of money he requested in his budget request?

Mr. THORNBERRY. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. THORNBERRY. The gentleman is correct. The total is exactly the amount that the President asked for.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Thank you. That is what I thought.

Does the chairman recall who it was that testified that the amount requested for fiscal year 2016 for the national defense is ''at the ragged edge of manageable risk?''

Mr. THORNBERRY. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. THORNBERRY. As the gentleman from Ohio just said, it was the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs that said that this is the lower ragged edge of what it takes to defend the country.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. And that individual is the President's senior military adviser, isn't he?

Mr. THORNBERRY. Yes, sir.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. That is what I thought.

Thank you, Chairman.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have an easy choice here today: we can vote for a conference report that sends a bill to the President that provides him authorized funding at exactly the level he requested, or we can send the Nation below the ''ragged edge of manageable risk'' in its security.

It is a bill that provides over a $320 million increase for our Israeli allies on top of the $155 million in the President's request for missile defense cooperation.

I would ask Members, especially those who supported the President's Iran deal, to recall it is exactly this funding that the administration said was vital to Israel's security because of that deal and its termination of multilateral sanctions on ballistic missile proliferation.

This is a bill that provides $184 million to fund an American rocket to end our reliance on Russian-made rocket engines. This is a bill that provides the President's request of $358 million for Cooperative Threat Reduction activities.

What does that mean? That is how we fight Ebola.

Mr. Speaker, my fellow Members, there are some tough votes that we have to take around here from time to time. This is not one of them. Vladimir Putin is bombing U.S.-backed anti-Assad forces in Syria. If you want to make Putin happy, vote against this bill.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, the reason that we are at the ragged edge of what defense needs is because of the budget caps. That is the issue. That is the substantive issue and why this is important.

Tied into that is a regrettable fact. The chairman says repeatedly, look, this is the authorizing bill. Don't talk to me about the budget. Don't talk to me about appropriations. The defense budget is over half of the discretionary budget. So, unfortunately, the defense bill is about the budget and about the appropriations process.

As long as we have those budget caps locked in place, we will be at the ragged edge of what we can do to protect our national security. We shouldn't be there. We should lift the budget caps. This NDAA locks in those budget caps and uses the OCO dodge, which, as I have pointed out, the Senate isn't agreeing to, so the $38 billion isn't going to be there.

Even worse, what Secretary Carter has also said is that the OCO funding simply perpetuates the 5 years of budget cuts and uncertainty, of CRs, of government shutdowns, of threatened government shutdowns, and of not being able to plan. Secretary Carter has been very clear. He opposes this bill because the OCO funding is not an adequate way to fund defense because it is 1-year money. It is a budget gimmick. It doesn't give them the ability to plan and do what they need to protect our country and take care of our troops.

So opposing this bill because of the OCO funding is enormously important to our troops and is a substantive part of this. We cannot simply dodge the budget issues.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to respond briefly to the comment about the committee vote. We in committee said we didn't like the OCO funding and that we needed that to be fixed. But we are coming out of committee. We are going to give it a chance to work its way through the process. No changes were made, so we opposed it on the floor.

We didn't just wake up yesterday and oppose this. Democrats voted against this bill when it came through the House in the first place. The critically important issue that we absolutely made a point of in committee was not fixed, so that is why we are opposing this bill.

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

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN), the distinguished chair of the Subcommittee on Readiness.

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask Congress to vote in favor of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY16. I am proud that this conference report takes significant steps towards rebuilding our military and readiness.

We prioritize training for our troops and maintenance and modernization of our equipment and technology. This NDAA is critical to carry out the military missions of this Nation effectively and successfully in an increasingly dangerous world.

Recently, former Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger proclaimed: ''The United States has not faced a more diverse and complex array of crises since the end of the Second World War.'' This statement holds true today as we combat ISIS in the Middle East, as Russia again tests our commitment to global leadership, and as China continues to increase its defense spending to record levels.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has a constitutional duty of providing for the common defense of our Nation. If Congress and the President fail to act on the NDAA, we forgo our constitutional duty, and we weaken the security of our Nation and ability to confront crises that occur around the globe.

It is also important to point out that this is not the time to play political games with our national security or to hold hostage funding and authorization for the military for political gain. Our

Nation and our men and women in the military deserve better, and they deserve the proper support that Congress is under obligation to provide.

As we have heard through testimony from our military leaders before the committee, our military is approaching the ragged edge of being able to execute our Nation's defense strategy. By not passing this NDAA, or by allowing sequestration to continue to devastate our Nation's military readiness, we place ourselves in a position where we will be unable to defend against the threats we face today and in the future.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and vote in favor of the National Defense Authorization Act of FY16.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with a lot of what the gentleman just said about how critical national security is, yet the Republican majority insists on maintaining those budget caps that are devastating to our national security. They will not lift the caps that are causing precisely the problems that were just described, and 151 of them voted yesterday to defund the entire military by shutting down the government. So if we really believe in all of those national security priorities, let's start funding them. Lift the budget caps and actually pay for it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS).

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I want to associate myself with the ranking member because I think that we all work very, very hard on this committee, and I appreciate the work that our chairman has done as well. I have to say I am speaking largely as someone who has never not supported an NDAA. I actually did support it in committee, and I support it on the floor. But I think we are in a box, and sometimes when you get in a box, you have got to do something about it. You can't just stay in there and sit. It means making some hard decisions.

Mr. Speaker, I have listened in the committee when Secretary Carter was there. I have to say I think he was a bit badgered in that discussion, but at the same time, he is a big boy and he can handle that. Basically what he said is of course we support all those issues, of course we want a better budget for the men and women who serve our country because it is in the best interests of the United States of America, but we also have to be concerned about the future, not just about tomorrow. We have got to be able to do this for the men and women and for our country as we move forward.

That is what this doesn't do. We have got to give this a chance. There has got to be a better chance. That is why I feel that I have been there. I have compromised; and there are a lot of members on that committee, honestly, who are not willing to compromise. We have tried to find that balance.

Mr. Speaker, I am really proud of the work that we have done on the Military Personnel Subcommittee. I am proud because we made some gains. We have sort of shuffled some issues a little bit to be able to say to our leaders that we understand their concerns, we understand what readiness means in this country, and we have got to deal with that. Maybe we can't deal with all these issues that we have tried to make sure we funded to the very, very highest limit that we could possibly do.

We know there are some changes perhaps that are coming, and so we do it in an incremental way, in a slow way, and something that we think is in the best interests of the men and women and the country all at the same time. We have got to do that. We have multiple global crises going on in this country. So we can't just make a decision for today; it has got to be down the line.

What is it that we need to do?

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

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman an additional 30 seconds.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. What is important? What was Secretary Carter talking about? Predictability. Not just for our folks at the Pentagon to be able to make sure the men and women of this country are provided with everything that they need, but we also need to be sure that those who work with our country—we have a very strong contractual relationship with the public-private sector in this country, and we need to provide prediction for them as well. That is why I stand today. I believe it is in the best interests to go back and work this out.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has again expired.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. I work in a community of large numbers of military families. And guess what, the military is no different from the rest of our country. It is made safer and stronger by Homeland Security, by law enforcement, by environmental protection, and by strong education programs. They care about all those things, so they want us to stand up for their children and for their future.

Mr. Speaker, we can do this together. Let's take that chance. It is worth it.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER), the distinguished chair of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the lady that we need to make hard choices, but we don't need to do this in this bill. We can't solve the problems that have been reiterated in this bill. This is a budget issue.

I serve on the Budget Committee as well, and I believe we need to undo sequestration for our national defense. We need to come up with a comprehensive plan to address the cost drivers of our country that are causing us to go into debt.

□ 1230

We need to get our priorities back as a country and make sure we provide for the common defense. We need to do that in the budget in a comprehensive way.

But we don't need to hold our military hostage today by not approving the expenditure of funds for the vital things that they need. That is what my colleagues are doing. I appreciate their intent. I look forward to working with them—many of us do—to solve this overall problem, but today our military need to know that we are standing behind them and that we are going to authorize them with the things that they need.

This bill is full of the things that our country and our men and women in uniform need. As the chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, we are doing an investigation dealing with the transfer of detainees out of GTMO and what happened with Sergeant Bergdahl and the Taliban Five. So I was especially proud of the part in here that makes sure that the detainees are not removed from Guantanamo Bay and brought into our local communities. In addition, we set up an additional protocol so that the Secretary of Defense has to certify that any detainees that go to a foreign country, that that country is able to detain them, keep them safe, and make sure that they don't go back into the fight and continue their terrorist activities.

This bill takes care of our troops. It addresses the threats facing us. We have so many. Whether it is what is going on in Ukraine and with Russia, whether it is dealing with ISIL, or whether it is a cyber threat that we have, every day there are threats coming around us, and we address them in this bill. That is why we need to pass it. It also provides for the platforms that we need.

I urge my colleagues to do the right thing, to stand with our troops, to provide them with what they need, and to support this bill.

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

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HECK), the distinguished chair of the Subcommittee on Military Personnel.

Mr. HECK of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

As chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel, I appreciate Chairman THORNBERRY's efforts to bring this conference report to the floor. His dedication to our Armed Forces, their families, and our veterans is commendable.

Supporting the men and women who volunteer to pick up a weapon, stand a post, and guard the freedoms and liberties that make our Nation great is a primary function of the Federal Government. Article I, section 8 of the Constitution, ''to raise and support Armies,'' ''to provide and maintain a Navy,'' today with adoption of this conference report, we achieve that goal.

Included in the report are personnel provisions that will allow us to recruit and retain the best and brightest, maintain an agile military force, and ensure our brave men and women in uniform are given the benefits they have earned and deserve.

The President has threatened to veto this conference report, even though the report authorizes the amount he requested in his own budget, because he is not happy with the manner in which it is provided. He is using our military men and women as political pawns to get increases in nondefense spending. I understand that he has urged some of my colleagues to vote ''no'' today, and I want to make sure my colleagues know some of the things they would be voting against:

A new retirement plan that provides options and portable retirement benefits for individuals who serve less than 20 years, roughly 83 percent of the force;

A pay raise for our military men and women, along with many special pays and bonuses, that are critical to maintaining the all-volunteer force;

A joint uniform drug formulary between the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs so that transitioning servicemembers get to stay on the drugs that are working for them as they leave active service; and

Enhanced protections for sexual assault victims to include expanding access to Special Victims' Counsel, protecting victims from retaliation, and improving the military rules of evidence.

If the President follows through with his veto threat, servicemembers and their families will be deprived of these significant improvements to their compensation and quality of life.

I urge my colleagues to stand with our military men and women and their families and support this report.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining on each side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Washington has 10 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas has 10½ minutes remaining.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

There was a comment earlier about the military being held hostage by these other needs, and I think it is really important to understand that, over the course of the last 5 years, what the military has really been held hostage to is the budget caps, one government shutdown, multiple CRs, and multiple threatened government shutdowns. That is what is holding the military hostage.

If you talk to them about how they have tried to figure out what they can spend money on and what they can't spend money on throughout that madness—because we can't pass along a long-term budget, because we can't lift the budget caps, because we can't pass appropriations—that is what is holding them hostage.

A 1- or 2-month delay in passing the NDAA—which, by the way, we have passed in December for the last 3 or 4 years—isn't going to hold them hostage at all. What is holding them hostage is that ridiculous budget process that I just mentioned.

And why do we have that ridiculous budget process? Because the Republican majority insists on maintaining those budget caps. It is those budget caps that are holding our military hostage. Unless we lift them, we will not be able to adequately fund defense.

I heard a number of times over here that the only reason we oppose this is because we want more spending on other programs. That is not even close to true, and it is obvious that no one has been listening to the arguments that I have been making.

The reason we propose this is because it perpetuates our military being held hostage to budget caps, budget gimmicks, CRs, and threatened government shutdowns. This bill has OCO funding in it. It does not have base budget funding. It does not provide the same amount of money for the President that the President's budget provides because it is not the same money, and the type of money does matter. If you have actual budget authority, if you have actual appropriations, you can spend them over multiple years because you know that they are going to be there.

It is absurd the way we have budgeted for the last 5 years, and what we are doing in opposing this bill is standing up to that absurdity for many reasons, I will grant you. Number one is to protect our national security and the men and women who serve in the Armed Forces who have had to live with that government shutdown, those CRs, those threatened government shutdowns, and, most importantly, those budget caps that the majority refuses to lift. Unless we lift those, the military is going to be in this situation in perpetuity, and that is unacceptable for our national security.

It is all about national security. It is all about defense for why we are opposing this bill. We can't go on like this and have an adequate national security. We have to lift the budget caps.

I will say one other thing. We have to raise taxes somewhere. In the last 14 years, we have cut taxes by somewhere in the neighborhood of $7 trillion. Now, granted, there are unquestionably places in the budget we can cut, and we cut.

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

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I yield myself an additional 2 minutes.

We have cut Medicare. I know we have cut Medicare because the Republican Party ran all kinds of ads bashing us for cutting Medicare back in 2010. We found about $700 billion in savings that has extended the life of the program and saved money, so we have saved money.

But the flat refusal to raise any revenue is what has got our military with a hand around its throat, because, believe it or not, you have to actually raise the money if you are going to spend it.

So as you stand up here complaining about all the things that we are not funding in national security and then insist on maintaining the budget caps and insist on not raising a penny in taxes, that is the grossest hypocrisy I can imagine. If you are unhappy with how much money is being spent on the military, then have the guts to raise the caps and raise the taxes to actually pay for it, or just stop talking about it and accept it at that level.

We are opposing this bill because the budget process that we have been under is what is throttling our military. Until we break that grip, until we get an actual appropriations process, until we get the budget caps lifted, and until, I believe, we actually raise some revenues to pay for it, we are not going to be doing adequate service to the men and women of our military.

I also want to say that I oppose this bill because it also continues to keep Guantanamo Bay open at the cost of nearly $3 million per inmate. In addition to being an international problem, it is unbelievably expensive and not necessary. We should shut Guantanamo. This bill locks in place for another year that it will stay open and does not give the President any option or any flexibility in that regard.

So, again, don't tell me or anyone over here that we are voting ''no'' for reasons that have nothing to do with national security. How can you possibly look at the last 5 years of budgeting and the impact that it has had on the Department of Defense and say that getting rid of the budget caps isn't absolutely critical to national security? I believe that it is, and that is why we oppose this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a couple of points. Number one is I share a lot of the concerns about the effect of sequestration on the military, but as this conversation continues, it is clearer and clearer that the real problem here is budgets, and now we hear taxes.

This bill cannot solve either of those problems. We cannot rewrite the Tax Code or raise taxes. We can't repeal ObamaCare. There are lots of things we can't do. But we can do some things, and we should do that.

Secondly, a dollar of OCO is a dollar spent just as much as a dollar of base

is spent, and that is why I say I don't really think if you are on the ground in Afghanistan you care about what the label put on the money is. And, by the way, the increase in the OCO account is operations and maintenance money, which is only good for 1 year anyway.

Next point. In fiscal year 2013, Israel missile defense was funded in OCO, and yet we had Members on that side of the aisle, including some who are complaining about that, vote for it. That is what we do sometimes.

Finally, this President signed into law the exact provisions on restricting GTMO transfers.

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

Mr. THORNBERRY. I yield myself an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, this President signed into law the exact restrictions on Guantanamo transfers that we have in this bill. Now, is it all of a sudden such a big deal that he has decided that he is going to veto the bill over it? I think that is a hard case to make.

Mr. Speaker, at this point, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), the distinguished chair of the House Small Business Committee.

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

Mr. Speaker, the passage of an annual National Defense Authorization Act to lay out our Nation's defense and national security priorities is one of our most important duties as Members of Congress.

This year is no different, especially given the very serious conflicts happening around the globe—in Eastern Europe, in the Middle East, in the South China Sea—which have serious implications for our own security and for our allies.

This year's NDAA makes a number of positive changes to DOD small business contracting policies to help ensure that small businesses throughout the country can continue to perform the critical support functions that help make America's military still the best in the world.

Mr. Speaker, having a small business industrial base means taxpayers benefit from increased competition, innovation, and job creation. Since 2013, we have lost over 25 percent of the small firms registered to do business with the government—25 percent. That is over 100,000 small businesses. The reforms in this year's NDAA, the bill that we are considering now, takes steps to reverse that trend.

The White House has threatened to veto this bill. That is a shame because this bipartisan, bicameral bill defends small businesses and ensures that the spirit of entrepreneurship is alive and well in our industrial base. This isn't about political gamesmanship—at least it shouldn't be. This is about two of the most bipartisan issues in the political arena: the men and women in uniform and the small businesses that employ half of our American workforce.

I sincerely hope that the President reconsiders and enacts this bipartisan, bicameral bill.

I want to thank a number of members of my committee who have contributed to this year's bill, including Mr. HARDY of Nevada, Mr. KNIGHT of California, Mr. BOST of Illinois, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mrs. RADEWAGEN of American Samoa, and Mr. HANNA of New York. I would also like to thank a number of other Members and thank Mr. THORNBERRY.

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

□ 1245

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP).

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, our military must always be available and able to ready, aim, fire at a moment's notice. The threats we face around the world today demand it; and as soldier and a veteran, I can tell you that ''ready'' in the military needs to be spoken as a command, not proposed as a question.

There is one crucial element: our military has to be ready to engage the threats. This bill ensures our military readiness, and it ensures that there is a plan for 2016.

From ISIS to Russia to North Korea, the threats we face are too serious to wait any longer. But in the same week that the President was surprised by the Russians bombing U.S.-backed forces in Syria, he is threatening to veto this National Defense bill.

Veto our national security, really?

I encourage the President to use his phone, and to paraphrase his own words, to call the 1980s and ask for their foreign policy back because we need it. That policy demands that our military must be backed by the full confidence of this government now. This can't wait.

Pass this pay raise for our troops. Pass this to give our troops new retirement benefits. Pass this to keep our critical weapons systems at an operational level.

Mr. Speaker, we have been working on this legislation since the beginning of this year. It is a good bill that adheres to the law, and it is the certainty our troops need.

Pass this bill. Our troops need it. They don't let you down. Don't let them down.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. STEFANIK), the distinguished vice chair of the Subcommittee on Readiness.

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the conference report to H.R. 1735, the fiscal year 2016 NDAA. I thank Chairman THORNBERRY for his leadership, guidance, and tireless efforts on this imperative piece of legislation.

Just this past week, the major headline coming out of Afghanistan was the Taliban's seizure of the prominent town of Kunduz. This serves as yet another reminder to us all that this region of the world remains unstable and brings about challenges to our national security. The fiscal year 2016 NDAA provides our Nation's Armed Forces with the resources they need to defend our national security.

Since September 11, the Army's 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Drum, which I am honored to represent, has been the most actively forward deployed division to Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet sadly, just this past month, Specialist Kyle Gilbert, a soldier from the 10th Mountain Division, died in Afghanistan while serving our Nation.

In New York's North Country, our community and our military families understand what fighting for our Nation's liberties and freedoms truly means.

So when I express my support for the NDAA, the tools it provides and how it enables our Armed Forces to defend our Nation from organizations who create volatility and terrorism around the world, I am speaking for my constituents, those servicemen and -women who are overseas right now in highly kinetic combat zones fighting to protect you and me, our families, and our Nation.

Colleagues, the fiscal year 2016 NDAA allows for our Armed Forces to plan and operate according to what we as a nation have asked of them. We must support the NDAA to maintain our readiness and provide for our military.

As leaders here today, we know we cannot continue to task our troops with doing more with less as defense sequestration cuts remain. The conference report to FY 2016 NDAA provides relief from these harmful defense sequestration cuts, but more must be done.

Let me remind my colleagues across the aisle sequestration was proposed by this administration, signed into law by this President, and passed by a previous Congress.

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

Mr. THORNBERRY. I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from New York.

Ms. STEFANIK. When the NDAA comes before the President's desk, I hope he realizes a veto threat could threaten the safety of our Nation's servicemembers and our country's defense.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting and voting for the NDAA.

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

I will go ahead and start with that last comment because it is a popular trope that is trotted out all the time about how sequestration was the President's idea and, therefore, it is not our fault, which is a fascinating argument because I was actually here when that

happened, and I don't think it is clear exactly whose idea sequestration was.

What is clear is that the reason that we did the Budget Control Act and sequestration was because the Republican majority in the House was refusing to raise the debt ceiling, refusing to allow us to borrow money at a time when we had to borrow it. How do we think that would have impacted national security and our troops?

I voted against the Budget Control Act, but I have often said I don't hold anything against those who voted for it because they basically had a gun to their head. The Budget Control Act was an awful piece of legislation, but not raising the debt ceiling, not paying our debts, you know, stopping the ability of the United States of America to borrow money, was clearly worse.

So this partisan argument that, oh, you know, sequestration was the President's idea so therefore it is not our fault is about as absurd an argument as I have ever heard. Number one, because like I said, the only reason that that discussion was on the table was because it was blackmail for raising the debt ceiling, which had to be raised.

Number two, it has been a good 5 years since then. The Republicans now control both the House and the Senate, and they had an opportunity to pass a budget resolution this year. They passed a budget resolution that held those caps and sequestration firmly in place, and that is not good for our troops and it is not good for our national security.

So let's move on to that appropriations process; get those budget caps lifted for the sake of a whole lot of different issues. That brings me back to the National Defense Authorization Act and the fact that, by locking in the OCO, by accepting those budget caps, by using OCO funds, we are once again putting the Pentagon in a situation where they don't know how much money they are going to have and they have no predictability whatsoever.

It is the OCO in this bill that is the reason that I oppose it and the reason that most Democrats oppose it because that OCO is harmful to national security. We need a real budget. We need real budget authority and real appropriations. Voting for a bill that puts in place the OCO instead of that simply perpetuates the nightmare of the last 5 years of uncertainty. Like I said, we are going to have a motion to recommit here in a moment that easily fixes this problem.

I agree with 95 percent of the rest of the bill. I don't agree with all of it. The chairman said, you know, we negotiated some things; they were up, they were down. By and large, it is a good bill. But the 5 percent that is bad is so bad that it does justify a ''no'' vote because it perpetuates this bad budget situation and is a very easy fix.

Take the OCO out of it and put it in the base budget. It is very simple. That is what we are going to propose in the motion to recommit. You will see Democrats vote for that because we support funding this. What we don't support is maintaining the budget caps through an obvious budget gimmick.

I had a fascinating conversation with a member of the Rules Committee yesterday on the other side of the aisle who said he was very, very proud of the Budget Control Act, said it was the best vote he had taken in Congress. Interesting that it was supposedly all the President's fault. But he really supported the Budget Control Act. He felt those caps were absolutely necessary. And I said: Well, then you must oppose the NDAA because it busts those caps by $38 billion. He said a lot of things at that point, but he never answered my question.

So this dodge of saying that we are going to create sort of money that really isn't money in order to, for one brief period of time, fund isolated programs within the Pentagon does not help national security. The only thing that is going to help national security is by getting rid of the OCO dodge and budgeting honestly. So that is why we oppose this bill.

Yes, I believe that budget caps should be raised for the other bills as well, in part, because I think a lot of those Departments are important to national security, as I mentioned: the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, the Department of the Treasury.

More than anything, we oppose this bill because of how bad it is for the Pentagon. That is the reason the Secretary of Defense opposed it. That is the reason all of the Joint Chiefs of Staff oppose it. They want an actual budget. They want actual, dependable money, the way things used to be before 2010 when we would actually pass appropriations bills and they could plan more than a month or two at a time. If we pass this bill, we simply perpetuate that process.

We will pass an NDAA. We will resolve one way or the other our appropriations difference, and we will get it done, but passing this bill now simply perpetuates a bad situation that is bad for our troops and bad for national security. For that reason, I oppose it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to start with one of the points I made at the beginning, and that is to thank the staff, especially on both sides of the aisle, who spent a lot of hours, disrupted a lot of plans, put in incredible effort back and forth to come up with this conference report. Members on both sides of the aisle and both sides of the Capitol contributed to the product that we are about to vote on.

Mr. Speaker, for 53 straight years Congresses of both parties have passed and Presidents of both parties have signed into law Defense Authorization bills.

There were a handful of times—and it is exactly four—when a President vetoed a Defense Authorization bill, and every single time it was because of something that was in the bill. So it came back to Congress, there were adjustments made, it went back to the White House, and he signed it into law.

Never before has a Defense Authorization bill been held hostage, not because of something that is in it, but trying to force Congress to take action on some other matter. Now, we have talked a lot today about appropriations, about budget, even about taxes. None of those things can happen with the Defense Authorization bill.

The reason it has never happened before is because it would be irresponsible to hold defense hostage to another domestic agenda, a political agenda, even a broader budget agenda. And it unnecessarily threatens the national security of the United States. This is a first, and this first is happening at a particularly dangerous time.

There is nothing in this bill that could solve the problem that we have heard so much about. It is an authorization bill. It is not appropriations. It is not budget. It is not a tax bill. It is a defense policy bill.

We have heard from time to time the military opposes it. No. They say, ''I would rather do it differently,'' and I would, too. But I have specifically asked general after general, Would you rather have the money or not, and they always say they would rather have the money. Even though it is not an ideal way to do budgets, it is better to have the money than not.

By the way, there is a provision in here so that if we can, as I hope we do, reach a budget agreement in a different appropriations matter, the authorizations are adjusted accordingly.

The bottom line is, if Members vote against this bill, they are voting against everything in it. You may say you are for it, but you are voting against it.

So what I think our troops deserve and what the world needs to hear, especially at this point in time, is that Washington can work. We may not solve all the problems today, but we can do something that is good and that we are willing to stand up and take action to help defend ourselves. That is what this bill is about.

I hope Members will support it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I will vote against H.R. 1735, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 because it is a budget gimmick, shamelessly hiding behind the guise of national security. Make no mistake—America would be less safe were this bill to move forward in its present form.

The President has already said—as he has been saying for months—that he will veto this bill if it misuses Overseas Contingency Operation funds to evade the congressionally mandated budget caps. Sadly, but not surprisingly, Congressional Republicans did exactly that and worse. They had an opportunity to avoid leaving our troops in the lurch by pursuing a

balanced and fair budget deal that would unwind the reckless sequester for the national security activities at non-defense agencies like State, Homeland Security, and the VA.

In addition, this Authorization contains a budget-busting time bomb, the National Sea-Based Deterrence Fund, which is such a naked attempt to rob sister accounts to pay for pet projects that, for the third year in a row, Congressional appropriators have refused to fund.

The Sea-Based Deterrence Fund was created in the FY15 Defense Authorization because the Navy could not afford to simultaneously build back up to a 300-plus surface fleet and procure 12 Ohio-class replacement nuclear submarines. The Sea-Based Deterrence Fund didn't solve their problem of how SSBN(X) would be paid for. It simply shifted that burden onto the larger Pentagon budget. According to a recent Congressional Research Service report, the new ballistic missile submarine program is expected to cost $139 billion. Sadly, the account grew worse in conference by expanding its use to also include attack submarines and aircraft carriers. This account is emblematic of a larger problem, which is that this Defense Authorization marches our country towards a complete rebuild of our nuclear arsenal and triad, something that a Congressionally-appointed National Defense Panel estimated will cost up to $1 trillion.

While I cannot support this bill, I want to acknowledge the leadership taken by the House and Senate Armed Services Committee Chairs and Ranking Members for tackling some tough issues in this Authorization that previous efforts have ignored. This bill includes bipartisan acquisition reform aimed at containing defense spending, difficult but necessary military retirement and benefit changes, and makes strides towards rightsizing the Pentagon workforce.

Critically, it includes provisions that I championed to reform and extend the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SW) program for those brave Afghan men and women who risked their lives to aid our troops, but are now in danger as a result of their courageous service. We cannot allow more of our Afghan allies, and their families, to fall victim to the merciless Taliban. Should this Defense Authorization succumb to a protracted political fight, these provisions dealing with the Afghan SIV program should be broken off and moved through Congress as standalone legislation. I am prepared to introduce and push such a bill, as I've done in the past.

Though some hard decisions were made in this Defense Authorization, that leadership is overshadowed by continued budget gimmickry on Overseas Contingency Funds, the Sea Based Deterrence Fund, and harmful policy riders such as the continued effort to prevent the administration from rightfully closing Guantanamo Bay.

Both the House and Senate Ranking Members of the Armed Services Committees could not support this bill. Nor can I. The president will veto it. That's because our men and women in uniform should not be taken hostage in a budgetary circus. Just yesterday, 151 Republicans voted to shutdown the government, including our military. America cannot be great if it's subject to one manufactured crisis after another. We can get this right. All it would take is a little leadership and some common sense. Sadly, both are in short supply in this process.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 449, the previous question is ordered.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I am.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Smith of Washington moves to recommit the conference report on the bill H.R. 1735 to the committee of conference with instructions to the managers on the part of the House to—

(1) agree to section 1501 of the Senate amendment in lieu of section 1501, as passed by the House;

(2) agree to section 1505 of the Senate amendment in lieu of section 1504, as passed by the House;

(3) disagree to section 4303 in the conference substitute recommended by the committee of conference; and

(4) insist that the conference substitute recommended by the committee of conference be modified—

(A) by transferring the funding table in section 4303 to appear after the last line of section 4301 so as to be included in the funding table in section 4301;

(B) in section 1301(b), by striking ''section 1504'' and inserting ''section 301'';

(C) in section 1301(b), by striking ''section 4303'' and inserting ''section 4301''; and

(D) in section 1522(a), by striking paragraph (4).

Mr. SMITH of Washington (during the reading). I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The motion is not debatable.

Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

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

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on the motion to recommit will be followed by 5-minute votes on adoption of the conference report, if ordered; and passage of H.R. 3457.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 186, nays 241, not voting 7, as follows:

[Roll No. 531]

YEAS—186

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
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
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
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
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

NAYS—241

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

NOT VOTING—7

Culberson
Gutiérrez
Hudson
Kelly (IL)
Neal
Perlmutter
Reichert

□ 1326

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

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Messrs. ENGEL, SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, and RUSH changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the conference report.

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

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 270, nays 156, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 532]

YEAS—270

Abraham
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bera
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Delaney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Esty
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gabbard
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
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)
Kilmer
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Latta
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Lummis
MacArthur
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Takai
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
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—156

Adams
Amash
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Beyer
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Farr
Fattah
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gallego
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Hahn
Hastings
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huelskamp
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kennedy
Kildee
Kind
Labrador
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Massie
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Mulvaney
Nadler
Napolitano
Nolan
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Richmond
Rohrabacher
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanford
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—8

Culberson
Gutiérrez
Hudson
Kelly (IL)
Neal
Perlmutter
Reichert
Sanchez, Loretta

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1333

So the conference report was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, while I voted "no" on rollcall vote 532, I intended to vote "yes" on H.R. 1735, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016.

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF IRANIAN TERRORISM ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on passage 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, 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 passage of the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 251, nays 173, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 533]

YEAS—251

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black

Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
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
Maloney, Sean
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
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Vela
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—173

Adams
Aguilar
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
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
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Grayson
Green, Al
Grijalva
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson, E. B.
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
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Peters
Pingree
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
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Veasey
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—10

Collins (NY)
Culberson
Gutiérrez
Hudson
Johnson (GA)
Kelly (IL)
Neal
Perlmutter
Reichert
Russell

□ 1341

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for votes on Thursday, October 1, 2015 due to a family emergency.

Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 532, a vote on agreeing to the Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 1735, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 because we cannot continue to put military spending on the credit card and violate our budget rules while critical domestic investments are slashed.

I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 533, a vote on final passage of H.R. 3457, Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act because I support peace and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to prevent a nuclear Iran.

Finally, had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall votes 529 and 530, and "yea" on rollcall vote 531.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2835. An act to actively recruit members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service to serve as Customs and Border Protection Officers.

PROVIDING FOR CORRECTIONS TO THE ENROLLMENT OF THE BILL H.R. 1735

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I send to the desk a concurrent resolution and I ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 81

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 1735, the Clerk of the House of Representatives shall in section 1301(b)—

(1) strike ''section 1504'' and insert ''section 301''; and

(2) strike ''section 4303'' and insert ''section 4301''.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 702

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 702.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1345

AMERICAN SAMOA MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE POSTPONEMENT

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the 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, with the Senate amendments thereto, and concur in the Senate amendments.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the Senate amendments.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendments:

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.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that we dispense with the reading.

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

There was no objection.

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

There was no objection.

The title of the bill was amended 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.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I was absent for the second vote in the series of votes that we just took on rollcall vote No. 532. If I had been present, I would have voted ''nay.''

PERMISSION TO FILE SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ON H.R. 702

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Commerce be authorized to file a supplemental report on the bill H.R. 702.

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

There was no objection.

STEM EDUCATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 1020) to define STEM education to include computer science, and to support existing STEM education programs at the National Science Foundation, with the Senate amendment thereto, and concur in the Senate amendment.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the Senate amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendment:

On page 5, strike lines 3 through 4 and insert the following:

(3) in subsections (e) and (f), by striking ''subsection (g)'' each place it appears, and inserting ''subsection (h)'';

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

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY), the majority leader, for the purpose of inquiring about the schedule for the week to come.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, no votes are expected in the House.

On Tuesday, the House will meet at noon for morning-hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. Votes will be postponed until 6:30.

On Wednesday and Thursday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for morning-hour and noon for legislative business.

On Friday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. for legislative business. Last votes of the week are expected no later than 3 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the House will consider a number of suspensions next week, a complete list of which will be announced by close of business tomorrow.

In addition, the House will consider H.R. 3192, the Homebuyers Assistance Act, sponsored by Representative FRENCH HILL of Arkansas. This bipartisan bill will provide relief to everyone who is doing their best to comply with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's mortgage loan disclosure rule.

Mr. Speaker, the House will also consider H.R. 538, the Native American Energy Act, sponsored by Representative DON YOUNG of Alaska, which is necessary to expedite energy production on tribal lands.

And, finally, Mr. Speaker, the House will consider H.R. 702, sponsored by Representative JOE BARTON of Texas. Oil exports are key to creating American jobs and furthering America's energy renaissance.

Given the increased security threats facing the United States and its allies, the presence of more American oil in the global marketplace will offer more secure supply options. This will provide America with greater foreign policy influence as well as strengthening our economic and national security.

I thank the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that information.

Mr. Speaker, the last 2 weeks have been filled with a lot of things going on in this House. But I know the majority leader would be profoundly disappointed if I didn't ask him about one thing that doesn't seem to be going on, but which I think is critically important.

I know the majority leader, Mr. Speaker, joins with me in not wanting to see American jobs lost overseas or American jobs not created here in America for American workers because we are able to make products and sell them overseas.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the distinguished majority leader, knowing full well, as he does, that Jeff Immelt, the CEO of GE, was here; and he spoke to both Democrats and Republicans. I know he talked about 500 U.S. jobs going overseas because we have not yet reauthorized the Export-Import Bank.

The Senate voted 64–29 to reopen the Bank. They voted in July. Almost two-thirds of the United States Senate.

As the majority leader is tired of hearing, I know, but I still believe there is a significant majority of Members in this House that would vote for it.

Now, I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I was extraordinarily pleased to read—I didn't hear, but read—the majority leader's comments when he was talking about the failure of the Senate to proceed on a vote of disapproval or approval on the agreement with Iran on nuclear arms control.

He said he was deeply distressed that ''so consequential that they demand revisions to the Senate's procedures.'' And he went on to say those revisions would be ''to let the people''—in this case, the Senate—''have a voice'' That was quoted in The Wall Street Journal just a few days ago.

I know the gentleman doesn't want us to lose jobs. I know he is quoted as saying that the people's voice ought to be heard. I know that he shares with me that this is the people's House.

And I ask the gentleman: It is not on the schedule next week, but does the gentleman expect the Export-Import Bank to be voted on in this House before the end of this month?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman.

In honor of the late Yogi Berra, ''It's like deja vu all over again.'' There is no action scheduled in the House on Ex-Im.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, that is the answer I expected. That is the answer I have been getting. And, very frankly,

that is the answer this House has been getting.

I know some of my Republican friends are very frustrated by that answer, and I know all of our side is frustrated by that answer.

I will say respectfully to my friend I would certainly hope we could bring that bill to the floor.

Win or lose, whether you win or I win or Export-Import Bank is reauthorized or not, you are correct: the voice of the people should be heard on such a critical issue for jobs in this country.

Also, I know that we had marked up in committees reconciliation bills. Those reconciliation bills repeal provisions of the Affordable Care Act and defund Planned Parenthood.

The gentleman I think knows full well that the United States Senate voted on the Planned Parenthood issue and only got 47 votes for it. So in the one instance, we have an issue that got three less than one-half of the United States Senate being proposed to come to this floor, and an issue that got 64 votes in the United States Senate, as the gentleman so correctly observed, is not yet scheduled.

Can the gentleman tell me whether or not these reconciliation provisions are going to be brought to this floor, knowing full well that they won't pass the Senate and, even if they did, the President wouldn't sign them and we would sustain that veto?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Knowing the rules of reconciliation, I do believe it will pass the Senate.

The three committees that received reconciliation instructions from the Budget Committee have marked up their portions, as the gentleman has said.

I do expect the Budget Committee to meet in the near future to complete their work, and we will notify Members as soon as that is scheduled for the floor.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, we may have a difference of opinion, but perhaps we will see who is right on whether it passes the United States Senate or not. I understand reconciliation only needs a majority, but we will see.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also ask the majority leader: One of the issues that I know the majority leader has been working on—and I know that all of us on this floor feel it to be very, very important to pass before October 30, when the highway bill authorization expires, and I know the gentleman from California is a strong supporter of it. Clearly we need to invest in infrastructure, again, to expand the economy.

Can the gentleman tell me what prospects we have on passing or at least considering the highway bill?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

As the gentleman knows, the hardest thing to do in this town is to find pay-fors. But Chairman RYAN continues to have bipartisan discussions on ways to pay for the long-term highway bill.

I have had follow-up meetings with him today, and they are progressing over in the Senate. I have met with Chairman SHUSTER even today as well, and I expect an announcement very shortly on committee movement.

We will advise Members as soon as action is taken to schedule it for the floor.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the leader.

I hope that optimism is realized and that we do have the opportunity to consider a highway bill. I would urge the majority leader to urge those who are working on a resolution that the pay-fors, which are difficult, as he observes, are pay-fors which can be supported in a bipartisan fashion.

I think that is important not only to pass the Senate, but to be signed by the President. And we all, I think, share the view that this is a very, very important bill for us to get done.

With that, unless the majority leader may want to reconsider and tell me the Export-Import Bank is coming to the floor, which apparently he doesn't, I yield back the balance of my time.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW; AND ADJOURNMENT FROM FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2015, TO TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2015

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that, when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 1 p.m. tomorrow, and further, when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet on Tuesday, October 6, 2015, when it shall convene at noon for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1400

CONGRATULATING JOHNSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA, HOCKEYVILLE, USA

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

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Johnstown, Pennsylvania, for hosting the first-ever Kraft Hockeyville USA game this week and the Pittsburgh Penguins for their 4–2 victory over the Tampa Bay Lightning in the game.

The Kraft competition to choose America's Hockeyville was conducted in partnership with the National Hockey League Players' Association and the National Hockey League. Towns across the country submitted stories showing their passion for hockey, and more than 20 million votes were cast. But as the contest results revealed, few places in America love hockey like Johnstown does, and Johnstown rightly deserves the title, ''Hockeyville, USA.''

Johnstown was the home of the fictional hockey team the Charleston Chiefs in the 1977 movie, ''Slap Shot.'' Scenes from the movie were filmed at Cambria County War Memorial Arena. We also can't forget the Johnstown Jets, who played here from 1950 to 1977 and won five Eastern Hockey League championships from 1951 to 1962.

As Penguins coach Mike Johnston said after the Penguins' victory: ''It's a great arena. The excitement in the building, the excitement in town, I just think it's special.''

RECOGNIZING THE GROWING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN SYRIA

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the growing humanitarian crisis in Syria. As a result of the Syrian civil war and continuing military operations against ISIL, over 4 million people have been forced to seek refuge outside of Syria.

The Syrian crisis has quickly become an international crisis, and it requires the attention and the assistance of every nation. Many may see this crisis as a distant problem, but the reality is this is a global world now and everyone is interconnected.

As each nation continues to resettle refugees, we must ensure that they are provided the best resources, and this requires international cooperation. It is not just about providing financial assistance, but understanding that these refugees are people. They are people who have been forced out of their country, might have left their families, and are struggling to survive on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, as the U.S. is committed to accepting more refugees, I urge our country to have compassion and to commit to providing the necessary resources to address this ongoing crisis.

THE GENOCIDE OF CHRISTIANS ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST

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

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleague from Orange County, California, and her deep concern for what is going on in the Middle East.

Today I rise to speak out about the genocide that is taking place in the Middle East, that is being committed against Christians across the Middle East. They are being victimized and targeted for genocide. Violent radical Islamists have targeted Middle Eastern Christians for extinction, killing them, forcing them from their homes, and burning their churches.

Hundreds of thousands of Christians have been forced to flee. The United States needs to do what we can to save these Christian victims, as we have saved other refugees throughout our history

Mr. Speaker, all of us who believe in religious freedom and tolerance need to stand up and state clearly that we won't sit quietly as a genocide takes place on our watch. I ask my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring a resolution that I have here in my hand, that resolution declaring Middle Eastern Christians as targets of genocide and giving them priority for immigration and refugee status.

We have been silent already for too long. It is time for this body to make sure that our words are heard and our deeds are taken. This is a good place to start, and I ask my colleagues to join me in this resolution which I will now submit to the United States House of Representatives.

BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS

(Mrs. LAWRENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I and many of my colleagues had to hold our noses as we voted for a short-term continuing resolution. The CR, thankfully, did not cut funding to Planned Parenthood, which provided 2.7 million Americans—women, men, and youth—with medical services last year. But this CR is only good until December 11, and it leaves out funding for a vital program like the Ex-Im Bank. In less than 10 weeks, we will be right back here fighting against another government shutdown.

Mr. Speaker, do we really want to fail our military veterans, our seniors, our families, and our voters? I say no. Let's do the right thing. Let's do our job. Let's come up with a long-term budget that serves the American people, American businesses, and the American economy.

RECOGNIZING LOREN THORSON OF GREEN VALLEY, ARIZONA

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

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, we are called the people's House for a reason. We are sent to Washington to be the direct voices of our constituents back home. Last week, it was my honor to take action on an issue that was originally brought to my attention by one of my constituents from Green Valley, Arizona.

Loren Thorson served in World War II as a Navy commander. When he saw a report 5 years ago describing a little-known tax increase in the Affordable Care Act that is hurting families and is scheduled to hit seniors in 2017, he looked into it and knew something had to be done. He has sent letters, made phone calls, written editorials, and done much more to raise the alarm about this little-known issue.

After hearing about this issue from him, my office has worked with Members from both parties in the House and in the Senate to move the issue forward and fix it. Those efforts resulted in my introduction last week of bipartisan legislation, with my lead, to repeal this tax hike and put Loren's ideas into action.

Mr. Speaker, this is how our government is supposed to work. I am grateful for Loren's tireless efforts to protect seniors and middle class families, and I will continue to work to advance his and my constituents' ideas in Congress.

REAUTHORIZE THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

(Mrs. BUSTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, for too long, this Congress has governed from one crisis to the next. Yesterday, when we were just hours away from another self-inflicted Washington wound, two news pieces were published that I would like to share: number one, the CEO of Honeywell, a company with a significant presence in my district, published an article about the economic damage of Congress' failure to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank; then Bloomberg published a story with the headline, ''Boeing Risks Losing $1.1 Billion Jet Order on Ex-Im Shutdown.''

Washington gridlock is putting the jobs of thousands of Americans at risk. This includes hundreds of the people I serve in Rockford and the Quad Cities.

But today is a new day; it is a new month. Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to turn over a new leaf of bipartisanship. Let's work together, reauthorize the Ex-Im Bank, and protect these good-paying manufacturing jobs before it is too late.

THE MEDICAL EVALUATION PARITY FOR SERVICEMEMBERS ACT

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, just a few minutes ago, I cast an affirmative vote for the National Defense Authorization Act for 2016. However, I do have great concern over an important measure which was all but removed from the legislation we voted on today.

Earlier this year, I authored the Medical Evaluation Parity for Servicemembers, or MEPS, Act. The MEPS Act would improve military suicide prevention by instituting a mental health assessment for all incoming military recruits, which can be used as a baseline for evaluations throughout their military careers. The conferenced version of the NDAA merely calls for the Department of Defense to continue to study such a screening.

Mr. Speaker, this issue has been studied thoroughly over the past several years. I strongly urge the Pentagon to act quickly to take steps in better assessing the mental health of our servicemen and -women with a commonsense baseline evaluation.

A recent Army study found that nearly one in five Army soldiers enter the service with a psychiatric disorder, and nearly half of all soldiers who tried suicide first attempted it before enlisting.

I call on the Pentagon to stop studying to death the death of our soldiers. Mr. Speaker, we need to act now.

THE BENGHAZI COMMITTEE

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for this institution that I have had the privilege of serving. As a member of the Judiciary Committee, I am very grateful for the extent of our jurisdiction that embraces the Constitution, and I believe justice is important.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in great consternation, concern, and condemnation of the statement made by the Republican leadership that the Benghazi Committee is not for factfinding, it is not for recognizing the tragic loss of four Americans, but it is really to insult and degrade a public servant who happens to be a Presidential candidate. How tragic that we would engage in such tomfoolery. In spite of the Constitution and the Madison Papers, it talks about doing justice.

As a member of the Judiciary Committee, I was engaged in impeachment proceedings, the investigation of Waco, investigation of antitrust issues, held a trial for a judge who acted improperly, a Federal judge. That is the factfinding role of this Nation.

While we are fooling around with a committee that is there to do nothing but deal with political aggrandizing and we have not passed a Zadroga Act that helps our 9/11 first responders, I would only ask that we stop and end this committee because it is not doing justice as the United States calls us to do.

Mr. Speaker, the Constitution gives us our guideposts. Why don't we follow it?

HONORING ARTHUR WILLIAM ''BILL'' BAILEY, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALKER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FLORES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Arthur William ''Bill'' Bailey, Jr., of Waco, Texas, who passed away on August 18, 2015.

Bill Bailey was a Korean war veteran, a renowned Waco businessman, and a distinguished alumnus and former regent at Baylor University. He touched many lives in the Waco and Baylor communities, and he will be greatly missed.

Bill was born in Waco on April 24, 1929. He graduated from Waco High School in 1946 and enrolled in Baylor University. On December 15, 1950, Bill married his high school sweetheart, Roberta Hatch. They were married for almost 64 years prior to Roberta's passing in 2014. Roberta and Bill had 3 sons and were blessed with 10 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

Bill graduated from Baylor University in 1951 with a B.A. degree and a law degree. While at Baylor, he was a member of the debate team and the Baylor Chamber of Commerce.

Bill served our Nation in the United States Air Force as a first lieutenant in the JAG division during the Korean war. He was ultimately promoted to captain in the U.S. Air Force Reserves.

After concluding his service to our Nation, Bill returned to Waco to enter into the insurance business. In 1956, he established his own independent insurance agency, Bill Bailey Insurance Agency, which is now known as Bailey Insurance and Risk Management, Inc. He became a noted State and national leader in the insurance industry.

Mr. Speaker, because of his expertise in risk management, he was called upon to testify before the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives committees as well as the Federal Reserve Board, all on behalf of the insurance industry.

In 1969, Bill teamed up with a group of his fellow Texas insurance agents to establish the Certified Insurance Counselors Program, which focused on teaching advanced insurance topics to ensure high-quality standards of ethics and professionalism in the insurance industry. This program would become the foundation of the National Alliance for Insurance Education and Research. Today, these certification programs are conducted in all 50 States with more than 150,000 participants annually.

Bill held many prestigious positions on various boards, including as the chairman of the Board of Governors for the National Alliance for Insurance Education and Research; the president of the Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers Association of America; the liaison to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners for the Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers Association of America; and as director, executive committee member, and past vice chairman of the Texas National Bank of Waco.

Bill's work in the insurance industry was honored by the Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers Association of America when they dedicated their conference room in the Washington, D.C., office as the A. William Bailey, Jr., Conference Room.

He was also a recipient of the Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers Association of America Woodworth Memorial Award for Meritorious Service to the Insurance Profession, as well as the Drex Foreman Award of the Independent Insurance Agents of Texas. Both of these are the highest distinctions for these respective organizations.

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Bill was active in the Waco and Baylor University communities and served as the following: Trustee, Vice Chairman of the Board, and Regent of Baylor University; Officer, Director, and Executive Committee Member of the Waco Industrial Foundation; Member and Chairman of the Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center Board of Development; Founder and Past President of the Waco Business League; and President of the following organizations: the Greater Waco United way; the Baylor-Waco and Baylor Bear Foundations; the Waco and Northwest Waco Rotary Clubs; the Waco YMCA; the Waco Camp Fire Girls; and the Baylor Stadium Corporation.

In 1988, Bill was honored by the Baylor Alumni Association with the W.R. White Meritorious Service Award. In 1997, they honored him as a Distinguished Alumnus. Additionally, in 2008, the Waco Public Schools honored him as a Distinguished Alumnus.

Bill was an active member of the First Baptist Church of Waco, where he served as Trustee, Deacon, and Chairman of the Board of Deacons; Chairman of the Finance Committee; Founding Chairman of the First Baptist Church of Waco Foundation; President of the McCall Sunday School Class; and Co-Superintendent of the College Sunday School Department.

Mr. Speaker, Bill Bailey will not only be remembered for his long list of accomplishments, but, most importantly, he will be forever remembered as a loving husband, a father, a grandfather, a great-grandfather, and a loyal friend to hundreds of central Texans.

My wife, Gina, and I offer our deepest and heartfelt condolences to the Bailey family. We also lift up the family and friends of Bill Bailey in our prayers.

As I close, I ask that all Americans continue to pray for our country, for our military men and women who protect us abroad, and for our first responders who protect us here at home.

HONORING MATTIE LEE PHILLIPS

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mattie Lee Phillips from Bryan, Texas, who passed away on August 25, 2015, her 103rd birthday.

Mrs. Phillips was born in Washington County, Texas, on August 25, 1912. Growing up, Mrs. Phillips attended school in the Waco and McGregor areas and later attended Bryan Public School for Colored. She married Willie Sterling in 1931. They were blessed with five children. Later she married Eddie Phillips. They were blessed with four children.

Mrs. Phillips was a member of the New Liberty Baptist Church in Boonville, Texas, at an early age and remained a member until 1941, when she became a member of the Pleasant Grove Missionary Baptist Church in Bryan.

She was an avid church worker, serving on the Pleasant Grove Church Usher Board for 35 years and as a Sunday school teacher and a mission teacher. She served on various programs and committees at the church and worked tirelessly raising funds to help improve their church facilities.

Mrs. Phillips taught and counseled numerous youth during her life. She was a staunch believer in higher education, and all nine of her children attended college.

Mrs. Phillips was an entrepreneur who took sewing and tailoring classes through the mail and worked for many years as a self-employed seamstress. She also bought, repaired, and resold real estate for additional income. In addition, she successfully owned and operated Phillips Cafe & Barbecue.

Mrs. Phillips led a full life and was well respected in our community. She will be forever remembered for her devotion to her church and her community and as a loving wife, a mother, a grandmother, a great-grandmother, and a great-great-grandmother, a youth mentor to hundreds, and a friend to many as well.

My wife, Gina, and I offer our deepest and heartfelt condolences to the Phillips and Sterling families. We also lift up the family and friends of Mattie Lee Phillips in our prayers.

As I close, I ask that all Americans continue to pray for our country, for our military men and women who protect us abroad, and for our first responders who protect us here at home.

HONORING TOMMY BOSQUEZ

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Henry Thomas ''Tommy'' Bosquez, of Bryan, Texas, who passed away on September 12, 2015.

Tommy Bosquez selflessly served the Brazos Valley community in a variety of ways, and he will be missed greatly.

Tommy was born on August 9, 1962, in Bryan, Texas. He graduated from Bryan High School in 1980. When he was 19, he began his public service career as a City of Bryan police officer. He was the city's youngest policeman and served on the force for 8 years.

He held various assignments, including patrol, special advanced traffic investigations, the field training officer program, crime scene analysis, and honor guard detail.

Tommy was also a member of the Texas State Guard. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant, serving as company commander in the 223rd Military Police Battalion, to assist State and local authorities in times of emergencies.

Tommy married his high school sweetheart, Stella Grimaldo. They were married for 29 years and were blessed with two daughters.

Tommy earned his associate's degree from Blinn College and later earned an undergraduate degree in political science in 1989 and a master's degree in public administration in 1995, each from Texas A&M University.

During his time at Texas A&M and the years that followed, he worked for the university. He started out in the College of Medicine, where he held various positions, including Director of Special Programs, Special Assistant to the Dean of Medicine, admissions committee member, principal investigator, and a lecturer in the Department of Humanities in Medicine.

He would go on to work for the university system in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, where he assumed a leadership role with the Health Science Center, working as Special Assistant to the President.

Prior to his death, Tommy worked as the Chief Contracts Officer and Director for Contract Administrator in the Office of Finance and Administration at the Texas A&M Health Science Center.

Tommy was an active volunteer and an engaged parent in the Bryan Independent School District for over 25 years. He began his service as an elected school board trustee in 2012 and served as vice president of that board.

He also served extensively on various local and statewide charitable and educational organization boards such as the Texas Association for Access and Equity, the Texas Association of Advisers for the Health Professions, the Texas Area Health Education Centers—East, the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce, the Bryan ISD Education Foundation, the Blinn College Advisory Board, the United Way, the Boy's and Girl's Club, the Kiwanis, Gear Up, Habitat for Humanity, and Junior Achievement.

Tommy received many acknowledgements throughout his career, including the 2007 Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education Outstanding Meritorious Public Service Award, and the Kiwanis International Walter Zeller Fellowship Award.

Tommy worked tirelessly to better our community. He will forever be remembered for his devotion to public service and as a loving husband, father, and friend to countless Brazos Valley citizens.

My wife, Gina, and I offer our deepest and heartfelt condolences to the Bosquez family. We also lift up the family and friends of Tommy Bosquez in our prayers.

As I close, I ask that all Americans continue to pray for our country and for our military men and women, who protect us abroad, and for our first responders, who protect us here at home.

HONORING DR. JAMES COOPER

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. James F. Cooper of Bryan, Texas, who passed away on August 18, 2015.

Dr. James Cooper was a veteran of World War II and the Korean war. He was a physician, an aviation medical examiner, and an active member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He touched many lives in the Brazos Valley, and he will be greatly missed.

Dr. Cooper was born on August 30, 1927, in Farmersville, Louisiana. He was the son of a Baptist preacher and grew up in many towns throughout the South.

At the age of 17, Dr. Cooper enlisted in the Navy to serve aboard the USS Dorchester in the South Pacific. Upon returning to the U.S., he used his GI bill benefits to attend medical school in Tennessee.

He then served again in the Korean war as Deputy Medical Officer for the Destroyer Fleet Atlantic, stationed aboard its flagship, the USS Yosemite. Dr. Cooper retired from the Navy with a final rank of Lieutenant Commander, Medical Corps.

In 1955, Dr. Cooper moved to Bryan, Texas, and entered a medical practice with his brother, O.C. Dr. Cooper was a well-loved family doctor and a surgeon at St. Joseph's Hospital.

In addition to his medical practice, the good doctor had a strong affinity for aviation and specialized in aviation medicine. He was involved with the space programs at NASA and present at many of the Apollo launches. His knowledge and experience with NASA missions earned him the opportunity to do voice commentary for six Apollo launches for television broadcasts in Australia.

Dr. Cooper also served as a FAA Senior Aviation Medical Examiner. As a fellow pilot, I was fortunate and grateful to have Dr. Cooper as my medical examiner for many years. We developed a strong friendship and shared many stories about our mutual love for aviation.

Dr. Cooper was an extraordinary doctor not only specializing in aviation, but also serving as Chief Medical Officer for the Texas World Speedway in College Station.

In addition to his medical duties, Dr. Cooper was an active member of VFW Post No. 4692 in Bryan. He was very passionate about the VFW and even served as Commander of the post.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Cooper left a strong legacy for his family and for the Brazos Valley. He will be forever remembered as a great doctor, a dedicated veteran, a loving husband, a great father, a grandfather, and a loyal friend.

My wife, Gina, and I offer our deepest and heartfelt condolences to the Cooper family. We also lift up the family and friends of Dr. James Cooper in our prayers.

As I close, I ask that all Americans continue to pray for our country, for our military men and women, who protect us abroad, and for our first responders, who protect us here at home.

HONORING ALAN WALDIE

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Alan Duane Waldie, of Bryan, Texas, who passed away on August 22, 2015.

Alan Waldie was a veteran, an electrical engineer, an Aggie, a pillar of the Brazos Valley community, and a great friend. He led a full life and will be missed greatly in our community.

Alan was born on April 23, 1928, in Iowa Park, Texas. He graduated from Lamar High School in Houston in 1945 and later attended Texas A&M University.

While at Texas A&M, Alan was a member of the nationally famous ''Fightin' Texas Aggie Band'' and served as drum major during his senior year. He graduated from Texas A&M University in 1951 with a bachelor's of science in electrical engineering.

From 1946 to 1948, Alan served in the U.S. Navy. From 1951 to 1953, he served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army Signal Corps.

After his discharge from the Army, Alan began a successful business career, which took him to Houston; Tripoli, Libya; and Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

In 1995, he moved back to College Station to begin his retirement. There he served as a volunteer for the George Bush Presidential Library and was the member of the Bryan Rotary Club and the Central Baptist Church.

Mr. Speaker, Alan Waldie will be forever remembered as a dedicated veteran, a loving husband, a great father, and a loyal friend.

My wife, Gina, and I offer our deepest and heartfelt condolences to his wife, Nancy, and to all of the Waldie family. We also lift up the family and friends of Alan Waldie in our prayers.

Mr. Speaker, as I close, I ask that all Americans continue to pray for our country, for our military men and women, who protect us abroad, and for our first responders, who protect us here at home.

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

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 30, 2015.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, I have the honor to transmit a sealed envelope received from the White House on September 30, 2015, at 8:45 p.m., and said to contain a message from the President whereby he notifies of designation of funding for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism as provided in the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk of the House.

DESIGNATION OF FUNDING FOR OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS/GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 114–62)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 114(c) of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016, also titled the TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act of 2015 (the ''Act''), I hereby designate for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism all funding (including the rescission of funds) and contributions from foreign governments so designated by the Congress in the Act pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, as outlined in the enclosed list of accounts.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed memorandum from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *September 30, 2015.*

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 30, 2015.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, I have the honor to transmit a sealed envelope received from the White House on September 30, 2015, at 8:45 p.m., and said to contain a message from the President whereby he notifies that he has designated an emergency requirement $700 million in emergency funding for urgent wildland fire suppression activities as provided in the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk of the House.

DESIGNATION OF FUNDING AS AN EMERGENCY REQUIREMENT—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 114–63)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 135 of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016, also titled the TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act of 2015 (the ''Act''), I hereby designate as an emergency requirement all funding so designated by the Congress in the Act pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, for the following account: ''Department of Agriculture—Forest Service—Wildland Fire Management.''

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed memorandum from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *September 30, 2015.*

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.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

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 on September 30, 2015:

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.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 32 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, October 2, 2015, at 1 p.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

2986. A letter from the Under Secretary for Management, Department of State, transmitting a letter reporting two violations of the Antideficiency Act by the Department of State, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1517(b); to the Committee on Appropriations.

2987. A letter from the Program Specialist (Paperwork Reduction Act), Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Regulatory Capital Rules: Regulatory Capital, Final Revisions Applicable to Banking Organizations Subject to the Advanced Approaches Risk-Based Capital Rule [Docket ID: OCC-2014-0025] (RIN: 1557-AD88) 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.

2988. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's recommendations to Congress concerning energy performance requirements for fiscal years 2016 through 2025, in accordance with the National Energy Conservation Policy Act [45 U.S.C.8253(a)(3)]; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2989. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Administration's direct final rule — Significant New Use Rules on Certain Chemical Substances [EPA-HQ-OPPT-2015-0388; FRL-9933-30] (RIN: 2070-AB27) received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2990. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Administration's final rule — National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants for Primary Aluminum Reduction Plants [EPA-HQ-OAR-2011-0797; FRL-9934-16-OAR] (RIN: 2060-AQ92) received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2991. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Administration's direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Massachusetts; Approval of Regulations Limiting Emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds and Nitrogen Oxides [EPA-R01-OAR-2014-0631; A-1-FRL-9932-12-Region 1] received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2992. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Administration's direct final rule — Air Plan Approval; Illinois; Volatile Organic Compounds Definition [EPA-R05-OAR-2015-0008; FRL-9934-11-Region 5] received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2993. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Georgia Infrastructure Requirements for the 2008 Lead NAAQS [EPA-R04-OAR-2014-0442; FRL-9934-84-Region 4] received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2994. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Revisions to the California State Implementation Plan, Butte County Air Quality Management District, Feather River Air Quality Management District, and San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District; Correcting Amendment [EPA-R09-OAR-2015-0246; FRL-9931-19-Region 9] received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2995. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Administration's direct final rule — Revision of Air Quality Implementation Plan; California; Feather River Air Quality Management District; Stationary Source Permits [EPA-R09-OAR-2015-0542; FRL-9933-52-Region 9] received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-

121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2996. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Administration's direct final rule — Revisions to the California State Implementation Plan, Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District [EPA-R09-OAR-2015-0510; FRL-9934-04-Region 9] received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2997. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Air Plan Approval; California; Mammoth Lakes; Redesignation; PM10 Maintenance Plan [EPA-R09-OAR-2015-0279; FRL-9935-05-Region 9] received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2998. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Maryland; Adoption of Control Techniques Guidelines for Metal Furniture Coatings and Miscellaneous Metal Parts Coatings [EPA-R03-OAR-2015-0404; FRL-9934-92-Region 3] received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2999. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Administration's direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Delaware; 2011 Base Year Inventories for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard for New Castle and Sussex Counties [EPA-R03-OAR-2015-0455; FRL-9934-81-Region 3] received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3000. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Pennsylvania; Redesignation Request and Associated Maintenance Plan for the Pittsburgh-Beaver Valley Nonattainment Area for the 1997 Annual and 2006 24-Hour Fine Particulate Matter Standard [EPA-R03-OAR-2015-0029; FRL-9934-82-Region 3] received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3001. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; South Dakota; Revisions to South Dakota Administrative Code [EPA-R08-OAR-2014-0916; FRL-9934-83-Region 8] received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3002. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Administration's direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; State of Missouri, Limited Maintenance Plan for the St. Louis Nonclassifiable Maintenance Area for the 8-Hour Carbon Monoxide National Ambient Air Quality Standard [EPA-R07-OAR-2015-0513; FRL-9934-98-Region 7] received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3003. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Administration's direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; Approval of the Base Year Emissions Inventory for the Liberty-Clairton Nonattainment Area for the 2006 24-Hour Fine Particulate Matter Standard and Approval of Transportation Conformity Insignificance Findings for the 1997 Annual and 2006 24-Hour Fine Particulate Matter Standards for the Liberty-Clairton Nonattainment Area [EPA-R03-OAR-2015-0470; FRL-9934-91-Region 3] received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3004. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Enhancing Support for the Cuban People [Docket No.: 150825774-5774-01] (RIN: 0694-AG67) received September 30, 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.

3005. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report to Congress on United States Participation in the United Nations in 2014, pursuant to Sec. 4(a) of Pub. L. 79-264; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3006. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a determination for the use of funds to provide non-lethal assistance to the Syrian Opposition, pursuant to Sec. 451 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3007. A letter from the Executive Analyst, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998, Pub. L. 105-277, 5 U.S.C. 3345-3349d; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3008. A letter from the Director, Office of Government Ethics, transmitting the Office's final rule — Organization and Functions; Implementation of Statutory Gift Acceptance Authority; Freedom of Information Act (RIN: 3209-AA40, RIN: 3209-AA41, RIN: 3209-AA39) received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3009. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's final rule — Managing Senior Executive Performance (RIN: 3206-AM48) received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3010. A letter from the Division Chief, Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Minerals Management: Adjustment of Cost Recovery Fees [L13100000 PP0000 LLWO310000] (RIN: 1004-AE44) received September 30, 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.

3011. A letter from the 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; Reallocation of Pollock in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands [Docket No.: 141021887-5172-02] (RIN: 0648-XE143) received September 30, 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.

3012. A letter from the Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Kentucky Regulatory Program [SATS No.: KY-253-FOR; Docket ID: OSM-2009-0014; S1D1S SS08011000 SX064A000 156S180110; S2D2S SS08011000 SX064A000 15X501520] received September 30, 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.

3013. A letter from the Deputy Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Pennsylvania Regulatory Program [SATS No.: PA-154-FOR; Docket ID: OSM-2010-0002; S1D1S SS08011000 SX064A000 156S180110 S2D2S SS08011000 SX064A000 15XS501520] received September 30, 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.

3014. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Administration's final rule — National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Electronic Reporting Rule [EPA-HQ-OECA-2009-0274; FRL-9930-70-OECA] (RIN: 2020-AA47) received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3015. A letter from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Return of Wine to Bonded Premises [Docket No.: TTB-2015-0013; T.D. TTB-130] (RIN: 1513-AB92) received September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on 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. UPTON: Committee on Energy and Commerce. Supplemental report on H.R. 702. A bill to adapt to changing crude oil market conditions (Rept. 114–267, Pt. 2).

Mr. BISHOP of Utah: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 538. A bill to facilitate the development of energy on Indian lands by reducing Federal regulations that impede tribal development of Indian lands, and for other purposes (Rept. 114–276). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 1644. A bill to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to ensure transparency in the development of environmental regulations, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 114–277). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. HENSARLING: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 3192. A bill to provide for a temporary safe harbor from the enforcement of integrated disclosure requirements for mortgage loan transactions under the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 and the Truth in Lending Act, and for other purposes (Rept. 114–278). 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. BURGESS (for himself, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Ms. DELBENE, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. POLIS, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. PETERS, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. BERA, Mr. FORBES, Mr. OLSON, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. YOUNG of Indiana, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. ALLEN, and Mr. HUFFMAN):

H.R. 3660. A bill to amend the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 respecting the scoring of preventive health savings; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. GUINTA:

H.R. 3661. A bill to terminate the independent third-party program for sectors of the Northeast Multispecies Fishery unless the program is fully funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. RUSSELL (for himself, Mr. BRAT, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. HURD of Texas, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. YOHO, Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. HARDY, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. GIBBS, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. MESSER, and Mr. LOUDERMILK):

H.R. 3662. A bill to enhance congressional oversight over the administration of sanctions against certain Iranian terrorism financiers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. FLORES (for himself and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas):

H.R. 3663. A bill to prevent certain discriminatory taxation of natural gas pipeline property; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. ESHOO:

H.R. 3664. A bill to provide for the identification and documentation of best practices for cyber hygiene by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida (for himself, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. CAPUANO, and Mr. SIRES):

H.R. 3665. A bill to authorize appropriations for the university transportation centers program for fiscal years 2016 through 2021, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, 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 Mr. KING of New York (for himself, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. CROWLEY):

H.R. 3666. A bill to coordinate and advance fibrosis research activities at the National Institutes of Health, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN:

H.R. 3667. A bill to promote transparency, accountability, and reform within the United Nations system, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. COOK (for himself and Mr. KNIGHT):

H.R. 3668. A bill to codify in law and expand certain off-highway vehicle recreation areas in the State of California, to designate as wilderness certain public lands in the State of California administered by the Bureau of Land Management, to expand the Death Valley National Park Wilderness and the San Gorgonio Wilderness in San Bernardino National Forest, to ensure the conservation and necessary management of wildlife in these wilderness areas, to establish the Mojave Trails Special Management Area in the State, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. GARAMENDI (for himself, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. FARR, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. MEEKS, and Ms. NORTON):

H.R. 3669. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide a criminal penalty for operating drones in certain locations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CICILLINE:

H.R. 3670. A bill to amend chapter 83 of title 41, United States Code (popularly referred to as the Buy American Act) and certain other laws with respect to certain waivers under those laws, to provide greater transparency regarding exceptions to domestic sourcing requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, and Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BARR:

H.R. 3671. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a 3-year recovery period for all race horses; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BARR:

H.R. 3672. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reduce the holding period used to determine whether horses are section 1231 assets to 12 months; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BENISHEK:

H.R. 3673. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mail paper forms to any individual who filed a paper return for the preceding taxable year; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. CONYERS (for himself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. MEEKS, Mrs. LAWRENCE, and Mr. VEASEY):

H.R. 3674. A bill to establish a commission to examine the processes used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to provide unemployment rates and to make recommendations to Congress for any changes in methodology or improvements to such processes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. DESAULNIER (for himself, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. LOWENTHAL, and Ms. SLAUGHTER):

H.R. 3675. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to ensure that student loans are available at interest rates that do not exceed the interest rates at which the Federal Government provides loans to banks through the discount window operated by the Federal Reserve System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, 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. FOSTER (for himself, Ms. ESTY, Ms. EDWARDS, and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York):

H.R. 3676. A bill to authorize the Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, acting through the Director of the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, to award grants to States to expand access to clinically appropriate services for opioid abuse, dependence, or addiction; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. FOSTER (for himself, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. ESTY, and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York):

H.R. 3677. A bill to reduce opioid misuse and abuse; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania (for himself, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. NEAL, Mr. HOLDING, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. MARCHANT, and Mr. NUNES):

H.R. 3678. A bill to clarify the orphan drug exception to the annual fee on branded prescription pharmaceutical manufacturers and importers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MURPHY of Florida (for himself, Mr. HASTINGS, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. POE of Texas, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. MOORE):

H.R. 3679. A bill to provide that the Social Security Administration pay fees associated with obtaining birth certificate or State identification card for purposes of obtaining a replacement social security card for certain victims of domestic violence, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SARBANES:

H.R. 3680. A bill to provide for the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out a grant program for co-prescribing opioid overdose reversal drugs; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. THORNBERRY:

H. Con. Res. 81. Concurrent resolution providing for corrections to the enrollment of the bill H.R. 1735; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BARTON:

H. Con. Res. 82. Concurrent resolution recognizing the 50th Anniversary of the White House Fellows Program; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. BUTTERFIELD (for himself, Ms. ADAMS, Ms. BASS, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. BECERRA, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLAY, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Ms. NORTON, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Ms. LEE, Mr.

LEWIS, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. MOORE, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. PLASKETT, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. WELCH, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. RUSH, and Mr. HOYER):

H. Con. Res. 83. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the ratification of the 13th Amendment; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. AL GREEN of Texas (for himself, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Ms. NORTON, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. MEEKS, and Mr. HASTINGS):

H. Con. Res. 84. Concurrent resolution recognizing former United States Federal Judge Frank Minis Johnson, Jr. for his role in the civil rights movement; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RUSSELL (for himself, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. HURD of Texas, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. YOHO, Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. HARDY, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. DESJARLAIS, and Mr. LOUDERMILK):

H. Res. 454. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives relating to the exercise of presidential waiver authority of certain sanctions imposed against Iran under United States law; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida (for himself, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. WILSON of Florida, and Ms. FRANKEL of Florida):

H. Res. 455. A resolution expressing support for designation of the inaugural ''Cruise Travel Professional Month'' in October; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mrs. DAVIS of California (for herself, Mr. JOYCE, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. HONDA, and Mr. DELANEY):

H. Res. 456. A resolution expressing support for designation of October 2015 as ''National Principals Month''; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. JOLLY:

H. Res. 457. A resolution amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to require that the House be in session at least 40 hours each week other than a week that is designated as a district work period; to the Committee on Rules.

By Mrs. NOEM (for herself, Ms. MATSUI, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Ms. SPEIER, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mrs. LOWEY, Ms. BONAMICI, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. TITUS, Mrs. TORRES, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Miss RICE of New York, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. ADAMS, Mrs. LUMMIS, Ms. MOORE, Ms. ESHOO, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. HAHN, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. MENG, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina, Mrs. BUSTOS, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Ms. NORTON, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. STEFANIK, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. DEGETTE, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. TSONGAS, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. KUSTER, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. DELBENE, Ms. ESTY, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. GRAHAM, Ms. LEE, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Ms. LOFGREN, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Ms. GABBARD, Mrs. BLACK, Ms. MCSALLY, Ms. FOXX, Mrs. ROBY, Mrs. WAGNER, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, and Ms. PLASKETT):

H. Res. 458. A resolution celebrating 25 years of success from the Office of Research on Women's Health at the National Institutes of Health; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. ROHRABACHER (for himself, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. PITTS, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. KING of Iowa, and Mr. BARLETTA):

H. Res. 459. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Christians in the Middle East are victims of genocide; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

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. BURGESS:

H.R. 3660.

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

The attached bill is constitutional under Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1: ''The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.''

By Mr. GUINTA:

H.R. 3661.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. RUSSELL:

H.R. 3662.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 3 and 18 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. FLORES:

H.R. 3663.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Ms. ESHOO:

H.R. 3664.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 (To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes)

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 (To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof)

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida:

H.R. 3665.

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

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. KING of New York:

H.R. 3666.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN:

H.R. 3667.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. COOK:

H.R. 3668.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. GARAMENDI:

H.R. 3669.

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

section 8 of article I of the Constitution

By Mr. CICILLINE:

H.R. 3670.

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

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. BARR:

H.R. 3671.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BARR:

H.R. 3672.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BENISHEK:

H.R. 3673.

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

Clause 1, Section 8 of Article 1 of the United States Constitution which reads: ''The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts, and Excises, to pay the Debts, and provide for the common Defense and General Welfare of the United States; but all Duties and Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.''

By Mr. CONYERS:

H.R. 3674.

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

Art. I, Sec. 8.

By Mr. DESAULNIER:

H.R. 3675.

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

Article 1, Section 8.

By Mr. FOSTER:

H.R. 3676.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. FOSTER:

H.R. 3677.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 3678.

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

The Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution. The Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. MURPHY of Florida:

H.R. 3679.

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

Article 1 section 8 Constitution of the United States, which states the Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States.

By Mr. SARBANES:

H.R. 3680.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the US Constitution

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 239: Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. POLIS, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. RUSH, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. CARNEY, and Ms. HAHN.

H.R. 244: Mr. FORBES.

H.R. 292: Mr. CULBERSON.

H.R. 317: Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 381: Ms. BROWN of Florida.

H.R. 546: Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 592: Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 602: Mr. ASHFORD.

H.R. 664: Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 829: Mr. MEEKS.

H.R. 836: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.

H.R. 837: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.

H.R. 879: Mr. GOODLATTE and Mr. FITZPATRICK.

H.R. 969: Mr. BRAT.

H.R. 973: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.

H.R. 1019: Mr. DESAULNIER.

H.R. 1062: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina and Mr. WOMACK.

H.R. 1122: Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 1124: Mr. SERRANO.

H.R. 1130: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey and Ms. ADAMS.

H.R. 1141: Mr. COFFMAN.

H.R. 1174: Mr. COHEN, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. JORDAN, and Mr. GARRETT.

H.R. 1192: Mr. RIGELL.

H.R. 1220: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Mr. KEATING, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, and Mrs. CAPPS.

H.R. 1258: Mr. DENT, Ms. ESHOO, and Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.

H.R. 1283: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

H.R. 1288: Mr. POSEY, Mr. SIRES, and Mr. RIGELL.

H.R. 1427: Mrs. RADEWAGEN and Mr. COFFMAN.

H.R. 1441: Mrs. DINGELL and Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 1459: Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 1475: Mr. JORDAN, Mr. HUELSKAMP, and Ms. DUCKWORTH.

H.R. 1532: Mr. GARRETT.

H.R. 1538: Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. SANFORD, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. DEFAZIO, and Mr. DEUTCH.

H.R. 1566: Mr. FORBES.

H.R. 1567: Mr. WALZ.

H.R. 1594: Mr. POMPEO.

H.R. 1603: Mr. CRAMER.

H.R. 1660: Mr. RIGELL.

H.R. 1661: Mr. RIGELL.

H.R. 1671: Mr. LONG.

H.R. 1686: Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 1688: Mrs. RADEWAGEN and Mr. COFFMAN.

H.R. 1706: Mrs. BEATTY.

H.R. 1716: Mr. SMITH of Texas.

H.R. 1736: Mr. YODER.

H.R. 1737: Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. RIGELL, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. ABRAHAM, and Mr. SIRES.

H.R. 1769: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.

H.R. 1779: Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 1814: Mr. KILDEE, Ms. BASS, Mr. CUMMINGS, and Mr. PIERLUISI.

H.R. 1942: Mr. VARGAS and Mr. AGUILAR.

H.R. 1945: Ms. BROWNLEY of California and Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H.R. 1986: Mr. NEWHOUSE.

H.R. 2010: Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. STEWART, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. BABIN, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. BARR, and Mr. LAMALFA.

H.R. 2043: Mr. LONG.

H.R. 2050: Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois and Mr. FITZPATRICK.

H.R. 2076: Mr. RIBBLE.

H.R. 2090: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.

H.R. 2189: Mr. POE of Texas and Mr. PASCRELL.

H.R. 2287: Mr. RIGELL and Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.

H.R. 2292: Mr. LOWENTHAL and Ms. JUDY CHU of California.

H.R. 2293: Mr. DELANEY, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, and Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 2342: Mr. JOYCE, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, and Mrs. KIRKPATRICK.

H.R. 2461: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.

H.R. 2633: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 2643: Mrs. ROBY.

H.R. 2646: Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia.

H.R. 2657: Mrs. KIRKPATRICK.

H.R. 2671: Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 2672: Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 2673: Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 2674: Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 2697: Mr. SWALWELL of California.

H.R. 2698: Ms. JENKINS of Kansas.

H.R. 2710: Mrs. BLACK.

H.R. 2717: Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. GRAYSON, and Ms. BONAMICI.

H.R. 2737: Mr. TED LIEU of California and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 2775: Mr. POCAN.

H.R. 2799: Mr. LEWIS.

H.R. 2805: Mr. PETERS.

H.R. 2858: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. ESHOO, and Ms. TSONGAS.

H.R. 2869: Mr. CRAWFORD.

H.R. 2889: Mr. PASCRELL.

H.R. 2904: Mr. BARLETTA.

H.R. 2944: Mr. HANNA, Mr. NADLER, Mr. ABRAHAM, and Mr. POLIS.

H.R. 3011: Mr. GIBBS.

H.R. 3029: Mr. DEFAZIO.

H.R. 3033: Mr. TAKANO and Mrs. BEATTY.

H.R. 3048: Mr. SMITH of Texas.

H.R. 3084: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina and Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 3095: Mr. YODER.

H.R. 3099: Mr. POCAN, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. KATKO, and Mr. POMPEO.

H.R. 3102: Mr. MCCAUL.

H.R. 3119: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut and Mr. FITZPATRICK.

H.R. 3130: Mr. DONOVAN.

H.R. 3144: Mr. MCCAUL and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.

H.R. 3151: Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.

H.R. 3173: Mr. NOLAN.

H.R. 3229: Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. JOLLY, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. KATKO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee.

H.R. 3310: Mr. ROUZER and Mr. COLLINS of New York.

H.R. 3314: Mr. ROUZER, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. PALAZZO, and Mr. NUGENT.

H.R. 3326: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri and Mr. POE of Texas.

H.R. 3338: Mr. PETERS and Ms. DUCKWORTH.

H.R. 3381: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. HIGGINS, and Mrs. BEATTY.

H.R. 3412: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. LEE, and Mr. DESAULNIER.

H.R. 3457: Mr. DOLD.

H.R. 3458: Ms. LOFGREN.

H.R. 3459: Mr. HILL, Mr. ROONEY of Florida, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. JOLLY, Mr. ROSS, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mrs. COMSTOCK, and Mr. BUCK.

H.R. 3463: Mr. GOODLATTE and Mr. ROE of Tennessee.

H.R. 3516: Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, and Mr. CARTER of Texas.

H.R. 3532: Mr. KIND.

H.R. 3542: Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 3543: Mr. POLIS.

H.R. 3573: Mr. BYRNE.

H.R. 3618: Mrs. BLACK.

H.R. 3626: Mr. FARENTHOLD.

H.R. 3628: Mr. MACARTHUR.

H.R. 3632: Mr. GRIJALVA and Ms. LEE.

H.R. 3640: Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, and Ms. BROWN of Florida.

H.R. 3643: Mr. KIND and Mr. WILLIAMS.

H.R. 3646: Mr. VELA.

H.R. 3651: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Ms. NORTON, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. RIBBLE, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. WOODALL, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. SANFORD, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. TITUS, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. KATKO, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. RUSH, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. COSTA, Mr. BOST, Mr. ASHFORD, Mr. VISCLOSKY, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. CLAY, Mr. SCHRADER, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. HARPER, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. POCAN, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. YODER, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. FLORES, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. DOLD, Mr. BENISHEK, Mr. PETERS, Mr. UPTON, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. LONG, Mr. KLINE, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. EMMER of Minnesota, Mr. ZINKE, Mr. HILL, Mr. BYRNE, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. POMPEO, and Mr. LOBIONDO.

H.J. Res. 19: Mr. SANFORD.

H.J. Res. 59: Mr. LATTA, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, and Mrs. WALORSKI.

H. Con. Res. 77: Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H. Res. 28: Ms. BONAMICI.

H. Res. 54: Ms. BONAMICI.

H. Res. 112: Mr. CRENSHAW.

H. Res. 210: Mr. QUIGLEY.

H. Res. 214: Mr. SERRANO, Ms. LOFGREN, and Mrs. DINGELL.

H. Res. 220: Mr. RUSSELL.

H. Res. 293: Mr. HIGGINS.

H. Res. 346: Mr. WILLIAMS.

H. Res. 354: Mr. HULTGREN and Mr. LEVIN.

H. Res. 428: Mr. POLIS.

H. Res. 453: Ms. FUDGE, Ms. BASS, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. LEE, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Ms. Adams, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.

PETITIONS, ETC.

Under clause 3 of rule XII, petitions and papers were laid on the Clerk's desk and referred as follows:

29. The SPEAKER presented a petition of Board of Chosen Freeholders, Morris County, New Jersey, relative to Resolution No. 59, strongly urging their Congressional delegation to reject the terms of the Iran Nuclear Agreement, and to vote to override the anticipated veto of President Obama; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

30. Also, a petition of Village Council of Bal Harbour Village, Florida, relative to Resolution No. 2015-978, encouraging the Florida Delegation to the 114th Congress of the United States of America not to approve the proposed agreement between the United States and Iran regarding the operation of Iranian nuclear facilities; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

31. Also, a petition of Council of the County of Maui, Hawaii, relative to Resolution No. 15-109, urging Congress to pass the Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2015; jointly to the Committees on the Judiciary and Energy and Commerce.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161 WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2015 No. 143

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.

Almighty God, as bombs fall in Syria and refugees seek safety, may all who are oppressed look to You. In spite of our world's turbulence, we continue to proclaim Your greatness for Your sovereignty will prevail. Free us from fear. Answer when we call. Shelter us from disappointment.

Bless our Senators. Lord, fill them with the Spirit of Your wisdom, making them equal to challenges of this difficult season of our national and world history. Open their minds to comprehend Your wisdom, their ears to hear Your guidance, and their hearts to obey Your biddings.

Lift the light of Your countenance upon all who seek You and give them Your peace.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

FOREIGN POLICY AND SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS AND VETERANS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, with each passing day, the American people are reminded of the peril attached to the Obama administration's inflexible determination to conduct foreign policy based on campaign promises made in 2008. These goals—unilaterally withdrawing from Iraq and Afghanistan based on fixed deadlines, ending the war on terror and some of the critical tools used to pursue Al Qaeda, closing the secure detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, withdrawing from our deployed forward presence, slashing investment in our conventional armed services, and pursuing nuclear agreements with Russia and Iran at any cost—have remained constant, although the world has changed right in front of our Commander in Chief.

Yesterday we saw the Obama administration threaten to veto the national Defense authorization bill, which recently passed the Senate by a large bipartisan majority of 71 to 25. It passed the House by a big bipartisan margin as well.

This is the legislation that sets out military policy and authorizes funds for our military each year. It is always one of the most important bills we consider every year, but it is especially important right now.

The number of threats currently facing us is truly staggering. The last month and week have brought glaring reminders. We are now seeing Russian forces deploy to Syria to preserve the Assad regime. Although Moscow may try to call this some kind of counterterrorism campaign, let's be perfectly clear: Russia's offensive is designed to protect Assad's Alawite stronghold and Russian military installations, while driving out the moderate opposition and compelling coordination of Syrian airspace with the coalition. Russia aims to forcefully insert itself into the middle of coalition operations to gain insights into the plans of the United States and, of course, to secure a seat at the table. Meanwhile, our moderate Syrian allies stand appalled that the United States has ceded its leadership position in the broader Middle East.

Of all the promises made by this administration, withdrawing from Afghanistan by a date certain seems to ignore the attack upon Kunduz by the Taliban and the efforts of President Ghani to secure the gains of the coalition and his country's future. How can the administration be pondering a withdrawal of the force when the Taliban's offensive persists and the campaign against Al Qaeda has not yet achieved its defeat?

So many threats face us—from Russia, Iran, Syria, ISIL, and even China—as do so many different means of attack: conventional, cyber, or terror. And now the Obama administration is talking about vetoing America's national defense bill. They are talking about vetoing the national defense bill in the wake of all of this.

I will have more to say about the national defense bill in the coming days. But this is about more than one bill; it is the latest in an increasingly worrying pattern. Just last week, Democrats voted again to block funding for our military. Democrats had voted for that military funding bill in committee. They issued press releases praising the bill they had supported in the Appropriations Committee, but then they blocked the Senate from even debating it. Now they appear ready to give the same treatment to our veterans. Democrats voted for the veterans funding bill in committee. They issued press releases praising the bill. But now they seem prepared to block the Senate from even debating this bill too. It is all part of some half-baked Democratic scheme to get more money for the IRS and for Washington bureaucracies. It makes no sense, it is extreme, and it needs to stop.

The veterans funding bill before us would do right by the men and women who have given everything to protect us and who have suffered so much

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

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under the failings of this administration. This is the bill that supports veterans by funding the health care and the benefits they rely on. This is the bill. This is the bill that supports military families by funding the housing, schools, and health facilities that serve them.

The veterans legislation before us provides support for women's health, for medical research, and for veterans suffering from traumatic brain injury. It provides funding for design work at a new VA medical center in Louisville, for educational facilities at Fort Knox, and for a special operations headquarters at Fort Campbell, all in my State.

The bill contains important reforms aimed at supporting veterans in the wake of a true national disgrace—the VA scandal. The reforms funded in this bill will allow for greater national and regional progress in reducing VA claim backlogs, and they will deploy important protections for whistleblowers too.

Look, we need to remember that we have an all-volunteer force in this country. The young men and women who sign up to defend our Nation don't ask for a lot, but our Nation certainly asks a lot of them. These heroes shouldn't have to worry that their benefits or health care or the housing and support their families need might not be there.

There is a long tradition in the Senate of bipartisan support for our troops, our veterans, and their families. We saw that bipartisan tradition on full display just a few months ago when Republicans and Democrats came together in the Appropriations Committee to pass bipartisan legislation to fund our troops and support our veterans.

We ask a lot of the men and women who serve. They don't need a bigger IRS or political games like the Democrats' self-described filibuster summer; they need our care and our support. It is our turn to give back to them. Why don't we get back to the bipartisan tradition of supporting these bills so we can do what we need to do for our veterans.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

FOREIGN POLICY, BENGHAZI SELECT COMMITTEE, AND THE NEED FOR BIPARTISAN NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is hard for me, when I come here every day, to be patient and listen to my friend the Republican leader talk because he is talking about something that is not real. He is not talking about reality. He wants to get back to the bipartisan way we used to do things. I certainly agree with him, but having looked at some 600 filibusters during the last few years conducted by my Republican friends, I think that speaks volumes.

To have the Republican leader come to the floor and criticize Obama about what is going on in the Middle East—that takes a lot of gall. We all know what happened in the Middle East a number of years ago that created all these problems. It was the worst foreign policy mistake in the history of our country—invading Iraq. For what? Look what we have now in Iraq. Look what we have in the entire Middle East. So it takes a lot of rearranging facts for the Republican leader to come to the floor every day—most days I just sit here, listen, and go on about my business, but I can't do that. It is just unfair. Everyone knows we need to look no further than President Bush's invasion of Iraq to find out what the real problem is in the Middle East.

He talks about the Defense authorization bill. If it is such a great piece of legislative action, why does all of our military think it is a bad deal? This would be as if you decided one day you are going to make your house payment and your car payment with money that doesn't exist. That is what they have done. That is what the Republicans have done. They have $39 billion in the Defense authorization bill that doesn't exist. It is just on paper. It is a gimmick for short-term funding. And to have the audacity to come here and talk about—look at all the threats we are having with cyber security, cyber threats. We have a cyber bill we have tried to get on this floor. The Republicans blocked it when they were in the minority. Now when they are in the majority, they won't do a bill, period.

We have an order that is before this body now that allows us to go forward on cyber security. We already have a list of amendments to agree on. But the Republican leader won't bring it to the floor. To have him come to this floor and complain of Obama not doing anything about cyber—I would suggest my friend, every morning when he gets up, walk into the bathroom, put a little water on his face, wake up, and look in the mirror.

I will talk about this a little more in a minute, but I want to start what I have to say right now by reading a direct quote from the current House majority leader, and we are told he is going to be the next Speaker of the House of Representatives. Listen to this one, speaking about the Benghazi committee. This is what Congressman MCCARTHY told FOX News:

> Everybody thought Hillary Clinton was unbeatable, right? But we put together a Benghazi select committee, a select committee. What are her numbers today? Her numbers are dropping.

I might add, the person doing the interviewing—good job.

But there you have it. According to the odds-on favorite future Speaker of the House, the Benghazi select committee was put together to hurt Hillary Clinton politically, to make her poll numbers drop. We have been saying this all along, but we have now had a gaffe. But it wasn't a slipup; he just told the truth. This is evidence of what we have been saying. The Benghazi committee is a political stunt meant to influence Presidential elections that will be coming up in about a year. It is no surprise that Congressman MCCARTHY's own colleagues are now backpedaling on his comments as fast as they possibly can. Their elections will be in 1 week. They better take a look at whom they are going to put in as Speaker. The Republicans have taken a national tragedy—four Americans were killed—and turned it into the cheapest political farce imaginable. This is a shame. The very notion that an official House committee was used as a political tool is appalling. Even more disgraceful is the fact that they spent almost $5 million on this select committee—dollars spent on this rightwing political hatchet job.

That is not all. In addition to this select committee, they have had six other committees investigating this. There are untold millions of dollars spent on this. Whose money are they spending? They are spending taxpayer dollars.

We hear my friend make references to how bad it is that we are concerned about nondefense stuff. Yes, we are. We are concerned about nondefense stuff. We think the nondefense part of this budget should also get some recognition. We are concerned about the FBI and the Federal court system. We are concerned about the Drug Enforcement Administration and all the immigration officials who need help. We are concerned about our forests that are burning down. We are concerned about the situation we have where we don't have enough money to build our highways or to repair our highways. Yes, we are concerned about that and rightfully so. To have a secure nation is more than having a lot of bombs and bullets and airplanes and tanks and ships. It is also having a population that is educated.

We sent a letter to Speaker BOEHNER asking that the Benghazi Select Committee be disbanded. Get rid of it. It is a disgrace. Do the right thing; get rid of this.

Senate Republicans are stuck in a deep rut. They have dug this hole. They are in it, and they don't know how to get out of it. The Republican leader continues bringing bills to the Senate floor that have no chance of passing. We have things out there we could be doing.

Four months ago we said to the Republican leader: Why don't we sit down and try to work something out on this budget for the long term. We have been ignored. They have ignored the need for a consensus budget framework and instead are trying to move a flawed appropriations bill based on the Republicans' partisan budget. The Senate spoke and, of course, the bill didn't advance.

The Republican leader tried to move the same measure again last week, even though the Senate already rejected it. And to no one's surprise, it failed.

How about this one? This year—this year—we have already had eight votes on the health of American women—eight votes. Everyone knows how those votes are going to turn out, but you can't satisfy this voracious appetite the Republicans have to bash women. Yet the Republican leader continues to schedule votes on legislation that can't pass the Senate.

I think C–SPAN will have to have a disclaimer each time that flips up there that says: This is not a rerun. This is the Republican Senate doing it again. We have already done it seven times. Once more won't matter that much.

Today the Republican leader wants to rerun the same show again, this time with another bill—military construction. This appropriations bill is still based on the Republican's faulty budget. The senior Senator from Montana, the ranking member of that subcommittee, said yesterday this bill ''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.''

That is what Senator TESTER said yesterday.

It has no chance of getting 60 votes—none. I know that, and my friend the Republican leader knows that. So why are we wasting time on another vote that is destined to fail? Because they do not want to bring real legislation to the floor. Why aren't we spending our time coming to a real bipartisan solution that helps our veterans and helps the nondefense part of our country, which is so important?

The time to sit down and to begin real budget negotiations was a long time ago, but we will take it now. I am happy to learn the Republican leader said he wants negotiations—he said this a couple days ago—he wants negotiations to begin very soon. Well, isn't that nice. Democrats have been waiting for 4 months. So let's get to it.

Just imagine what we could have accomplished if the Republican leader had taken us up on our offer 4 months ago. The U.S. Government wouldn't have come within hours of a shutdown, hundreds of government agencies would not have had to spend time and effort preparing for a shutdown, diverting them from their main jobs.

If you want to see how close we were to a government shutdown take a look at what took place in the House of Representatives yesterday. We passed over here in the Senate a short-term continuing resolution to fund the government until December 11. It went to the House, and they voted on it yesterday. Three-fifths of House Republicans—151—voted for a shutdown. They voted against the continuing resolution. That says it all.

I have reminded people before, and I will do it again. The government was shut down here a couple of years ago for 17 days. We finally got it open. We passed something over here, and it went to the House. Two-thirds of the House of Representatives—Republicans in the House—voted to keep the government closed.

There are so many programs that are just not being taken care of. I will talk about a couple of them right now. There is something I have worked on since I came here—the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Presiding Officer is from Nevada. He has represented the northern part of the State for many years in different elective jobs. He understands and knows Lake Tahoe very well. It is a beautiful lake that we share with California. Well, the Land and Water Conservation Fund helps us greatly because we were able to take some money out of that program and purchase land that was going to be used for subdivision that would have allowed more filth to go into Lake Tahoe. We were able to stop that with money from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The money hasn't been coming in as we have wanted in the past, so we beefed it up and were able to do a lot of things.

Now, for the first time in 50 years, this program has been allowed to expire. It is gone. This program has been supported by Democrats and Republicans and by rural and urban communities. But on the Republicans' watch, one of the most important programs and one of the best programs for our Nation's parks—and one of the most broadly supported programs in the country—has been allowed to lapse. It is gone.

The program is funded by a portion of fees collected by offshore oil and gas drilling. Every day that it is not authorized, we lose out on collecting $2.4 million of offshore oil and gas so it can be used for our beautiful natural resources that are in a state of disrepair. This Land and Water Conservation Fund has supported projects in every State, from protecting the rim of the Grand Canyon to securing access to the Appalachian Trail, and from Lake Tahoe to building neighborhood playgrounds in urban areas across the country.

In a last-ditch effort to sway their own leadership, several Republicans came to the floor yesterday and tried to pass a stand-alone extension of the program that would be dead on arrival in the House. The Republican leaders refused to extend the program in the continuing resolution, despite many Democrats and Republicans asking for it to be included.

One other program. The good Senator from Illinois—the senior Senator from Illinois, the assistant Democratic leader, served in the House of Representatives, as I did, with a man named Claude Perkins. He was a wonderful House Member. When we came to the House in 1982, he was a very senior person. He was responsible for something called the Federal Perkins Loan Program. It wasn't reauthorized in the continuing resolution. What does that mean? As a result of that, the Nation's oldest student aid program has expired, leaving up to 150,000 students who are coming into college in the lurch.

The Perkins Loan Program offers low-interest, federally subsidized student loans for students with exceptional financial needs and also offers a variety of forgiveness options for those who choose to pursue public service professions. Last year, more than $1.2 billion in new Perkins loans were made to about 540,000 new and returning college students around the country, including 500 low-income students from Nevada.

It is hard to believe the tea party-dominated House—and obviously the Republican Caucus here is heavily influenced by the tea party—has turned a blind eye to this. It is hard to believe the tea party-dominated House of Representatives passed an extension of Perkins unanimously, but Senate Republicans would not agree to do the same. Yesterday, Senate Republicans even blocked a bid to extend the program.

These are just two of the programs that expired at midnight last night. There are many more. It is a shame because they wouldn't have expired at all if we had sat down and negotiated a few months ago. So I say to my friend the Republican leader: Let's not waste another minute on politically motivated votes that are doomed to fail. Instead, let's focus the Senate's energy and attention on bipartisan negotiations to get our country on the right track.

Mr. President, would the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein, with the time equally divided, with the majority controlling the first half and the Democrats controlling the final half.

The Senator from Louisiana.

MILCON–VA APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I wish to speak on the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill that is now being considered. I will start by saying that this is 3601 Gerstner Memorial Parkway, Lake Charles, LA. This is the location for the new Lake Charles VA clinic—a clinic that has taken 13 years to get

approved, a clinic that has seen delay after delay, costing veterans access to quality health care, a clinic still waiting to be built.

This is a picture of the current facility in Lake Charles, where veterans have to go for their health care while they have waited for over 13 years to have the new facility built. This RV and this small building are why Congress must advance this MILCON–VA appropriations bill and why the President should sign it into law.

This mobile clinic in Lake Charles—you almost laugh—is the clinic for our veterans. It is one of many such clinics in our country and is unacceptable. This is something one might see in a documentary about developing nations, not the United States of America. This RV, where our veterans are treated for serious medical conditions, is connected to a waiting room that is triple the size of the square footage of the mobile home. That is because the demand for care so greatly exceeds this subpar facility's ability to deliver health care to our veterans.

In the waiting room there is a television set, but it is not plugged in and it doesn't have a remote. That is because VA rules say you must have a TV in the waiting room, but the rules don't stipulate that it must function. It sounds like a joke. We have to have a television, but we don't say it has to be plugged in.

This is the current state of the VA, and this is what Congress is allowing when we fail to pass this needed legislation.

I would like to say this is an isolated problem but there are veterans all over the country receiving health care under similar circumstances. For more than 10 years, our young men and women have returned from war in the Middle East. These young veterans are joining men and women who have served this Nation in uniform, defending our freedom in every corner of the globe. They deserve better than a mobile home. They deserve action, and they deserve it now. If we don't pass this bill, there will be consequences for people—America's heroes—who need help now.

This is the VA portion, but it is also the military VA construction budget. If we fail to act, it will not just be our veterans who are hurt; it will also affect our Active-Duty military and our national security.

We know there is a portion of the budget which goes for actually protecting our military construction, but what sometimes people forget is there is a human face to our military. Gen. Robert Rand recently took control of Global Strike, a position that is charged with maintaining our nuclear triad and first strike capabilities, but there are those in the Air Force who serve under General Rand. He needs the resources to maintain our nuclear ability, but without this legislation we cannot maintain his combat readiness, which includes basic needs such as housing for our soldiers and educating their children.

I urge my fellow Senators to consider what is included in this legislation: family housing, schools, medical facilities for Active-Duty personnel and their families, and funding for the care of 6.9 million veterans.

Let me add something to this. As a doctor, I am glad we also specifically provide for groundbreaking hepatitis C treatments and for modernizing the VA electronic medical records system.

The Senate Appropriations Committee passed the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill by a bipartisan vote of 12 to 9, with all Republicans and 5 Democrats voting in favor.

This is common sense. Congress has the duty to pass this legislation now, and the President has an obligation to sign it. We must honor our commitment to our military and to our veterans.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill.

Yesterday, Congress sent the President a continuing resolution, a bill to prevent a government shutdown. This was necessary to ensure that vital resources and services the American people depend on do not lapse and in order to avoid harm to jobs and our economy. But as my colleagues fully realize, simply putting government on autopilot through a continuing resolution is not the responsible way to fund government. It locks in last year's priorities, delays the start of vital new programs, and allows unneeded programs to continue to be funded. We must pass the 12 annual appropriations bills.

In July of this year, the Senate Appropriations Committee, on which I am privileged to serve, reported the last of the 12 bills. This was the first time that all 12 of the appropriations bills have been approved by the committee, in plenty of time for the Senate to act, since 2009. It is past time for the Senate to take up and pass these funding bills so that we can go to conference with our House colleagues and send to the President annual funding bills that reflect our current priorities that benefit the American people.

In May of this year—in May—the Senate Appropriations Committee reported the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs funding bill by a strong, bipartisan vote of 21 to 9. As a member of the subcommittee with jurisdiction over this bill, I know this represented bipartisan consensus and hard work. It reflected the leadership of Chairman KIRK and Ranking Member TESTER.

This bill provides vital resources for our veterans and our servicemembers. We are operating under very challenging budget constraints, and I support the negotiations that are going on now. But it is long past time for the Senate to take up, debate, amend, and pass each of these appropriations bills. We have the opportunity to do that just now, and I do not understand those who argue that we should not proceed with the normal appropriations process.

Those who disagree with provisions in this bill will have the opportunity to offer amendments to change the bill. But to not even allow this vital funding bill for our military and for our veterans to come to the Senate floor is an argument that I do not accept nor understand.

We owe it to our Nation's veterans, 127,000 of whom reside in the great State of Maine. There are more than 21 million nationwide. We owe it to them to move forward with this important bill. These veterans answered the call to duty. They shouldered the hardships and sacrifices of military service. They have done their jobs. It is time for the Senate to do its job. We must fulfill our obligations and affirm a larger commitment made long ago to take care of those who have so proudly served our Nation—the patriots who have worn our Nation's uniform.

To highlight a few examples of why this bill is so important, let me mention that it ensures our veterans have access to critical mental health care services. It aims to reduce veteran homelessness—a very important issue to me that I have worked on with Senator JACK REED as a member of the HUD and transportation appropriations subcommittee—another bill that we need to bring to the Senate floor. This bill provides funding to pay veterans benefits and includes $270 million for the Office of Rural Health, important to the Presiding Officer as well as to my State. This office has established the program called the ARCH Program, or Access Received Closer to Home. ARCH ensures that rural veterans in the pilot States, who often have a difficult time accessing the regular VA health system, can receive care closer to where they live. This has been a tremendous success in northern Maine, which has one of the pilot programs in Caribou, ME, in conjunction with Cary Memorial Hospital. This has made such a difference to our veterans.

I remember one of our veterans telling me about breaking his hip last winter in the height of a terrible winter storm. Instead of enduring a painful and bumpy ride for more than 4 hours to get to the VA hospital in Augusta, he was able, through the ARCH Program, to receive care at his local hospital, Cary Memorial in Caribou, ME. He also had the benefit of being able to receive care closer to where his family and friends were.

The programs that I just mentioned, like so many that are contained within the Military Construction-VA appropriations bill, are essential to ensuring that veterans who have placed their lives on the line for our continued safety receive the benefits they have

earned. This bill is essential to providing updated military housing and other construction upon which those who are serving today depend.

It is simply irresponsible for us not to proceed with consideration of this and every other appropriations bill. They are ready. They have been reported by committee. Let's do our job. We must do our best to honor those who serve, and who have served, and who have sacrificed so much for our country. Surely—surely—the Senate should do its part. We should do our part by promptly passing this important bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I wish to commend the distinguished Senator from Maine. She has articulately explained why we need to move forward, and I want to underscore something that she said.

For 6 years now, the Senate has abdicated its responsibility to appropriate. We have left the prioritization of spending to faceless bureaucrats and faceless buildings in Washington, DC. The needs of our veterans and soldiers and our country have gone unheeded, while we in here have argued about things that are superfluous and actually unimportant.

I came into this Chamber today and listened to the distinguished Senator from Nevada, the minority leader, make the following statement: He can't understand why the leader would bring forward a ''can't-pass'' piece of legislation and not go to something more important.

I want the Senator from Nevada to go out to Walter Reed Hospital or to go to the hospital in Maine or the hospital in Arkansas and tell those soldiers, who sacrificed and risked their lives for us, that their needs for health care are not more important, or to tell Jim Webb, who was a Member of this Senate and passed the GI bill expansion a few years ago, that the educational benefits for dependents, children, wives, and others are not that important. Tell the people of the United States of America that those who protect us, those who have sacrificed, those at risk are not more important.

There is nothing more important than our veterans and our military. There is nothing more important in our constitutional responsibility as Senators than to appropriate the money of the American people. We are abdicating our responsibility. It is professional and political malpractice, and it is time it stopped. I get sick and tired of the political bantering back and forth when there are things come before us that must be done.

As chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, last Thursday night in this Senate we passed unanimously—and it has now passed the House—a total reform of VA construction, and we fixed the Denver hospital problem that has been going on for 6 years in the VA. The Denver hospital has had a 428.3 percent cost overrun. That is unconscionable and that is wrong. But we finally are fixing it.

With this bill—if the distinguished minority leader will let us take up this important bill, rather than something that is not as important—we are going to fix VA construction forever because what this does is to say that the VA no longer is in charge of construction of hospitals and clinics. The Corps of Engineers is. It is about time we had construction management by people who know what they are doing. Doctors are good at fixing people, but they are not very good at bricks and mortar. We need the bricks and mortar people doing it.

Secondly, this bill funds mandatory veterans' benefits through 2017. We had a threat of a government shutdown yesterday. Fortunately, we avoided it, but we have had it in the past, and we could have it again. Veterans health care should never be shut down, and we need to continue to forward-fund medical benefits so our veterans know—whether or not we are foolish and shut down the government—that their health care is going to be met.

As the Presiding Officer knows, in the great State of South Dakota—and Senator COLLINS knows from Maine—the biggest complaint we get is about the lack of timely responsibility in determining disability claims in the VA; right? We have veterans waiting 478 days to get a disability claim on an injury they suffered fighting a war for us—478 days, almost 2 years. That is terribly wrong. This bill fixes that. It provides the money for the personnel necessary to expedite disability claims so veterans get a timely judgment.

Now you tell me this, Senator from Nevada: What is more important, taking care of these guys taking care of us or just debating on the Senate floor a bunch of hot air that means no difference to the American people?

It is time we fished or cut bait. It is time we did what we were elected to. It is time we set the priorities. It is time we honored our commitment to those who honored their commitment to us, the veterans of the United States of America.

So as chairman of the most bipartisan committee in the Senate, the Veterans' Affairs Committee—of which the Presiding Officer is a member—we don't have Democratic spats and Republican spats. We talk about our veterans. Almost everything we pass out is unanimous. We do so because we all agree that—Republican or Democrat, black or white, rich or poor, whatever the case might be—we would not be where we are today nor would we be what we are today if it weren't for those who sacrificed, risked their lives, and, in some cases, died for the people of the United States of America while serving in the military.

So I don't know what the Senator from Nevada thinks is more important. But for me, these guys right here are the most important thing in the world. And to vote against proceeding to debate this important appropriations bill is professional malpractice and wrong. I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will make a commitment to those who served us and vote to proceed to the VA-MILCON appropriations bill.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, yesterday Congress passed yet another short-term continuing resolution. While this avoids a shutdown, it is far from ideal. Certainly a shutdown is not good governing. I think all of us can agree on that much. I wish to remind my colleagues, though—particularly those on the other side of the aisle—that continuing resolutions are hardly better. While the American people demand that we get our financial house in order, Washington continues to pass stopgap after stopgap funding bills. Instead of tackling this challenge head-on, these short-term extensions continue current funding levels and prevent us from stopping waste, fraud, and abuse of taxpayer dollars. Just like a shutdown, this, too, is no way to govern. There is another option. We don't have to choose between a continuing resolution and a shutdown. The third choice is the right choice, and that choice is for this Chamber to follow regular order and pass all 12 appropriations bills.

We have done our work at the Appropriations Committee. For the first time in 6 years, every spending bill has cleared committee—all 12—and most of them passed with strong bipartisan support. I commend the Appropriations Chairman COCHRAN and Leader MCCONNELL for their leadership to make that happen.

The full Senate has the responsibility to consider each of these bills as well. Leader MCCONNELL is committed to this approach. Our caucus is behind it 100 percent. The minority, on the other hand, is actively working against it. Committee passage of these 12 bills was no easy task. Both sides made compromises. These bills were the product of a great deal of give-and-take.

We worked very hard for months to ensure that these bills reflect the spending and policy priorities that are right for our Nation. These bills should not simply be left for dead. The President is encouraging the Senate Democrats to obstruct the appropriations process because he wants more domestic spending for agencies like the EPA and IRS. This is not the direction our country needs to go. I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will reconsider this failed strategy.

The funding bills show the American people that we share their priorities. For instance, the bill before us takes care of our Active Military and our veterans when they return home. Clearly this is an area of bipartisan agreement. Yet talk of a filibuster remains.

Here is what the minority is considering filibustering: increases in funding for veterans services, military housing and family support, hospital and health facilities construction, just to name a few vital things in this bill. The bill increases funding in areas where our veterans need it most—health care, benefit claims processing, and medical research. It also includes funding for projects to ensure military readiness and improve the quality of life for military families. In light of the numerous scandals that have plagued the VA, it includes some strong policy reforms such as protection for whistleblowers.

These are funding and policy priorities for both sides of the aisle. That is why this bill passed out of the Appropriations Committee with strong bipartisan support. That is why it should move forward without resistance on the Senate floor. Yet the minority is threatening a filibuster for reasons that have nothing to do with this bill. This is all about protecting the President's agenda.

President Obama wants spending increases across the board. He has issued a blanket veto threat for any appropriations bill that does not meet his demands. Basically, the President's view is that if such agencies don't get more money, then neither should our veterans or military families. It is my hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle recognize this is out of line with our Nation's priorities.

The right thing to do is reject the President's call to obstruct so we can continue to work together for the good of the country. Determining how we allocate taxpayer dollars is our responsibility, not the President's. Continuing resolutions have been all too common, while they should be a rare exception. We need to reestablish our priority of regular order and pass the individual funding bills that are needed to keep the government open. We can start that today and by moving the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill forward.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, we heard from many Members talking about the situation with the appropriations bill, and I would like to add my voice to the chorus. For too long uncertainty has hampered our Nation's ability to grow our economy and make necessary investments in our workforce, our infrastructure, and our technology. It was imperative that we avoided an unnecessary and reckless government shutdown this week, but that was a short-term patch. Now more than ever we need to take longer term actions to move our economy and our Nation forward.

As the Senator from Arkansas mentioned, earlier this year the Appropriations Committee, on which I sit, accomplished something that has not been done since 2009. We passed all 12 appropriations bills through the full committee. We did so in a fiscally responsible way. We did so within the budget caps agreed to by the Congress. Many of us voted for those budget caps. We did so with broad-based bipartisan support; 9 of the 12 bills had broad-based bipartisan support. These bills touch every aspect of government and every facet of our economy. From transportation, medical research, energy investments to justice programs, these funding bills were robustly debated.

Knowing all this, why are the Democrats blocking the Senate from considering one of these single appropriations bills? Earlier this week it was the Defense appropriations. Today it is the MILCON–VA. Why? Why are they blocking these same bills that many of them have previously voted for in committee and touted to their constituents?

Last week I had the privilege of traveling across West Virginia with VA Secretary McDonald. We heard directly from veterans about their challenges and needs. One of the things we discussed was the Greenbrier County community-based outpatient clinic that had been closed. Secretary McDonald made a commitment, with over 200 veterans that we had in the room from that area, that that clinic would reopen quickly, but without the certainty of the funding that we have in these bills, Secretary McDonald cannot make those assertions across the country. We went to the Huntington VA Hospital, where we met with employees and veterans—committed individuals who want to see our veterans treated the way we want them to be treated, but the advances in medical technologies can't move forward without a certainty of what the funding levels are.

These men and women, our brave veterans, deserve our unified support and should not be subjected to the gridlock that has been so common in these past few years. The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs bill funds construction and care for facilities and services that assist our military veterans. It improves facilities for men and women who are willing to sacrifice for our freedoms. I will say, many of our VA facilities are challenged with approximately 20 percent of women veterans who are coming out. They don't have facilities to adequately treat our women veterans. This bill also includes funding for construction of State extended-care facilities, which helps construct, expand, and remodel nursing home facilities to care for our elderly veterans. We know many of our veterans are aging in larger and larger numbers.

Determining our Nation's spending priorities, especially when it comes to our veterans, is one of Congress's most important responsibilities. Our process can work and our government can function. We demonstrated that at the committee level. We need to demonstrate that as well today on the floor of the Senate, but make no mistake about this, this is not just about process; it is also about progress. Funding bills are not just numbers on paper; they are people. They are our veterans. They are our friends and neighbors, our fathers and mothers, our sons and daughters. They represent the priorities of our Nation.

There are other things in the appropriations bills that are equally important. We passed out historic investments in NIH and community health centers. We passed out critical infrastructure improvements from expanding broadband access to trying to help with the drug epidemic. You cannot measure the impact of programs like the National Guard Counterdrug Program, which is helping to combat the spread of illegal drugs in our State, or the work of the Appalachian Regional Commission which helps to improve the lives of so many. Endless continuing resolutions are not the most effective ways to meet these needs and can be proved wasteful in both time and dollars. Our bills provide critical funding, but they also provide direction on significant policy matters that are facing this Nation.

When we operate from one short-term funding patch to the other, we as Members of Congress are forfeiting our responsibility to hold the executive branch accountable. Advancing appropriations bills through regular order is a vital check on wasteful spending and overreach in our government agencies.

We need to work together. We can start that today, and I hope we will later this afternoon. These are broad goals, and the goals are shown in those bills. As the Senate begins consideration of funding for Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, we should remember this: Governing is about setting priorities and bringing fiscal responsibility to the Federal Government, while ensuring that we provide for the necessary investments and services. Supporting our veterans is not only necessary, it is about the men and women who put their lives on the line for us so we can enjoy the freedoms we have here today. West Virginia is a very patriotic State, with one of the highest percentages of military veterans. I want to see that they are cared for properly. I am going to make that vote today. I hope my colleagues—the ones who are on the Appropriations Committee who have already voted in favor of this bill—will convince their colleagues on the other side that gridlock and obstructionism is not the way to go in the Senate. It is time to work across the aisle to pass this bill and support our veterans. Doing so will strengthen our Nation.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CAPITO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

SENTENCING REFORM

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, there are many stories written in the last months about the dysfunction of Congress, why can't they get along, why can't they produce something, why can't they address the issues and challenges of our time. It is easy to get into that mindset and believe that something has happened on Capitol Hill that cannot be repaired. For those who are about to give up hope, I hope they are reflecting on what I left just a few moments ago. It was a press conference held up in the radio and TV Senate gallery.

Attending this press conference were Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY, who is the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee; Senator JOHN CORNYN, the Republican whip; Senator MIKE LEE of Utah; and Senator TIM SCOTT. On the Democratic side: Senator PATRICK LEAHY, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee; Senator COREY BOOKER of New Jersey, a relatively new Member of the Senate; Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE; and Senator CHUCK SCHUMER.

We were there to announce what we think is a historic achievement, a historic agreement. We have been working now for years, literally for years, on both sides of the aisle to make significant and meaningful criminal sentencing reform and reform to the corrections system of the United States of America. On that stage, from MIKE LEE to PAT LEAHY and DICK DURBIN, was the entire political spectrum of the Senate. Within that spectrum, there are a lot of differences of opinion. There were times a year ago that I did not think that meeting and that announcement would take place.

But today we came together, on a bipartisan basis, to announce that we had reached an agreement, a historic agreement, on the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2015. We knew we had a problem in America, a problem of incarceration. A nation with 5 percent of the world's population has 25 percent of the world's prison population. What is going on in America? Why are so many people in prison, and has it made us any safer? We asked those hard questions and came up with what we think is a good response.

We took a category of crime, drug use, that does not involve violence or a gun or gang activity and said: We are going to give to the judge in that case, that category of cases, more flexibility when it comes to sentencing. The minimum mandatory requirements can be changed by the judge based on the defendant before him, the crime they committed, and what that judge believes to be the best for our society.

It is such a change. For the longest time, years and decades, our goal was to incarcerate as many as possible, and we did, some of them for extraordinarily unfair and unjust periods of time. The worst vote—the worst vote I ever cast as a Member of Congress was in the House. It goes back more than 20 years ago. A basketball player at the University of Maryland named Len Bias died from a drug overdose. We were called on to stiffen the penalties for crack cocaine in America and we did, dramatically: 100 to 1 for crack cocaine versus sentencing for powdered cocaine—100 to 1. The net result of that in several decades of sentencing was to send away primarily African Americans for incredibly long sentences. Eugenia Jennings of Alton, IL, a teenage mother and a crack addict was selling crack cocaine, a handful of it, to buy clothes and food for her children. It was her third offense.

When she was convicted, the mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines gave Judge PATRICK MURPHY no choice but to hand down a sentence of 23 years in prison. Judge Murphy said at the time: This country, this government, has done nothing for you, Ms. Jennings, through your tortured life, and now at this moment in life we are going to kick you hard.

The judge knew it was the wrong sentence. Fortunately, Eugenia Jennings' sentence was commuted after a dozen years. She was released from prison to be with her children, only for a short time. She passed away from cancer. But that is just one statistic, one story, and it can be repeated thousands of times.

This bill tries to avoid that type of injustice. We were not going to be a safer State, a safer nation if she served 23 years instead of 12. It made no sense. So we address it with this bill. With this bill, we go after a new approach in sentencing on this narrow category of crimes, which we believe can result in many serving shorter sentences.

Secondly, for those who are still in prison subject to that 100-to-1 ratio on sentencing, we give 6,500 inmates in the Federal prison system a chance to petition for reconsideration of their sentence on an individual basis, so they can be judged by judges, prosecutors, and people in the community as to whether their sentence should be changed.

So this, in a way, is a sweeping bill when it comes to the population of our prisons. I believe—many agree—it would be far better to take the $25,000, $30,000, $35,000 a year it costs to house an inmate and put it instead into community policing, making our neighborhoods safer, giving our prosecutors the resources they need to not only come down with the right sentences but variations in sentencing like drug courts, veterans courts, and things that are working around America which will make us safer at a lower cost. We will have more money available to the Department of Justice and across the board to go after the seriously threatening criminals we still have in America whom we can never ever ignore.

Senator CORNYN and Senator WHITEHOUSE took a look at those in prison to determine ways they could earn an earlier release or better terms of release. They did extraordinary work. Senator Corey Booker of New Jersey stepped in on an issue that all of us who serve with him know he feels so passionately about, the African-American incarceration rate and particularly the impact it has on young people in that part of our population. He made some valuable contributions to this bill.

It is our hope we can bring this bill to the Senate Judiciary Committee soon. Senator GRASSLEY gave his word that would happen, and then bring it to the floor and send it to the House.

For those who say, ''What is going to happen over there, with all of the changes taking place?'' I would make one observation: Our spectrum of political support for the bill we had at the press conference represents the spectrum in the House as well. All of us came together. All of them can come together too. They may not agree with every word in this bill. Having served in the House, I am sure they won't. But if they will make the same good-faith effort at finding reasonable compromise, then we can reach a historic achievement, a historic outcome in this process.

I wish to commend one member of my staff in particular who has devoted more hours than I could ever count to make this a reality. His name is Joe Zogby. He is my lead counsel on the Senate Judiciary Committee. Time and time again, Joe Zogby has performed so professionally and with such determination, from my point of view and I am sure from other Senators' points of view. We wouldn't be here today if we didn't have staffers like Joe who have given so much of their time and their heartfelt dedication to finding a solution to an American problem.

So before we walk away from the Congress and say there is no hope, take a look at this bill and this effort. This is how the Senate is supposed to work. This is how the House is supposed to work. It is how Congress is supposed to work. It is how America expects us to work.

The President is anxious for us to come up with this work product. Let's not disappoint him and the millions of Americans who count on us to solve the problems facing America.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

9/11 HEALTH PROGRAM

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I rise today to mark a sad occasion. Yesterday, parts of the Zadroga 9/11 Health

and Compensation Act expired. Specifically, the authorization of the 9/11 health program—one of the two critical programs in the Zadroga act—came to an end last night and will have to start winding down. Thankfully, Dr. Howard and his team, who run the program, have responsibly managed their funding, so they can continue to support health services and benefits for several months on into the future, perhaps another year.

To be clear, our brave heroes are still able to get health care from this program today. That fact, however, should diminish in no way our responsibility in Congress to reauthorize the program as quickly as possible and permanently—forever. In truth, it is a black mark on a Congress that the program was ever allowed to expire, regardless of its ability to continue operations in the short term.

The firefighters, police men and women, construction workers, and first responders from 9/11—many of them injured, many of them sick—traveled to Washington a few weeks ago to lobby Congress, to petition their representatives and their government to continue supporting basic health services they need to treat cancers, respiratory ailments, and other illnesses directly linked to 9/11.

I wish to thank my colleague from New York, Senator GILLIBRAND, for her valued work on this issue. It has been a passion for her. She took the torch Hillary Clinton first lit when she was here as Senator and has run with it hard and well. I am proud to be her partner in trying to make sure that Zadroga, in both its parts, is extended permanently.

People would think it would be easy to get this done considering all the legislators who say they will never forget, who make promises each anniversary to honor the heroes of 9/11. We should not need them to walk the Halls of Congress to win support for basic services for those who walked undaunted through dust, fire, rubble, and ash, who risked their lives to save their fellow citizens. The first responders who ran to the smoldering towers on 9/11 are just like our veterans—they volunteered and risked their lives for our safety. These folks didn't have to do this. They volunteered. They knew the dangers, but they care about our safety. We should not forget them.

But their voices and the impassioned advocacy of folks like John Feal and Jon Stewart have had a real impact. On September 16, when these first responders visited Congress, the majority leader graciously said he would meet with them personally and said: ''We do plan to extend the program and the committees . . . in the House and the Senate are actually working on the details now.'' It was a real breakthrough.

The first responders who pled their case, the advocates who supported them each step of the way, and champions in Congress such as Senator GILLIBRAND here and Representatives NADLER and MALONEY in the House, who passionately led the fight for this bill for years now, deserve much of the credit. They are the reason we have so many cosponsors—56 here in the Senate, including 12 Republicans. I wish to thank the Presiding Officer for being one of those recent cosponsors.

That is why I was so troubled to hear earlier this week, when again asked if the Senate would consider the extension of the Zadroga act before the deadline, the majority leader said he would ''have to check and get back on that.''

When the towers were hit, the firefighters and the EMS workers and cops who rushed into those burning buildings did not stop and say ''I have to check on that and get back to you.'' When the towers came down and there was a hellhole of twisted steel and smoldering plasterboard, with our brothers and sisters trapped within, the smell of burning flesh still in the air—I was there; I vividly remember it—and thousands with anguished faces holding signs that said ''Did you see my mother, Mary? Have you seen my brother, Bob?'' because people didn't know where people were—maybe they were still alive but trapped in the smoldering towers—the first responders so bravely rushed in to see if they could save any lives. They did not say ''I have to check on that and get back to you.'' No, they rushed right to the towers. They rushed in even before they were asked. They did their duty. They did more than their duty. Many died. Many more are suffering. We don't need to check on things and get back to them. We need to write the check to fund their health care for the injuries they sustained in selfless service to their Nation when we were under attack by a foreign enemy. Period. End of story.

So what changed so much over the course of 2 weeks? When the first responders were here in DC, the majority leader committed to passing the legislation they need and so richly deserve for their heroism. A few weeks later, when the eyes of the world aren't watching quite so closely, he said: I will have to check and get back.

I would plead with the majority leader to help move this legislation forward and move it forward quickly. Let's not have to have these first responders, many of whom have all kinds of cancers they acquired on those fatal days after 9/11, come back here again and again. Let the doctors who are bravely working for the program not have to worry whether they will have a job. And let the program itself, which has been done without an iota of fraud—all the claims of ''Let's do it for 5 years because we are not sure it will work''—those are the things we negotiated, Senator GILLIBRAND and I with Senator Coburn—those worries are gone. It is working exquisitely well, and there has not been an iota of fraud or misspent money.

So we shouldn't have to check on it; we should just move forward. I plead, plead, plead with our majority leader, who was genuinely moved by the first responders when he met them, to make sure the bill moves forward. And let me say the same to the new leaders—whoever they may become—in the new House, in the new elections that are coming.

We cannot leave these heroes in limbo. We cannot leave them wondering if their health program, now expired, will be there for them if and when they get sick. As John Stewart said so well, cancer doesn't expire.

I only ask one thing this morning—one thing: that the majority leader and the Speaker honor their commitments to put this bill on the floor of both Houses. I implore them to move quickly to pass the Zadroga 9/11 health reauthorization act.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 2029, which the clerk will report.

The 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I am here this morning to speak about the issue that is before this body, the motion to proceed to H.R. 2029, or what we refer to as the MILCON–VA appropriations bill.

I certainly intend to support closing off debate on this and moving to take up this important appropriations measure. This is important for a host of different reasons, not the least of which is that we need to get to the substance of this issue. We need to get back to a regular order process in order to advance the appropriations bills that we on the Appropriations Committee have spent a considerable amount of time and effort drafting.

Over these past many months, we have worked to make sure that the bills were ready for floor consideration. We didn't want to find ourselves in a situation where, at the end of this year, we scramble to piece together an omnibus measure that has not had the considered debate and opportunity for amendment that I believe we all seek as lawmakers. It is important that we consider the Military Construction-VA bill in regular order and do it now—not stick it on the back end of another measure, not incorporate it into an omnibus bill or into some fashion of a CR omnibus right before Christmas.

I serve on the Appropriations Committee. I had input into this bill at the subcommittee level and again at the full committee markup, which is a lot more than can be said of many of my colleagues in this body who don't have that opportunity since they are not on the Appropriations Committee. But even after having the input that I have had, it is extraordinarily important that I have another opportunity to influence the bill, and I will illustrate why.

I am going to speak about one very specific issue today that has garnered the attention, concern, and passion of Alaskans and veterans around the State, and that is the issue surrounding the Veterans Choice Card.

In the view of many Alaskans, the Veterans Choice Card is an unmitigated disaster in our State, and there are many reasons that is the case. We don't host a stand-alone VA hospital in Alaska. So the VA has issued a Choice Card to every veteran in the State who is enrolled for health care. In order to use the Choice Card, you have to identify a provider that is willing to accept the card, qualifies under the very onerous Choice Card standards, and is also willing to put up with the bureaucratic strings that are attached to determining which care is approved by the VA over what period of time and for what price.

In Alaska, we have a demand for health care providers that far outstrips the supply, and I have been on the floor many times speaking on that subject. We have many Alaskans that have private health insurance which pays the providers better, and it is certainly more efficient than the government-sponsored programs.

Structurally, the way the Veterans Choice Card Program is currently designed, it does not provide Alaska's veterans with the choices that it promises. It is just as simple as that, and those are just the structural problems we are talking about. Many of our colleagues know that TriWest has encountered difficulties with implementing the program, and the VA has had trouble coordinating TriWest's work with the work of the local VA facilities. Unfortunately, these problems have led to some dangerous near-misses.

We had one situation with a veteran who was scheduled for a fee-basis neurosurgery. He was going to receive this care from a community provider in the State. Then he was told by the VA that the VA had changed its mind. They were not going to sign off on paying for the care. The vet was told to call TriWest. The TriWest call center operator gave the veteran a list of behavioral health providers who had signed up to accept the Choice Card. The call center operator didn't know that neurosurgery is not the same as behavioral health. By the time the VA had reversed itself, the neurosurgery that the veteran had initially scheduled was no longer available. The vet had to wait for one to become available.

What happened in the interim? They gave the veteran pain medicine.

In another case, we had a veteran sent to Seattle for a course of radiation therapy, and in the middle of this course of radiation therapy the vet was told to return home because his authorization had expired. He was told: The authorization has expired. Go home.

It is not as if he could just get in a car and drive 20 minutes back to his house. He had been sent to Seattle from a rural community in Southeast Alaska for the care—for the radiation therapy. They said: Go home. Your authorization has expired.

So there was a whole series of exchanges with TriWest and then with the VA itself. The vet began, basically, calling family members to tell them he was coming home to die and to start making funeral preparations. This is not how we treat our veterans.

Now the Veterans Choice legislation provided that the Choice Card program does not displace any of the existing VA purchased care programs. It explicitly supplemented those programs, which for us in Alaska would be a good thing. In Alaska, the VA—and this was under Secretary Shinseki's leadership—established two purchased care programs to address gaps in VA capacity in Alaska. One of the programs provided for partnerships with our tribal health system to care for our vets in more remote areas of the State where the VA simply doesn't have a presence. It was innovative. It was innovative at the time, and these partnerships worked. They really did help to facilitate the care. The other program called ''Care Closer to Home'' enabled the VA to purchase care from community providers in the State who performed medical services that the VA didn't offer—services such as neurosurgery and specialized forms of radiation therapy.

Before this program was implemented, the VA forced veterans to fly to Seattle or other parts of the country for services that we would consider pretty routine. You have a 1,000-mile-plus flight to Seattle for an orthopedic appointment or for a neurosurgery appointment. This is what we are putting our veterans through. Imagine you are 70 years old, 80 years old, and you are told to go take a flight for 3½ hours to Seattle—get yourself to the hospital just for an orthopedic appointment. By the time the veteran is at this place and needs that appointment, you are not feeling well in the first place.

I have talked and written before about a veteran on the Kenai Peninsula who died while fighting with the VA over urology care. He couldn't travel to Anchorage, which is about a 3-hour drive, much less to Seattle where the VA wanted to send him because he was in very frail condition, but the VA refused to purchase his care on the Kenai Peninsula where there are facilities that could have helped him. I think we would all agree that when our elderly veterans are in perhaps their final months of life, they have got a lot better things to do than fight with the VA and the bureaucracy.

When the VA came to the hearings before the appropriations subcommittee, I asked them pointblank whether the implementation of the Veterans Choice Card would adversely affect the existing purchased care programs in Alaska, whether it is through IHS or further specialized care, and the answer was clear. There was no nuance; there was no doubt. The answer was no, it is not going to impact negatively the purchased care program. When the Senate Appropriations Committee marked up the MILCON-VA bill on May 21, the VA hadn't changed its answer. It is not going to negatively impact, they said.

Then a week later, on May 28, I happened to be visiting the VA facility in Anchorage, and I learned there that the VA had spent all of its fiscal year 2015 purchased care money and was planning to suspend its relationships with community providers and the Alaska tribal health system.

I had gone to the VA center to get an update, to check in with the new docs who were there and to see how things were going. It was basically a checkup with the folks at VA, and they laid this bombshell. They weren't trying to be coy with me or hide the ball. They had just learned themselves. I don't know who was in greater shock, me or the folks there at the VA and their military partners.

We were also in a situation where there were a lot of rumors that the VA was going to pull out of the Joint Venture Hospital that it shares with the Air Force on the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. Again, this was a bombshell of news. Now we know that the VA was not just out of purchased care money, it was out of money to operate its health care system, and without the emergency infusion of money we provided from the Choice Act fund before August recess, the VA would have run out of money before we had come back from the August recess.

It was a situation that was a mess. We fixed the mess for 2015 but did nothing for 2016.

What does the VA's failure to properly project the cost of purchased care in 2015 mean for its fiscal year 2016 appropriations? After asking the VA on several occasions, I am left with the impression that the VA once again will

run out of money for purchased care and then will remedy this situation by shoving veterans who are seeking care under the Choice Card whether the care is meaningfully available or not. So we have been pushing the VA on this, and to Secretary McDonald's credit, he came to Alaska this summer. The Undersecretary for Health, Dr. Shulkin, visited Alaska. They weren't sheltered from the anger that our vets were feeling.

My colleague Senator SULLIVAN conducted an incredible field hearing to create a record of how the VA, TriWest, and the Choice Card Program were individually and collectively failing Alaska's veterans. But here's the problem. We don't have a fiscal year 2016 solution locked down, and we may not have an acceptable solution locked down by Veterans Day, either.

Without an opportunity to debate the fiscal year 2016 appropriations bill on the floor, I have limited opportunity to press this point, to demand that the GAO investigate what actually is going on and try to amend the bill to ensure that the VA has adequate purchased care money available so that it doesn't drop these veterans through the cracks when it can't serve their critical care issues, and neither can the Choice Card program. Without the opportunity to debate in regular order, I can't do what the people of Alaska have asked me to do in representing them the way I know that we need to in order to deal with this.

I hear what the Democratic leader is saying, that the Budget Control Act needs to be addressed, but I don't agree with the tradeoff that we cannot consider appropriations bills in regular order while conversations are ongoing to address the bigger, broader question. Failing to consider these bills in regular order corrodes the influence of this body; it corrodes the ability of Members to fulfill the responsibilities that we have to the people that we work for. These are issues.

Again, I chose to focus my comments this morning on one area within the MILCON-VA, on that implementation of the Choice Card in Alaska, and how it has so basically failed our veterans. But there is so much more. Again, if we don't have that opportunity to bring it up, to offer our amendments, to do our best to serve the needs of our veterans, we fail them. We fail the system.

I do hope we will have the opportunity this afternoon to advance to these important measures. Remember, this is just the first of 12. It is very important work that we have in front of us.

Madam President, I know my colleague from Connecticut has arrived on the floor, but before I yield the floor to him, I want to briefly mention a meeting that I had this morning in my office.

WELCOMING MEMBERS OF THE ANCHORAGE FIRE DEPARTMENT HONOR GUARD

Madam President, I was able to welcome members of the Anchorage Fire Department Honor Guard to my office. They are making their way to Emmitsburg, MD, to be part of a ceremony at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial, where they will pay tribute to and honor the firefighters who have given their lives in the line of duty during the year 2014.

REMEMBERING JEFF BAYLESS

The firefighter whom Alaska is recognizing and honoring is a gentleman by the name of Jeff Bayless. He died at the age of 51 on March 7, 2014, during a strenuous training exercise in Anchorage.

How Jeff Bayless lived his life as a fourth-generation Alaskan, and as one who had not only a love for the outdoors but a love and care for people, is something that we want to pay tribute to, and we want to honor and recognize him.

This weekend, on the campus of the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, MD, the name of fallen Anchorage firefighter Jeffery Edward Bayless will be inscribed on the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial. A total of 87 firefighters will be honored, and 84 of those firefighters, including Jeff, gave their lives in the line of duty during 2014. Three died in previous years. This week, I welcome members of the Anchorage Fire Department Honor Guard to my office, as they make their way to Emmitsburg to celebrate Jeff's life and his contributions to the fire service.

I wanted to reflect for a moment on the life of fire hero Jeff Bayless. Jeff died at age 51 on March 7, 2014, during a strenuous training exercise in Anchorage. Heroes are remembered for the way they lived their lives and this is how we should remember Jeff Bayless.

Jeff was a fourth generation Alaskan. He grew up in Copper Center, attended Alaska Bible College in Glennallen, and then became a paramedic through the Oregon Health Sciences University training program. Jeff was also trained as a Registered Nurse. After serving as a paramedic in Oregon, he returned to Alaska to work as a first responder in Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Ultimately he found his home at the Anchorage Fire Department, first as a paramedic and then as a firefighter. He excelled in both roles. Working his way up the ranks, Jeff was a Senior Captain at the time of his passing.

As would be expected of a fourth generation Alaskan, Jeff had a love for the out of doors. From an early age, Jeff put his mastery of the outdoors to work in the service of lifesaving. As an older teenager, Jeff and his buddy happened upon a flash flood in the Yukon that swept vehicles off the road. Using their wilderness savvy, they roped up and rescued every person.

Later in life, as a member of the Anchorage Fire Department's whitewater rescue team, he plucked several victims from dangerous waters. One of these rescues was particularly memorable. On September 16, 2012, Jeff's Station 11 was called out to rescue a kayaker on the Eagle River who was lodged against a tree after his kayak overturned. The kayaker was in the water for about 90 minutes when a bystander called for emergency assistance. First the tree had to be cut, then the kayaker plucked from the water by his lifejacket. The kayaker was hypothermic by this point. While a number of units from the Anchorage Fire Department responded, Jeff was senior on the three-man jet boat team that plucked the victim out of the water. Jeff's team won the American Red Cross of Alaska Wilderness Rescue Heroes award. Jeff characterized the rescue as one of the most challenging successful rescues his team had ever been involved with. The team was well trained to perform the rescue and in spite of the dangers ''everyone went home,'' including the victim.

I cannot characterize Jeff's life in words more touching than on his National Fallen Firefighters Foundation official biography. He spent his life simply doing what he loved, completely engaged, lost in the moment. Without any consciousness of the impact his own life was having, he left behind a great legacy of life, encouragement, accomplishments, and friendship.

That, my colleagues, is the definition of a fire hero.

He would say he was one of the guys who was just doing his job, but as one of those men who was just doing his job, he needs to know that we view him as one of our heroes.

Our thoughts and our prayers are with his family and all of his brother and sister firefighters as they gather this weekend in Emmitsburg.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

ZADROGA 9/11 BILL

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I thank my colleague from Alaska for yielding and giving me this opportunity to discuss two measures that ought to be beyond debate or discussion on this floor as well as in America—two issues where Americans ought to unite and be together without controversy or contention.

The first relates to the emergency responders who rushed to the rubble of the World Trade Center in New York in the wake of that horrific attack on America on September 11. I want to join and thank my colleague from New York, Senator SCHUMER, who just spoke on the floor, and associate myself completely with his very eloquent and powerful explanation for why this Nation must meet its obligation to provide critical health care for those emergency responders, firemen, police, and medical personnel who went to that site, even as it continued to smolder with poisonous chemicals and fumes, risking their lives in the face of peril that they little understood and could not know. They never asked whether that place was dangerous, but, in fact, as we now know, it has caused

countless cancers, blood diseases, and lung problems, which have manifested themselves in the years after.

Yet at midnight last night, the beginning of this day, the programs designed to provide critical medical care and compensation to the victims were permitted to expire. That is unconscionable and unacceptable.

I join my colleagues from New York and New Jersey as a leading cosponsor in urging this Congress to act—and to act immediately and urgently—to make sure that we do what is right for those emergency responders who served and sacrificed in the wake of 9/11. Failure to do so is absolutely outrageous. The fund still has some money, and it will continue to function. But this Congress should act to pass the Zadroga 9/11 bill immediately.

Madam President, the second area where I think we ought to be all agreeing relates to doing what is right for our veterans, and that means restoring the $857 million that has been deleted from the President's request for veterans in the Military Construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016. This bill essentially shortchanges our veterans and straitjackets the Veterans' Administration.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter from the American Legion.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE AMERICAN LEGION,
OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COMMANDER,
Washington, DC, September 30, 2015.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL: Last May then-National Commander Michael D. Helm called on Congress to pass a budget for the Military Construction-Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill that won't shortchange the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). On April 30 the House of Representatives had passed a funding bill which unfortunately underfunds VA's medical care, major construction and Information Technology accounts by more than $1.5 billion below the Administration's request.

We were pleased when the Senate Appropriations Committee remedied that shortfall somewhat, but because they were tasked with making an unworkable allocation workable, the Senate version of the bill still underfunds veterans by approximately $857 million. This comes at a time when the VA is faced with an unprecedented demand for services, in terms of both numbers and complexity.

We need your help to ensure that VA is fully funded so it can provide the care and services veterans have earned and need. An inadequate VA budget will have a negative effect on the timeliness and quality of care that veterans will receive. Fully funding VA must be a very high priority for Congress.

The American Legion is the largest veteran service organization in the nation and we take our responsibility to analyze and evaluate veterans' healthcare options very seriously. As VA, Congress and The American Legion move forward together we must ensure that America's veterans are provided with the healthcare and services they have earned and were guaranteed.

Respectfully,

DALE BARNETT,
National Commander.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. This letter emphasizes the challenges that the VA faces in meeting the unprecedented and increasing demand for services that our veterans need and deserve. This obligation for our country is not a matter of discretion or convenience, it is a promise that we have made and we must fulfill to provide medical care, skills training, job opportunity, and, most especially, the mental health care that our veterans need so that we can stop the 22 suicides every day in this country—the greatest, strongest, country in history of our world, where 22 of our Nation's heroes commit suicide every day.

They suffer from the invisible wounds of war, post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury. Many of our veterans suffer the more visible wounds, and they need care as well. Many of our veterans in increasing numbers will be coming out of the service needing jobs and skills training, not only through the VA but the Department of Labor. Just yesterday, the nominee for the Veterans Employment and Training Services position in the Department of Labor testified before the Veterans' Affairs Committee as to the importance of services provided by the Department of Labor, and yet they too will be shortchanged by this budget.

So I urge my colleagues to provide sufficient funding to restore that $857 million and to make sure that we meet those needs of our veterans. Failing to do so is as unacceptable as failing to meet the needs of the emergency responders who went to the 9/11 site. This bill underfunds the VA's medical facilities by $100 million, reducing the VA's ability to keep pace with the need for critical facility maintenance. This is upkeep that is vital for basic repair and maintenance. Facilities will decay and downgrade without that funding. It is an investment in basic infrastructure.

We ought to be investing in the personnel of the VA—the doctors and nurses and other professionals—so that we recruit and retain the men and women who will really do the work on the ground in the trenches to make sure that the VA provides the best care possible—world-class care to our veterans. They deserve no less. Fully funding the VA honors the service and sacrifice of men and women who have risked their lives to keep our great Nation free. Freedom is never free, and this Nation ought to be keeping its promise to those veterans, which, unfortunately, sadly, reprehensibly, this measure fails to do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with the Senator from Wisconsin.

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

BORDER JOBS FOR VETERANS ACT OF 2015

Mr. FLAKE. Madam President, we are here to discuss the process for the Border Jobs for Veterans Act that is going to pass shortly.

I yield to the Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Madam President, first, I thank my colleague from Arizona for leading and also for his leadership for working, on a bipartisan basis, with Members from the other side of the aisle to really accomplish something to produce a result. What I have been trying to do as chairman of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is that I have reached out to every Senator and asked them: If you have identified a problem, if you have a piece of legislation that solves that problem, bring it before our committee, and I will do everything in my power to mark it up, report it out of our committee, and then first work with you to first pass it through the Senate, then through the House, to get that piece of legislation on the President's desk, and to have it signed into law to actually solve that problem.

The Senator from Arizona has done a great job in this particular case because this is a piece of legislation that truly is a win-win. It is a win for our veterans, and it is a win for the border.

I am not going to steal the Senator's thunder in terms of describing all of the benefits of the bill, but I just want to mention a couple. We obviously have a huge problem at our border, and neither one of us would claim that this is going to solve all of our problems. But it identifies one—a staffing problem with our ports of entry. Also there is another problem in terms of our veterans who have served this Nation and are unable to find work. So that is the win-win. This is a perfect example of a piece of legislation now that solves that problem.

Coming from the manufacturing sector, I never did quite understand why our returning veterans—with their esprit de corps, with all their skills, all their dedication, their great attitude—are having a hard time finding work, because certainly in my manufacturing operation in Oshkosh, WI, boy, if I found a veteran, I hired that individual because they are great workers. Now, in my Senate office, we actually have seven veterans with a combined total of 115 years of service.

So I think what we are going to find now at Customs and Border Protection is that this bill will make it easier for veterans to connect with those particular jobs to help staff our ports of entry. Customs and Border Protection is going to find that value of being able to employ the finest among us because we have made that easier. Our veterans are going to have the ability to leave

service and have a very good job further serving the country and keeping our Nation safe.

I again thank the Senator from Arizona for his leadership on this and for working with me to get this passed through our committee, passed through the Senate, and put on the President's desk for his signature to have this bill signed into law so we can be helping our veterans and protect this Nation.

I thank the Senator from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you. I again thank the Senator from Wisconsin and others I will name later for working so hard on this bill.

The Senator made sure that it moved through his committee expeditiously, that we got it to the floor in the Senate and also through the House as well. It is an example of how the Senate and the House can work in a bipartisan way. I appreciate both the appeal that you have made to encourage us to come forward with problems that we have and to vote for ways that your committee can help solve them.

Thank you again.

Mr. JOHNSON. If I could just make one final point, this is a classic example of when we concentrate on the areas of agreement and find the areas of agreement that unite us, as opposed to exploiting the divisions.

Again, this is a perfect example of getting bipartisan support on a piece of legislation. It serves as a great example for everybody serving in Washington to see us concentrate on the areas of agreement that unify us rather than exploit those divisions.

Again, I thank the Senator very much for his leadership.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you.

Madam President, I wish to talk about the problem that led to this bill. We have made significant investments along the border in terms of port facilities. More needs to be done, obviously, but we made significant investments to accommodate cross-border traffic.

There is a lot of good that goes on at the border. We often just focus on the bad—the illegal crossings, the drug trade, and whatnot—but there is a tremendous amount of good that happens on the border, particularly the border of Arizona and Mexico.

There is a lot of commerce that goes in. Arizona's ports of entry processed $30.5 billion worth of goods in 2014. This is an increase up from $18.5 billion in 2009. So there is a lot of good that goes on. We have needed more adequate staffing at these ports.

The Border Patrol officers with whom we often associate the border are in green uniforms. What we need more of are blue uniforms—people to actually facilitate this cross-border traffic and the flow of goods that benefits us, benefits Mexico and other countries to the south as well.

Secretary Johnson, when we asked why we were having difficulty filling these slots for staffing of these ports, said that—well, let me just say we authorized—the Senate and the House authorized—2,000 new CPB officers. We authorized these positions, but as of earlier this year, only 800 of the 2,000 had been filled. So Secretary Johnson was explaining that the delays are associated with applicant background investigations, low polygraph clearance rates, and a shortage of Federal polygraph examiners combined with attrition.

So we thought: What group of people do we have who have gone through these security clearances already and who could clear this hurdle and expedite this? And it is, of course, our returning men and women from the military and those who are now out of service. They have, in many cases, already gone through the security clearances. They have passed the polygraph test and could more expeditiously move into these jobs. Obviously, we have concerns, and we have several other programs that deal with returning veterans to make sure that there are jobs awaiting them.

Let me say that this doesn't affect any of the preferences or other positions that are available for our veterans. This simply requires CPB and the Department of Homeland Security to coordinate or collaborate with our military to see what jobs are out there and see what positions can be filled.

It shouldn't take an act of Congress to get two agencies to work together like this, but sometimes it does. So that is what this legislation is doing, and it will require reporting to happen as well to make sure that this is being accomplished and the coordination is occurring.

Let me just talk about some of the endorsements for this legislation, some of those groups that have helped us in exploiting the need and coming to a solution.

The Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry said:

> The Border Jobs for Veterans Act . . . helps advance two major national priorities: the facilitation of cross-border commerce and the future employment of the tens of thousands of men and women who separate from military service each year. Ensuring our ports of entry are properly staffed is critical to our nation's ability to compete on a global scale.

The president of the Fresh Produce Association of the Americas said:

> The Border Jobs for Vets Legislation is crucial for continuing to grow the nation's economy. It is helping businesses across the country continue to prosper by facilitating trade while also using the skills and knowledge of an amazing asset we already have, our veterans, to do this important work.

The Greater Nogales-Santa Cruz Port Authority said:

> Border communities like Nogales, Arizona, depend greatly on the ability of people and goods to cross the border effectively and efficiently. We have been pushing for many years for additional staff. . . . The Border Jobs for Veterans Act is one of the most significant steps taken on this issue in many years.

The president of the Tucson Hispanic Chamber of Commerce said:

> We appreciate our Arizona Senators' innovative approach to a problem that is impacting our communities and our economy. Any impediments that increase wait times at our ports of entry such as a lack of adequate staffing impact our retail sales and ultimately the financial success of our business community in Arizona.

I would like to take a moment to thank my Senate colleagues—Senator RON JOHNSON, who already spoke here; Senator MCCAIN, who played a critical role in this; Senator SCHUMER, Senator BURR, Senator BALDWIN, Senator FEINSTEIN, Senator LANKFORD, Senator SULLIVAN, Senator TILLIS, Senator TOOMEY, and Senator DAVID VITTER—for cosponsoring this bipartisan legislation.

After being approved by the Senate, Arizona Congresswoman MARTHA MCSALLY has led the effort to get it passed in the House unanimously. She played a great role there, and I want to thank her for leading this effort in the House.

Thanks to everyone's support and the hard work of committee staff, including Brooke Ericson and Holly Idelson on the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and Paul Anstine of the House Homeland Security Committee, we now have this bill ready to head to the President's desk.

In conclusion, let me just say that those leaving the military need jobs and CBP needs officers. This is a great bill that will require coordination between the two, and it will lead to greater staffing at less cost and certainly in less time. So I look forward to having the administration look at this and look forward to having the President sign this legislation.

With that, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 2835, which was received from the House.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

> A bill (H.R. 2835) to actively recruit members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service to serve as Customs and Border Protection officers.

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

Mr. FLAKE. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 2835) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. FLAKE. Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2101

Ms. AYOTTE. Madam President, I come to the floor today to ask for an extension of a very important program to my State—the Land and Water Conservation Fund—and because of that 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. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Madam President, I am very disappointed that last night the Land and Water Conservation Fund expired, and so it has lapsed. I just offered a unanimous consent request to extend this fund for 60 days to make sure there was not a lapse in this important program.

This is a fund that, in my home State of New Hampshire, has been used to ensure the public can enjoy our beautiful environment and our natural spaces, from my home city of Nashua, NH, and Mine Falls Park, which I love to run through every morning when I am in New Hampshire, to our beautiful White Mountain National Forest.

I had the opportunity to come to the floor yesterday with Senators from both sides of the aisle, including my colleague from Montana, Senator DAINES. The Senator from Montana had a wonderful picture of him and his wife in their public lands that have been preserved using the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The picture was of him and his wife hiking. We all understand that a big part of the beauty of this country is our natural beauty, and because of that, the Land and Water Conservation Fund was established in 1965. It was actually established to aid in the preservation of spaces for outdoor recreation across this Nation.

In New Hampshire we have a very strong tradition of the outdoors being such a part of who we are. In fact, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has led to more than 650 individual acquisition and development projects in our State. We very much support the public use of our lands in our State, enjoying their natural beauty, whether it is hiking, fishing, hunting or any number of other wonderful uses we can have of our public lands. So this fund has been very important, and I believe we should not let it lapse.

The law that created the Land and Water Conservation Fund in 1965 established that a portion of the revenues coming from oil and gas leasing would be designated for this purpose. So to not extend this fund really is another example, if you look at the fund itself, where portions of these dollars have actually been taken to spend for other purposes in the Treasury, not in accordance with the law. We see that happen too much in Washington. But to let this lapse is very unfortunate.

I am very disappointed my colleague has rendered an objection because this is such a bipartisan issue and something that has done so much for our country—this program—and for my home State of New Hampshire. So I hope in the coming days we will be able to work together to have the Land and Water Conservation Fund program extended and that we can get beyond the partisan objections and get it done so we can work together to preserve the beautiful spaces in this country. This program has done so much for my home State of New Hampshire and for many States across this country, and that is why it has such strong bipartisan support.

Madam President, I am very disappointed that my very reasonable request in asking for unanimous consent to extend this program for 60 days until we can get to the long-term permanent authorization—which I support and I have cosponsored, and I think that is what we need to do in the long term—has been objected to. To let this lapse is completely unacceptable when it has been such a strong program in allowing everyone in this country to enjoy our public lands, to enjoy the great outdoors in the greatest country on Earth.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I want to talk for a few minutes about the discussion we are having about whether to have a discussion. The debate we are having about whether to have a debate is always amazing to me. How far we have moved in such a short period of time from the way the Congress always did its work. The way you set your priorities, both at home and in the government, is how you spend your money. You might think that is not the way you set your priorities, but if you think something is very important to you and your family and you find out you are not investing any money or time in it, it is probably not all that important. It is probably something you have decided is a good thing to say is very important.

This is the process we go through in the government to talk about what our priorities are. What could be more significant in our priorities than the bill that I would like to see us take up today, the VA-Military Construction bill, the bill that determines lots of things about not only people who serve in the military but what is available for their families, and what kind of support structure there is, and then with the Veterans' Administration, what is there after they serve, how are we meeting that commitment we made to our veterans that if they serve for the government—and we are grateful, so we should then make sure we are always there to do what the American people have told veterans we would do if they served.

We have already had votes not to go to the Defense appropriations bill—a bill that is about the same amount of money the President asked for and what the President said was needed to defend the country, but apparently there is some balance somewhere in the world—that I am not aware of—that no matter how much it costs to defend the country, you have to spend that much money on other things that don't defend the country; that there is a balance between what is happening in Syria today and how many employees the EPA needs or how many employees the IRS needs. Obviously, that is something that doesn't make sense to people. It doesn't make sense to me, but we couldn't get the four additional votes we needed to go to the Defense appropriations bill. I guess in a world where the President said he is also going to veto the Defense authorization bill—not because of what it authorizes but because of the money that eventually the appropriators would have to spend—people have to wonder what is going on. The No. 1 priority of the Federal Government is to defend the country, and following that priority, our obligation is to those who serve in the military and their families. That is what the Military Construction bill would do. It actually spends a little more money than we spent this year. That appears to be everybody's complaint; that somehow the government is not spending enough money, but the Appropriations Committee took the amount of money that the law allows, and the Budget Control Act did a good thing in terms of keeping spending under control. That is one of the few things that has happened in Washington, DC, in a long time that actually did put a lid on spending because it actually put a lid on spending. It actually says in the law how much money we can spend this year on discretionary spending. The Appropriations Committee, with Republicans in charge for the first time in a long time, did the work for the first time in a long time. In fact, this is the first year in 6 years that the Appropriations Committee voted all the bills out of committee, marked up all of the bills, cut places where the committee thought should be cut, increased places where the committee thought should be increased, and this at a level that the law

allows, but apparently the law is not good enough for our friends who always want to spend more money. It is not even good enough to debate the bills that come out at the level of the law, to let those be amended, and to let that work be publicly done.

This worked pretty well for a long time. I think initially there was probably one spending bill, but I think in the tradition of Congress, that was the one bill that in both the House and the Senate we were able to debate as long as we wanted to, until everybody was worn out, offering their ideas as to how to spend the money better or not spend it at all. The House has continued to do this, except for a couple of years under Speaker PELOSI, on the half dozen big bills of the 12 spending bills we have now, and they traditionally have 200 or 300 amendments on each of those bills on how to spend the money. Some of those suggestions were not to spend it at all. What could be healthier than that? The Senate is not allowed to do that. At the end of the day, we are saying: Let's debate these bills. Let's, of course, debate the bill that defends the country. Let's debate the bill that takes care of those who do defend the country.

This bill includes $5.5 billion more than was spent last year. I don't recall hearing a hark and cry—when this bill finally gets passed as part of one big not very appealing package—from anyone saying that we were not spending nearly enough on military construction or veterans programs last year, but even though we are spending $5.5 billion more than we spent last year, some are saying it isn't nearly enough to spend this year. The committee thought it was enough.

In fact, this bill was voted out of committee—and remember this committee has Democrats and Republicans on it—with a vote of 27 to 3. Eleven Democrats and all the Republicans said: This is the best way to spend this amount of money—$5.5 billion more for these purposes than we spent last year. Let's vote this bill out so it can be debated on the Senate floor. Here we are months later, still trying to get 60 Senators to agree to have that debate. Actually, I think we are trying to get five Senators to agree to have that debate because all of the Republicans, and one Democrat, appear to be willing to move forward on these defense funding bills, but there is not enough on the other side. If we could get half of the Democrats who voted for the bill in the committee, we would have the votes we need to have this debate and talk about spending money.

Eventually the government has to be funded, and we should all understand that if we don't do it this way, the alternative is that it will be funded in absolutely the worst possible way as one big bill with no debate and having to settle on some desperate decision at the end of the year in order to keep the government funded because we do have to defend the country.

I am not arguing with the decision that ultimately has to be made to defend the country. I am not arguing with the decision that ultimately has to be made to have the military installations that allow that to happen with military construction. I am not arguing with the decision that has to be made for the veterans affairs part of our government, including veterans' health—mental and physical—behavioral health, and other health, to be funded properly, but why aren't we debating on that today?

What would be wrong with debating this bill? If you were not one of the 27 Senators on that committee—so 27 percent of the Senate has already voted on this bill. Let's send it to the Senate floor and vote on it. If you are not one of the 27 Senators who voted for it or one of the 3 who voted against it, bring your ideas to the floor. That is how this process is supposed to work. Your ideas may be better than what is in the bill, but we will never find out if we are not allowed to debate it. This is regrettable for veterans and their families. We see a Veterans' Administration that is not doing what it ought to do.

A year ago, the President said the Veterans' Administration was the best funded part of ''his government,'' but now there is not enough money. Suddenly there is not enough money. The President thought there was enough money a year ago, but apparently there is not enough money now. The real issue is that there is not enough commitment to veterans and the Veterans' Administration. We could have that debate here too.

Over the last year, we have moved a long way toward giving veterans more choices, more options, and more places to go to get their health care. That system is in its fledgling stages, and it ought to be debated as we talk about how to spend money that would be spent on the Veterans' Administration, but we can't debate and vote on it if people aren't willing to have the vote it takes to have that debate. We ought to be getting back to the way this process works transparently and the way it works constitutionally. We need to have this vote today. We need to get to the Defense appropriations bill.

Earlier this week, we had a vote—which I didn't support—to move forward for a few more weeks with last year's spending. Last year's priorities only work for so long. Just a couple of years ago, we had the situation where the Budget Control Act had to go into effect—and it went into effect because Congress didn't do its job and ended up appropriating more money than the law would allow—and that required line-by-line cutting, the sequester, which is not a necessary part of that law at all. It is only a part of the law if the Congress violates the law, and the Congress violated the law. The President signed the bill, and then we had to do the line-by-line cutting.

We brought the leaders of our military in to talk about this, and none of them were for line-by-line cutting. Who would be? That is the worst possible way to reduce spending because you are not making any choices, you are just admitting that you can't make any choices, and so everything gets cut everywhere. Every one of them said this is a big problem, but an even bigger problem in almost every case is the sequester. In fact, Admiral McRaven of Special Ops said that an even bigger problem than the sequester is the continuing resolution because we were cutting lines of a budget that might have met the military needs 5 years before, but it hasn't been updated for 5 years.

Let's have this debate. Let's move beyond saying that we can't decide how to spend the money to debating how to spend the money. Let's have a defense structure that works for 2015 and 2016, not a defense structure that might have worked for 2010. One of the great frustrations the people we work for have with us today is they believe this is not all that complicated, and they are right. How complicated can it be? We were elected to the Senate so we could take positions and vote, so let's take positions and vote. The debate we should be having is about moving forward on these critical issues.

I hope our colleagues will join us today. I hope there are 60 Senators who will say: I am ready to have this debate. I am ready to defend the country. I am ready to take care of those who defend our country and their families and veterans and their survivors. And that is what this budget is all about.

How anyone can walk onto the floor and say they don't want to deal with this now and put it off a little while longer is disappointing to me and to lots of people.

Let's get our work done.

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

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

Mr. KIRK. Madam President, I come to the floor to urge my colleagues to pass the 2016 Military Construction appropriations bill. This bill has a $4.2 billion increase over last year's level.

We passed the MILCON–VA bill out of the full Appropriations Committee by a vote of 21 to 9, with Democratic Senators Leahy, Feinstein, Udall, Schatz, and Baldwin all supporting that bill and with 16 Republicans backing it.

We now have record levels of funding to fix the backlog of disability claims at the VA. We took construction out of the hands of the VA and gave it to the Army Corps of Engineers so that we never have cost overruns like at the Denver hospital again. The bill also bans funding for Glenn Haggstrom, the bureaucrat responsible for spending

$930 million over budget in Denver. The bill provides new protections for whistleblowers, especially for doctors and nurses not protected by the Whistleblower Protection Act.

By voting no on this bill, Members will be voting against a $4.2 billion increase for our veterans.

Thank you, Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I rise today to speak about a subject matter I touched on about a month ago regarding current trade negotiations.

I don't blame elected officials for pushing legislation, policy proposals, or ideas that further their home State's interests. In fact, I think that is one of the first things we should do here, that is, to make sure the folks who elected us know we are standing up for them.

But I also think there comes a time when we need to recognize that the long-term interests of our collective constituents are at risk, even when we are doing short term things that put us at risk.

This is why I have decided that I wish to speak a little bit about the current status of the Trans-Pacific Partnership or TPP negotiations.

I learned overnight and this morning that the American team of the TPP negotiators has tabled language which would carve certain American-grown commodities out of the protections of the trade deal's investor-state dispute settlement—or ISDS—mechanism.

By carving out tobacco from the TPP, the President and his administration are discriminating against an entire agriculture commodity, setting a dangerous precedent for future trade agreements.

I rise today to defend the farmers, the manufacturers, and the exporters from the discriminatory treatment in this proposed trade agreement. What they have decided to do right now relates to tobacco. Today it happens to be about tobacco, but I will do this for any crop now and for any agriculture commodity for any State going forward in the future. This is not just about tobacco. This is about American values and fairness.

In July I stood on this same floor and I discussed this same issue. I went out of my way to emphasize that I believe free trade is good. That is why I voted for trade promotion authority. A balanced trade agreement will benefit all of us.

I also recognize that the United States over the years has tried to do more with these agreements than merely haggle for market access or tariff reductions. Over the past 30 years, the United States has consistently imported certain components of our American system into these agreements, including due process protections, dispute settlement procedures, and the protection of private property rights.

These are now standard terms that those who engage with the United States at the bargaining table know are not negotiable.

They never have been—that is, until yesterday.

Our negotiators have now concluded that while some investors are entitled to equal treatment under the law, others aren't. What our negotiators have proposed sets the stage for the remainder of this negotiation and for those deals which will be negotiated in the future, such as the agreement with Europe and future agreements with African nations.

Our trade agreements are now apparently nothing more than laboratories for setting partisan policies and picking winners and losers. If we condone this kind of behavior, how can we be assured it will ever end?

As I stated in July, once we allow an entire sector to be treated unfairly, the question is, who is next? Is it the beef industry in Nebraska? Is it the pork industry in States such as Iowa and North Carolina? Is it the poultry industry in Delaware, North Carolina, Arkansas, and Georgia?

We need not look far to find protracted, heated policy debates about any number of issues that affect trade—the consumption of coal, energy exploration practices, the use of pesticides, the use of biotechnology. The right place for those debates is in bodies like this one, not in trade agreements. The wrong place is what is going on right now with our trade negotiators and the members of the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

I hold a sincere belief that unfair treatment for one agricultural commodity significantly heightens the risk that more unfair treatment for another commodity lurks around the corner.

I have no choice but to use this forum to make two very important points and make it very clear to the negotiators as we reach the final stages of the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations.

First, I would like to speak to process concerns. A failure to abide by the process and the terms governing the process as established by the TPA is unacceptable. When I state that I have no choice but to use the Senate floor to make these points, I mean it.

A full 8 weeks ago, I wrote to our Trade Ambassador cautioning him about this course of action and requesting that he consult with me as he was statutorily obligated in the TPA to do.

To explain to those in the Gallery, we passed a bill that said we wanted to provide the President with trade promotion authority. We wanted to empower representatives of the United States to negotiate with trading partners who are in the Trans-Pacific Partnership. We wanted to support that, over the objections of many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

We also set certain ground rules for being able to do that. They had to review with Congress some of the proposed items of the agreement that may be the most contentious about intellectual property, about the carve-out. But to date I have had absolutely no additional communication from the Ambassador or his designees. In other words, it has been lights out.

In fact, I would ask any Member of the Senate whether they honestly know what currently is in the TPP agreement that is being, in my mind, pushed forward and pushed to a point where we will just have a simple up-or-down vote. I think this abuse of the process is in violation of the letter and the spirit of the TPA.

The last time anybody spoke to me regarding this particular provision that has to do with the carve-out, I was told it is something our partners were insisting on. The actions of the last 24 hours—namely, that the United States actually tabled the language in question—really raises serious doubts about that assertion.

Second, I want to speak to the growing view that the TPP is not being negotiated in accordance with the substance of the TPA. The failure to abide by the substance of the provisions of TPA puts the privileged status of the proposed treaty at risk, and it is something I am going to spend a lot of time focusing on.

I would remind this body that we have already, in a bipartisan fashion, disavowed language that treats some products differently. In the TPA, Congress said that opportunities for U.S. agriculture exports must be ''substantially equivalent to opportunities afforded foreign exports in U.S. markets.'' Congress has stated that dispute settlement mechanisms must be available across the board, not selectively.

I voted to give the President trade promotion authority to allow trade agreements such as the TPP to move through Congress in a quick, orderly, and responsible fashion. Congress granted the President trade promotion authority with the mutual understanding that his administration would negotiate deals in good faith. I did not vote to give the President and the administration the freedom to indiscriminately choose when fairness should be applied and when it should be ignored.

If the President chooses to arbitrarily ignore TPA provisions he doesn't like, then Congress is not obliged to honor the fast-track status. If any carve-out is ultimately included in the TPP, I will work hard to defeat it.

I might add that our own majority leader has expressed concerns over this and has expressed the same sentiment to the trade negotiation team.

In closing, I wish to offer this to anyone who believes my sticking up for tobacco or this particular provision or for equal treatment and American values is shortsighted: I want you to know that I would do it for beef in Nebraska,

for pork in Iowa, for poultry in Delaware, for any farmer who is being unfairly carved out as a result of the administration's desire to put provisions in a trade agreement that simply shouldn't be there, and which have not been there historically.

So to the Members of the Senate and to the American people and the farmers out there, I want you to know I am going to continue this fight. I am going to continue this fight not because it satisfies a home constituency, but because I intend to protect the free trade ideals that have made the United States the most desirable trading partner in the world.

Thank you, Madam President. I also want you to know that I think there is a growing sense of concern—whether it is Senator HATCH, Senator MCCONNELL, or a number of other Senators—that regardless of how they feel about this particular issue with tobacco, the provision in such a trade agreement is unacceptable. I hope our trade negotiators recognize that we are focusing a lot of attention on this, and they risk putting together a good trade agreement that we would all like to get behind as a result.

Thank you, Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from New Hampshire.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2101

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, for 50 years the Land and Water Conservation Fund has done amazing work protecting our land, waterways, forests, State parks, and critical wildlife habitats. This is particularly true in New Hampshire, where since 1965 LWCF has funded more than 650 individual projects. Just this month, New Hampshire received eight new LWCF grants, which will allow New Hampshire communities to develop outdoor recreation facilities in Dover, which is close to where I live, to renovate Osgood Pond in Milford, and to do so many other projects.

In the last couple of months, I actually had a chance to go around New Hampshire and visit so many of these projects that were done because of LWCF grants. One of the things that really struck me about them is that they are not for big projects, although some have been used toward doing that. The Silvio Conte National Wildlife Preserve that crosses Vermont and New Hampshire is one of those that have been preserved, with the help of Judd Gregg, a former Republican Senator from New Hampshire. LWCF helped to preserve that.

So many of these grants have been used for small projects and communities, such as Meredith in the Lakes Region of New Hampshire on Lake Winnipesaukee, where I visited. They have been able to expand the park along the lake so that people not only from Meredith but from across the State and other parts of the country when they are visiting can come and sit and enjoy the water. With those projects, they have been able to put in new docks so that people can get out on the lake on boats and enjoy the water. Without LWCF, those projects would not have been possible. It gets people out into the outdoors who otherwise wouldn't be able to do that.

Federal and State LWCF funds are also vital to the outdoor recreation industry in New Hampshire. That is one of our biggest industries. It accounts for $4.2 billion in consumer spending, $1.2 billion in wages and salaries, and nearly 50,000 jobs. The importance of these projects and the conservation efforts that are the result of LWCF to the tourism sector of our economy and to our outdoor industry cannot be overstated.

There has been bipartisan support for LWCF since its inception back in the 1960s. There is a bill which Senator BURR has introduced and which I am a cosponsor of that would extend LWCF for 60 days. Unfortunately, last night LWCF expired. Its authorization ended as of September 30.

The effort to reauthorize the program, to invoke Senator BURR's bipartisan legislation, was defeated. When they objected to a simple short-term extension of LWCF, our Republican friends indicated it was because they believed most LWCF funding goes to Federal land acquisition. Well, I would like the RECORD to reflect that is just not the case. I have seen it firsthand in New Hampshire in the projects I talked about. I would bet the Presiding Officer has seen in North Carolina the support LWCF has provided. In fact, during the last 10 years, LWCF funds have been split about 50–50 between Federal agencies and States. In New Hampshire, what these Federal grants do is to leverage State support and private support and local support.

Moreover, most Federal lands that are acquired with LWCF funds are within the existing boundaries of Federal parks, refuges, forests, and other recreation areas. Consolidating these lands helps to reduce Federal maintenance and management costs, saves taxpayer dollars, and enhances the experience visitors have to these areas. For example, in 2014, 39 of 40 LWCF national forest acquisitions expanded access to property already managed by the Federal Government that had been previously closed to the public. This is not about keeping the public off these lands, this is about helping to ensure that members of the public can get on these lands and benefit from them and enjoy them.

This Senator is very disappointed that we have seen a few people blocking the extension of this program in a way that affects every single State in this country. Our failure to act has significant consequences for each and every State.

The expiration of this program jeopardizes access to public land for hunting and fishing, which is one of the great benefits we have in New Hampshire that we use these lands for. It prohibits access to other outdoor activities that are important and unique to our American heritage. This is going to adversely impact our Nation's outdoor, recreation, conservation, and preservation economy. In New Hampshire, our whole outdoor industry is affected. That outdoor industry contributes over $1 trillion to our Nation each year, and it supports millions of American jobs.

I think it is critical that we pass a short-term extension to keep this program operating, but ultimately what we need to do is to pass a bill that permanently reauthorizes and fully funds LWCF—something a bipartisan majority of this body supports doing. I am going to continue working to pass a permanent authorization. I know that Senator BURR; my colleague from New Hampshire, Senator AYOTTE; and other people who are on this bill feel the same way.

In the meantime, we should not allow LWCF to lapse any longer. So this Senator is going to renew a unanimous consent request that was made last night by my colleague from New Mexico, Senator HEINRICH, to pass a 60-day extension.

I recognize that this request is going to be objected to by Senator LANKFORD, whom I see on the floor, but I just want to remind us all that less than 2 weeks ago, 53 Senators wrote the Senate majority leader urging action to reauthorize LWCF. To the 12 Republican Senators who signed that letter, I say this: I hope you will work with us to correct the misconceptions and the mischaracterizations that exist about this program. Let's work together so we can allow this short-term extension to pass. Let's work together to get a long-term reauthorization for the Land and Water Conservation Fund because LWCF has expanded outdoor opportunities in every single State in the country.

We should come together to support the Land and Water Conservation Fund, to protect one of America's most essential tools for conservation and economic growth.

With that, Mr. President, 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; and 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 Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I do object to this bill moving forward by unanimous consent today. The issue is that this bill needs reform. I enjoy our national parks. My children enjoy our national parks.

Twenty-nine percent of the United States is already under Federal ownership. Twenty-nine percent of all of the United States is under Federal ownership. A significant portion of this—in

fact, last year $306 million was spent from the LWCF, and $178 million of that was for new land acquisition.

So the bulk of what this program is used for is for new land acquisition. But the real issue to address here is not only what happens if we allow it to lapse but what happens with it day to day. The day-to-day operation of the LWCF is for new land acquisition or for putting money into a State grant to be able to have them buy new facilities, not to maintain them.

We are not setting aside the money to be able to maintain this. We have an $11.5 billion deferred maintenance backlog at our national parks right now. The new additional dollars that are used for land acquisition are used to be able to pick up new properties and not to be able to maintain what we currently have. So the challenge that I have is this: Why don't we look at this fund in a new way? Why can't we take care of what we already have and not just focus on acquiring new properties?

To leave the LWCF as it currently is would be something akin to saying: I want to buy a new car, but I don't want to set aside money to actually put gas in it. I just want to have the new car.

Well, if we are going to have that property, we better take care of it. Currently, the Federal Government is a terrible steward of the land we have. Now, as far as this program and reauthorizing it right now, we checked with the Congressional Research Service. If this program is not reauthorized currently, the program continues. The program currently has $20 billion in reserves right now—$20 billion.

Last year, $306 million was spent. The year before, $306 million was spent in LWCF, meaning in current status, right now, if we do not put a single dime into LWCF for the next few years, we will only have 65 years of reserve left in this program. It is not a crisis that we need to fix immediately. This authorization does not keep the program going. This authorization means we are not adding new money to the $20 billion already in reserve.

I think we have at least 64 years to be able to work this out and a 65-year reserve. I can't imagine it would take that long, but with the Senate, everything seems to take too long. What we are looking for is pretty straightforward and simple. Let's spend some of these dollars to be able to focus on not just buying new properties but on actually taking care of properties that the U.S. Government has the responsibility to actually be able to maintain. It is to reform this program in the days ahead and to make sure that we are managing land well, not just adding new land all the time.

So with that, I do object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I would be all for taking the backlog of funding and putting it into LWCF. I think my colleague raises some real reforms that could be made to LWCF. In fact, there is legislation in the comprehensive energy bill that Senators MURKOWSKI and CANTWELL have passed that would make some of those reforms. But if we can't get to that, if we can't extend this program in the short term, we are never going to get to that point.

The fact is that the backlog of maintenance needs should be addressed. But it does not make sense for us to suspend the program while we address those needs. LWCF was not established for maintenance purposes. It was established to protect natural areas and to provide recreation opportunities to the American public.

When I went to the city of Nashua, the second largest city in New Hampshire, and walked with the Republican mayor along the Riverwalk that they are trying to establish there, what I heard from her was what a critical difference LWCF made to the city and being able to leverage funds that the city put in and that the State could put in to help make sure that the people of Nashua, many of whom cannot get to national parks or to the White Mountains in New Hampshire but they could get to the Riverwalk through downtown Nashua.

Those are the kinds of projects that LWCF goes to help fund. Some 99 percent of what Federal agencies spend goes to acquire inholds, those pieces of land that are already within the boundaries of a national park, a national forest or a national wildlife refuge that if sold to a private developer would block public access. It would damage park resources. It would harm the visitor experience, and it would make it harder to maintain those very projects that my colleague was talking about wanting to maintain.

So I think, while it sounds simple to say there is a backlog and we should not reauthorize this program, that is only half the story. It is very disappointing that with the strong bipartisan support this legislation has, with the need to reauthorize it to continue to protect special places in the country, we are seeing opposition from a very few people in this body who are able to block our moving forward.

NOMINATION OF GAYLE SMITH

Mr. President, I would like to, if I could, move on to address a different issue, and hope we will see some cooperative agreement at some point in the future. I also want to urge the consideration of the nomination of Gayle Smith to serve as the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, also known as USAID. I am here with my colleague Senator COONS from the Foreign Relations Committee to talk about this nominee because this is a noncontroversial nominee, a seasoned public servant for a position that should be above partisanship.

So it is really disappointing that, again, there is only one person in this body who is holding this up. This comes at a particularly difficult time because we are witnessing a humanitarian crisis in Syria and across the Middle East. It is a crisis that grows worse every day. Our European allies are struggling to cope with a massive refugee and migration crisis without precedent since World War II.

The United States, with our unparalleled capacity to mobilize humanitarian support for humanitarian relief, has played a leading role, but there is more that we can do to assist both the Syrian refugees and the neighboring countries that are hosting them to help with that humanitarian crisis. But our ability to respond effectively to these challenges is hampered by the inability of the Senate to vote on Gayle Smith's nomination to lead USAID.

So, again, nearly 4 months have passed since she appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The committee approved her nomination by a voice vote in July. But since then, there has been no attempt to bring her nomination to the Senate floor, even as these humanitarian crises have deepened and deteriorated. It is not only our operations in the Middle East that are being hampered, USAID currently operates in more than 60 countries and regional missions around the world.

Following the devastating earthquake in Nepal in April, USAID disaster response teams were among the first crisis personnel to deploy there to organize the humanitarian response. USAID personnel continue to support our development efforts in Afghanistan. Those efforts are critical to the long-term success in the country. Given the extraordinary humanitarian crises confronting the United States, confronting our allies in the world, we really need a leader in place at USAID. It is unconscionable that here we are 4 months later and she is still being stalled.

Gayle Smith is a superbly qualified nominee who will almost certainly be confirmed by an overwhelming bipartisan vote. The Senate deserves the chance to vote on this critical nomination. So, again, I urge the majority leader to bring her nomination to the floor. We discussed it again today in the Foreign Relations Committee. I know my colleague from Delaware can speak also to what we heard in the Foreign Relations Committee.

So I would yield to my colleague from Delaware to discuss what we have heard in the Foreign Relations Committee about Gayle Smith and the need to put her in place as leader of USAID.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, confirmation and expiration are issues before us today. As we have heard from the Member from New Hampshire, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on which we both serve, months ago considered the nomination of Gayle Smith to be the next Administrator of USAID. Today, 60 million people

around the world are displaced, either within their countries or as refugees spreading throughout the world.

It is the single greatest refugee crisis since the end of the Second World War. Gayle Smith came before our committee and received commendations and plaudits from Republicans and Democrats for her long experience as a journalist, as a leader in humanitarian agencies, as a member of the National Security Council, as a cofounder of the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network, and as a seasoned and senior leader who can help bring strong leadership to USAID at this difficult and important time.

Four months later, she has yet to be confirmed by this body. We have broad bipartisan support for this nominee yet fail to move her forward due to a hold by one Member. I think this points to a longer challenge that this body faces because you also heard from the Senator from New Hampshire of an attempt to move forward the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which yesterday expired.

BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM AND CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS

Mr. President, I cannot yield without commenting on how hard I worked in the previous Congress to get reauthorized two critical programs, a bulletproof vest partnership program that for years provided tens of millions of dollars to State and local law enforcement for lifesaving bulletproof vests, and a reauthorization effort I led for years—both of these with bipartisan support—to restore authorization to child advocacy centers—centers that critically support families who have been harmed by child abuse and allow local law enforcement to pursue effective prosecutions.

It is unconscionable that this body yesterday, September 30, allowed the Land and Water Conservation Fund to expire, allowed a whole range of child nutrition and school lunch authorizing programs to expire, and allowed the James Zadroga 9/11 first responders act to expire. One of the very first bills I cosponsored and was proud to support as a new Senator 5 years ago was the James Zadroga 9/11 first responders act, which provides support for those who raced to the site of the 9/11 catastrophe, risked their lives, and today suffer lasting health effects from it.

The idea that this body allowed that funding to expire yesterday and that many of the folks who are the beneficiaries of that fund now face the extinction of their medical support is unacceptable to me. So before I yield the floor, I simply wanted to commend my colleague for raising the issue of Gayle Smith's nomination at this unique time of global humanitarian challenges.

USAID cannot effectively do its job without a confirmed leader. I remind everybody in this body that when we fail to work together, when bills expire, it has real consequences, not just for humanitarian issues overseas but for our own first responders who we are pledged to support. I say it is a shame on this body that we allowed the 9/11 James Zadroga first responders act to expire, that we allowed the authorizing statutes for the summer lunch and school lunch programs to expire, and that we have allowed the Land and Water Conservation Fund to expire.

It is my hope that we will begin to work together in this place and to stop allowing nominations to rest for months and to stop allowing the expiration of valuable statutes that underlie our security at home and abroad.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 5 minutes, after which point I will be followed by the Senator from Montana.

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

RUSSIA

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, 3 years ago when President Obama's opponent said that Russia was our chief geopolitical rival, President Obama chuckled and said: ''The 1980s called and they want their foreign policy back.''

Well, now the 1930s are calling President Obama, and they want their foreign policy back. Yesterday was the anniversary of Munich. How fitting that Russia conducted its first major military operations outside of its near abroad since the end of the Cold War on that anniversary in Syria yesterday, because the President's foreign policy has invited exactly this kind of provocation all around the world. President Obama and Secretary Kerry keep saying that they don't know what Russian intentions are, that they don't know Russia's goals are in the region.

It is very simple. So let me lay it out clearly. Russia is an enemy. Vladimir Putin is a KGB spy who views the world as a zero-sum game. In the short term, he intends to prop up his tyrannical ally Bashar al-Assad, and he wants to preserve access to his expeditionary military bases outside of his country.

In the medium term, he wants to either preserve Assad or he wants to replace him with a like-minded ally. He wants to diminish the power and prestige of the United States in the region. He wants to establish Russia as the main Middle East power broker, and he wants to divert attention from his continued occupation of Ukraine.

In the long term, he sees an opportunity to divide EU and divide NATO at lower risk than it would take to conduct military operations such as Estonia or Latvia. If Europeans are going to be divided because of a refugee crisis of a few hundred thousand, imagine what could happen when Vladimir Putin turns up the heat in Syria and drives hundreds of thousands or more of those refugees into Europe.

How has this come to pass? Why would he think he could get away with all of this? Because of the unending series of concessions and appeasement of Barack Obama toward Vladimir Putin. Before he was even elected to office in 2008, when Vladimir Putin invaded Georgia, Barack Obama—then a candidate—called for Georgia to exercise restraint while they were under an invasion.

Just a couple of months later, he called for a reset in relations while there were still Russian troops on Georgian soil. A few months after that, he withdrew missile defense systems from the Czech Republic and Poland—on the 70th anniversary of Russia's invasion of Poland—without so much as a heads-up and without getting anything in return.

He entered into the New START treaty, which allows Russia to continue to grow their nuclear forces or requires the United States to reduce ours. In a ''hot mic'' moment, he was caught with Dmitry Medvedev, promising more flexibility toward Russia after the election of 2012. He fought tooth and nail against the Magnitsky human rights act, only accepting it once he realized it had overwhelming bipartisan support in Congress. He continues to look the other way as Russia violates the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. He jumped at the opportunity that Vladimir Putin provided him in 2013 to avoid carrying out his airstrikes in Syria and to enforce his own red line.

Just as in Georgia, when Vladimir Putin invaded Crimea, he demanded restraint from the government of Ukraine. When Vladimir Putin began to conduct operations in eastern Ukraine, he looked the other way, he imposed weak sanctions. To this day, he refuses to arm them in the ways they are desperately calling for.

So what should we do now? Again, I think it is very simple. Let me lay it out. We should make it clear that Vladimir Putin and Russia will not be a power in the Middle East. We should pressure our partners to do the same thing. We should establish no-fly zones in Syria and make it clear that any aircraft that enters those zones will be shot down. We should make it clear that we will fly where we want and when we want, that any aircraft in Syria—or, for that matter, in the vicinity of a NATO country—that turns on the transponder will be shot down as a menace to civil aviation and to our allies. We should ramp up our airstrikes in Syria against our enemies such as the Islamic State. We should threaten Iran with termination of the nuclear deal because they are continuing to provide support for Bashar al-Assad. We should make it clear that Israel retains the right to interdict missile shipments from Iran through Syria to the terrorist group Hezbollah.

Let's not forget about Ukraine and Europe. We should arm Ukranian forces. We should give them the intelligence they need on Russian forces and rebels who are amassing on their border. We should enhance sanctions

by expanding them across all sectors. We should move troops to base them—at least temporarily, if not permanently—on our eastern NATO flank in places such as Estonia and Latvia.

Some say these responses will be provocative, but where will Putin's provocations end? What is really provocative is American weakness.

Putin is humiliating the United States. If we don't draw a line now and enforce it, it will not be a choice between humiliation or war; it will be a choice between humiliation and war.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I do wish to go back to the comments of the good Senator from New Hampshire on the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and I want to associate myself with those remarks.

I also wish to add for the record that there is a fair amount of this money that is spent for land acquisition from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. That is not a bad thing. Get some of the in-holdings out of being in-holdings. It helps with management, and it helps with management costs.

I will tell you, if you are a fisherman or a hunter in this country, access and habitat is a huge issue, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund is all about access for hunters, fishermen, bike riders, birdwatchers, and all those folks, and habitat for big game and fisheries.

For this fund to expire for the first time ever is a travesty. You are right. We spent $306 million on it the last 2 years; we were supposed to have spent $900 million in this fund, and that is why there is the reserve there is. Quite frankly, if you take a look at the United States, you take a look at the in-holdings, and you take a look at the recreational opportunities out there—$306 million isn't enough. Yet this fund has expired and is not authorized.

In Montana alone, just for the record, recreational opportunities add $6 billion, with a ''b,'' to our economy. We are a State of 1 million people—$6 billion to our economy. It employs over 64,000 people, and that doesn't count the businesses that moved to Montana for the recreational opportunities nor the people who come to work for those businesses for the recreational opportunities. I just wanted to get that into the RECORD.

Mr. President, I wish to talk about the bill under consideration, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill, and I express my opposition to that bill.

Why? We just heard a presentation on the floor a minute ago from the Senator who talked about shooting down planes and potentially going to war. The amount that it costs to take care of our veterans is a cost of war, and we are underfunding the VA today by over $800 million. I express my deep disappointment in the majority's inability to recognize the true cost of sending this Nation, young men and women, into harm's way.

Veterans Day is 6 weeks from now. Many of the folks in this Chamber will go back to their home States where they will be attending ceremonies and taking photos of men and women who are in uniform. We will give speeches and talk about our profound gratitude to the veterans and their families who have sacrificed so much for their country.

In the meantime, you will see a flurry of press statements from Senators, oftentimes patting themselves on their backs for extending benefits to veterans or enhancing the quality and timeliness of their care, or you will hear Senators and Congressmen lamenting on the lack of leadership within the VA and taking the VA to task for not performing up to their expectations. But there is one thing many of those Members of Congress will not do, and that is give the VA the resources it needs to serve the men and women who have served this country and the military.

Right now, the VA is under greater demand for services and subject to a higher degree of accountability than any other time in this Department's history. After a decade of war in the Middle East, that demand should be expected to be high. After recent allegations of mismanagement and wrongdoing, that accountability is absolutely warranted, but the standard we are holding the VA to should be the standard we hold ourselves to.

Is Congress doing the very best that it can do to ensure our Nation's veterans can access the health care and the benefits they have earned? Given the appropriations bill before us, the answer to that question is: No, we are not.

Our job is to make sure the VA is working for all veterans and to make sure it can work for all veterans. That means holding the VA accountable and ensuring it operates in full transparency, but that also means the VA has to have the capacity to meet the current needs of the demand for its services and to meet those demands into the future.

It requires rigorous oversight. Today's President understands that. There is no doubt about that, but it also requires giving the VA the tools and the resources it needs to get the job done.

Let's be clear. I believe this bill sets the VA up for failure. There are folks on the other side who are demanding that the VA fix itself, but in order to fix itself, we have to give it the tools it needs to do that. We are refusing to do that in this bill. We are setting up the VA for failure, and that failure will result in failing our veterans.

If this bill is enacted, it could mean that 68,500 fewer veterans are receiving the VA medical care they need, including veterans such as a constituent of mine from Reed Point, MT. This man had an eye exam in early February and received a prescription for a new pair of glasses. He was told he would receive them in 4 to 6 weeks, but due to a large backlog, he did not receive them until July. It took 5 months to get this man glasses.

How are we going to improve the quality of care for veterans if the VA budget isn't where it needs to be?

Take the story of Perry, who is 67 years old. He has a 100-percent service disability due to Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam. He relies on the VA for lifesaving cancer treatment. Without chemotherapy and specialty care, Perry's prognosis is not good. To make matters worse, the VA can approve only six appointments at a time, which is a real challenge for Perry because he is receiving treatment 5 days a week. So every week he has to fill out another round of paperwork to qualify for medical care.

These are real folks who served their county. They are veterans who have real issues with the VA today at current funding levels.

Do we think these problems are going to be easier to solve if we give them an underfunded budget? They won't be.

Over the last 14 years, we fought 2 wars in the Middle East. Almost 10,000 Americans are still involved in a fight in Afghanistan at this very moment. For them, this war is far from over, and for many people in this Chamber—some who led us into the war in Iraq—they refuse to admit these are also the true costs of war, taking care of our veterans.

When we send young men and women over there and we put these wars on America's credit card as we did—financed by China, Japan, and others—we do not bother to factor in what it would cost to meet their health care and educational requirements when they come back home. Honoring our commitment to veterans is a cost of war and one that we should never forget about. Those who came home are now suffering from physical wounds but also wounds we cannot see. As I said yesterday, at least 22 veterans are taking their own lives every single day, and $1 billion less won't help the VA get these men and women back on their feet and give them the mental health care that they need.

The VA also faces unprecedented demand for new treatments of diseases such as hepatitis C, which are shorter in duration, with fewer side effects, and that have cure rates—and this is very good news—approaching 100 percent, but they cost money. As Vietnam veterans reach retirement age, that means that nearly half of this Nation's veteran population will be 65 years of age or older. They are entitled to their VA care. After all, they have earned it, and they are going to need more and more of that care in the years ahead.

My home State of Montana has the second highest per capita veterans population in this country. It is a rural State where distance poses a major obstacle to care. The Choice Act that we

passed and enacted last year was designed to address many of those obstacles that rural veterans face.

The VA is also working to establish residency programs in rural States to encourage rural medical providers to locate in those rural States. We need to build off of these efforts and work to ensure they are carried out as we intended and as the veterans deserve.

Will cutting pay for VA providers help bring more medical professionals to Montana or Alaska or Oklahoma or North Carolina? The answer is no.

I go home nearly every weekend, and when I travel around the State, I talk to veterans. They tell me that getting in the door of that VA can be very frustrating. Shortchanging the VA's medical facilities doesn't solve that problem. Not allowing the VA to hire more doctors and nurses doesn't solve that problem.

So today we need to fix this bill because the folks who sacrificed so much for this country deserve nothing less.

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. BURR. 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. BURR. Mr. President, I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The 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.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to 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, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) is necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 273 Leg.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—44

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

NOT VOTING—6

Boxer	Graham	Rubio
Cruz	McCain	Vitter

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 44.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and related agencies appropriations bill. I am very encouraged that has finally come before the U.S. Senate. I also wish to remind my colleagues that the Senate Appropriations Committee has put forward 12 appropriations bills that reflect the priorities of the American people and the budget we passed in April.

Let me remind my colleagues that budget took $7 trillion out of the President's proposed budget over the next 10 years. Yet here we are today, in October, facing the reality that since April we have not been able to debate on this floor those 12 appropriations bills. You have heard all year that we need to get back to regular order, and that means the Senate needs to bring up and debate each of these 12 bills individually. However, due to Democratic obstructionism, the Federal Government is operating under a short-term funding measure, and the Senate has not been able to debate any of these 12 funding bills.

It is time for the political posturing to stop. People back home don't understand. I don't either. Senate Democrats are again acting as a roadblock in preventing progress. The American people sent us to govern responsibly, and it is time for Senate Democrats to start living up to this expectation, particularly when it comes to funding our government.

In this vote today, Senate Democrats are blocking us from moving forward with a bill to fund military construction projects that help our troops and support key veterans programs, many of which need reform after being plagued by backlogs and scandals for years.

We must make good on our Nation's promise to our veterans and provide our troops with the facilities they need to work, train, and fulfill the mission of the U.S. Armed Forces. Senate Democrats just voted against improvements to the VA electronic health records system so that veterans' records are safely and seamlessly accessed among agencies and the private sector. They just voted against increased transparency for the VA disability claims system to reduce the backlog for those veterans who need help the most. They just voted against much needed oversight of VA construction projects, like the VA hospital in Denver, CO, that is over $1 billion over budget. Additionally, they just voted against construction of the second missile defense site in Poland, a project that is an important deterrent against Russian aggression in Eastern Europe and had been previously scrapped by President Obama.

Our Nation is currently dealing with a global security crisis. We must take recent Russian aggressions and the rise of great power traditional rivals very seriously. Yesterday Russia launched airstrikes in Syria to prop up President Bashar Al Assad in a strategy Defense Secretary Ash Carter described as counterproductive and equated to ''pouring gasoline on the fire.'' Clearly, we must make sure our troops have the resources they need to protect our country. Because of that, I am shocked that my colleagues across the aisle today just voted to delay construction for our military facilities—facilities our troops depend on to train for current conflicts and to prepare for whatever the future holds.

Most appalling of all, Senate Democrats voted today to block this bill even after we learned that tens of thousands of our veterans have died while waiting for care they need and deserve. This is unconscionable, and the brinksmanship we are seeing from Senate Democrats across the aisle is totally unacceptable.

Our veterans sacrificed so much for our freedom, and our service men and

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.

More importantly, after high school, Greg wanted to find out what life was about. He had an opportunity to be a production assistant working on movies such as the latest version of ''Indiana Jones,'' as well as one of my favorite movies, frankly, ''Iron Man.'' Yes, ''Iron Man.''

Greg was offered a job with Marvel, the comic book folks. He had an opportunity to stay out of the State and do amazing things and have a lot of fun, but his heart was beating to come back home to South Carolina, to come back home to Columbia, so that he could serve the people of South Carolina. He wanted to be a police officer. He wanted to help people. Kassy told me that Greg would have had no regrets.

To think about those words from his wife on the day her husband was murdered, Greg would have no regrets because he was doing what he was made to do: Protect people, serve people, sacrifice on behalf of people.

Greg was the embodiment of bravery and heroism. Greg was doing what he was wired to do. His wife was so clear and so passionate about his desire to be the first on the scene, his desire to do everything possible to try to be helpful. Greg, like so many police officers across this Nation and, without question, across the great State of South Carolina, loved serving people. And he did so. He did so with great integrity, with amazing character. He knew his place in the world was making sure that his town, his city, our State, and our Nation are safer because he put on the uniform every single day.

Today, we all stand in salute to Greg and make a promise to his wife Kassy that we will be there with her as she raises her son Sal. Our prayers and our thoughts are with the family.

In closing, I would like to share a story that Kassy told me yesterday afternoon as I had the chance to speak with her. The story brought a tear to my eye, and I hope as my colleagues hear the story, it may even bring a smile to their faces. Greg worked the night shift, and when he would come home in the morning—Sal was around 6 months old and he was learning to sit up, and in the morning when Sal heard the police cruiser of his dad pull into the driveway, he would sit up and he would start smiling. He was feeding, and the milk, because of his big smile, would run down his face.

Think for just a moment of that young man, Sal. He should have the opportunity to walk when he hears the cruiser coming into the driveway. He should have the opportunity to yell ''Daddy'' when he hears that cruiser coming into the driveway. So for that little boy and his mama, Kassy, and for the Forest Acres community, I stand here today saying thank you for every single thing Greg has done to make our State and our Nation a better place to call home. I say thank you to Greg for making the ultimate sacrifice that will never be forgotten. And I say thank you to Kassy for being such a powerful and strong woman in this amazing time of her need.

We should pray for Kassy and Sal.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I am glad I got to be here to hear Senator SCOTT talk about that family and that hero and those who protect and defend us. In Missouri we have had over the last year a number of challenges on this front. I was recently meeting with a group of African-American pastors, one of whom was a pastor in Ferguson, MO, and talking about the hard work of being in law enforcement. He said: People who protect us, just like me, want to go home at the end of the day. And more than most of us, people who protect us leave every day with them and their families having the No. 1 focus of getting home at the end of the day. Thank God they are willing to step forward and protect us, especially understanding that this is a challenging job at a challenging time.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

I wish to speak for a little while about veterans health care, another challenge we face right now. We just, unfortunately, failed to move to debate on a bill that would fund these programs, a bill that would increase funding for our veterans in areas such as health care and benefit claims and processing claims, medical research, and technology upgrades. For whatever reason, we decided as a Senate—and I don't think for a good reason—that no, we are not going to debate that bill because all of these bills somehow collectively don't spend enough money. But we have talked about that, and I talked about it earlier in the day.

Right now I wish to speak for a few minutes about what we do need to be figuring out for our veterans.

We learned a year ago that Veterans' Administration wait times were unacceptable. We learned it was likely that a number of lives had been lost and deaths had been caused because our veterans didn't get to see the doctor they should have gotten to see; they didn't get the health care they earned as veterans and deserved. This summer, after a year of working to make this better, we found out that the wait list of people waiting more than 30 days at the VA system to see a doctor was now 50 percent longer than it was last year. I thought about that a little bit and I thought, well, maybe it was just 50 percent longer than it was last year, because one thing they found out was the wait-list wasn't really reflective of the real wait-list. The kind of progress we hoped to have made we don't appear to be making yet.

Last year the Congress passed a law to give veterans more choice. It was passed on a broad bipartisan basis. The Senate came together, the Congress came together to allow veterans to receive their health care in non-VA facilities if they couldn't get that first appointment within 30 days or if they were more than 40 miles away from a facility. We tried this legislation this summer to put even more definition to that. Clearly, what the Congress means is 40 miles from a facility that can do what the patient needs to have done. If one needs to have a heart stint put in, just being 40 miles from a facility where they would take your blood pressure isn't good enough. We will continue to work to change veterans health care in a way that gives veterans more choices, I hope.

What we found out is that Alaskan care is just not acceptable. We have to continue to keep focused on this. The bill we provided will create more choices.

Last week I had one of the best conversations I have ever had with anybody at the Veterans Administration when I talked to the Under Secretary of Health—a new person in that job—Dr. Dave Shulkin, who spent his whole life in health care in the private sector managing hospitals outside of the Federal Government. Dr. Shulkin should know what he is doing, and it certainly sounded to me as if he knew what he was doing. He understood the kinds of things the Congress hopes to see for our veterans and the VA system that need to happen.

We talked about the fact that Congress intends for veterans' choice to mean exactly that—not ways for the Veterans Administration to find obstacles to choice but veterans' choice. If you are a Federal Government health care provider, if you take Medicare patients, you ought to be able to take veterans as patients. There shouldn't be some long second process you have to go through to become qualified so that the veteran can see a doctor the veteran wants to see, the veteran can go to a hospital the veteran wants to go to, particularly if the VA can't meet that need.

In fact, the conversation I had with Dr. Shulkin was so good that for a little while, I thought maybe I had gotten the wrong number, that possibly I actually had not called the Veterans Administration, because I have never had a conversation like that where somebody at the Veterans Administration not only knew what needed to be done but wasn't afraid to compete to get the health care needs of veterans met.

I talked to all our veterans groups in Missouri, or many of them—certainly the two big veterans groups—at their meeting this summer. I said: Many of you have had great experience with the VA.

There are a lot of people at the VA who want to do everything they can to serve veterans in the best possible way.

I said: But that is not good enough. All of you need to have had the best possible experience at the VA—not necessarily the best outcome but the best possible outcome.

You know, all of our health care outcomes aren't what we would want them to be, but they ought to be everything they possibly should be.

Veterans shouldn't have to drive past non-VA facilities that are equally capable of providing their health care or more capable of providing their health care, and we are going to continue to work to see that that happens. Competition is a good thing. The best possible place to go for your health care is a good thing.

I want to come back to that briefly in a moment, but before I get there, I received a report on Tuesday from the Veterans Administration's inspector general that frankly just said that the allegations about what was happening at the St. Louis facility, the John Cochran facility, were absolutely true, that a number of files had been changed to indicate that the consultation had been completed before it was ever had. I assume it does a lot for your performance numbers if you check the ''completed'' box before you see the patient, and that appears to be what was happening. We learned that there is not enough oversight there. We learned that at least one psychiatrist had received performance pay based on productivity data. The only thing wrong with the productivity data was that it wasn't correct. I guess it is easy to look good if you are not backing that up with real facts. It is not acceptable. It is inexcusable.

Then we have a problem with leadership at these facilities. At the John Cochran hospital in St. Louis—the biggest hospital we have in our State—we have had seven temporary directors in 2 years. No matter how good some of those may have been, having seven temporary directors is a lot like not having any director at all. If you know somebody is going to be there for 14 weeks, or however long they are going to be there, and you know somebody else is coming, that obviously is not going to produce a good result, but that is happening. There are 30 veterans centers that don't have permanent directors today. That is about 20 percent of all the facilities in the country. One in five of our VA medical centers doesn't have a permanent director, and we need to do better.

Supposedly the new Administrator of the Veterans Administration came in because he was a great manager. So far, I don't see the results. If he needs more help from the Congress to be a great manager, we ought to figure out a way to give him more help.

I believe competition is a good thing. The VA should be good and really better than anybody else at a few things. Nobody should be better than the VA in terms of dealing with post-traumatic stress. Nobody should be better than the Veterans Administration when it comes to dealing with the results of these IED attacks, the improvised explosive device attacks. Because of that, eye injuries should be something the VA deals with very well. And nobody should be better than the VA at dealing with prosthetics or spinal cord injuries.

Frankly, the Presiding Officer, as a doctor, would appreciate this. I don't really know why we wouldn't assume the VA would be the best place to specialize in almost anything else. And if it is not the best place to go, it shouldn't be the only place to go.

The VA is probably not likely to be any better or as good as anyplace you would drive by to get your heart stint put in, to take care of your cancer problem, to work with your kidneys that are failing, to get even the basic health care of getting your blood pressure checked. Our veterans deserve more choices.

There are lots of reasons the Congress should be and is concerned about the way the Veterans Administration is working. It is clearly time for the Veterans Administration to get focused not on what is good for the Veterans Administration but on what is good for veterans. We owe it to our veterans.

The report I got this Tuesday unfortunately verifies almost every concern that people have had, and we need to insist that that be better.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

PROVIDING FOR OUR VETERANS

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I am pleased to follow my colleague and friend from Missouri. I just want to mention—although I didn't come to the floor to talk about what we are doing for veterans, let me take a minute or two to talk about what we are doing that we are actually proud of and then maybe touch on a couple of areas where we can do a better job.

I myself am a veteran, a Navy midshipman out of Ohio State who studied economics for 4 years and went on to become a naval flight officer. I served for 5 years in Southeast Asia as a naval flight officer and then as a P–3 aircraft mission commander for another 18 years until the end of the Cold War. I loved the Navy. I loved serving.

I got an education—undergraduate and graduate school—and feel very privileged. I had the opportunity at the end of my Active-Duty tour to use the VA hospital very close to Wilmington, DE, in northern Delaware. I remember the first time I went there. I was offered some dental benefits, and my dentist—a young dentist who was right out of dental school—told me the morale was pretty bad, and he said they didn't do very good work. It was place where they had 16-bed wards. They didn't do much in the way of outpatient surgery. The pharmacy was a mess.

I said: Wouldn't it be great to be in a position to do something about that and transform this place so it can be a health care delivery facility we can be proud of today?

Do they do everything perfectly? No, they don't.

We have two satellite operations in Delaware. We have one in the Dover area, in the middle of our State, and we have another one in the southern part of the State, in Sussex County, which is Georgetown. I am very proud of those health care facilities. We call them outpatient clinics, CBOCS.

The reason I mention that is because I was also eligible—coming out of the Vietnam war, along with other Vietnam veterans—to get an education, to go to college, and in my case graduate school on the GI bill. In my generation, we received about $250 a month. At the time, I was happy to have every bit of it. I continued to fly with my Reserve squadron for another 18 years, and it was great to have that benefit.

A couple weeks ago, our congressional delegation—Senator COONS, Congressmen CARNEY, and Governor Jack Markell—sent 300 Delaware National Guard men and women off to Afghanistan. We had a big sendoff ceremony for them. Their families were there. We had about 1,000 people. It was a big sendoff.

As they left, I told them: When you come back, you are going to be eligible for a GI benefit that dwarfs what my generation received.

They won't get 250 bucks a month. If they serve a total of 3 years on Active Duty and serve in Afghanistan or Iraq for a period of time, here is what they will be eligible for: They can come back and go for free to the University of Delaware, Delaware City University, Wilmington University—pretty much any public college or university in America; tuition, books, and fees paid for; and if they need tutoring, that is paid for as well. On top of all that, they get a housing allowance of $1,500 a month. We received a GI benefit of $250.

Not surprisingly, at the end of World War II, when my dad and my uncle served—in the Korean war, when my uncle served, and at the end of the Vietnam war, scam artists emerged to take advantage of the GI and tried to separate the GI coming back from combat—tried to separate the GI cash value benefits from the GI and sometimes not to provide them with a very good education but to take advantage of the GI and the taxpayers.

In about 1952, something called the 85–15 rule was passed whereby at least 15 percent of the students enrolled in a for-profit college or university had to be there—their tuition paid for by some source other than the Federal Government. As it turns out, the 85–15 rule became the 90–10 rule, so that 90 percent of those who were enrolled were paid for by the Federal Government, but another 10 percent had to be paid for by someone else other than the Federal Government. Over time, that changed so that 90 percent of the revenues of a for-profit college or university could come from the Federal Government but not the other 10 percent—except for the money that came from the GI bill to a college or university or from tuition assistance for people on Active Duty. That didn't count against the 90 percent. At the end of the day, a for-profit college or university could get 100 percent of its revenues from the Federal Government. I don't think that is a good thing.

The system that was designed early on with the 85–15 rule and later the 90–

10 rule was designed to try to make sure there were market forces that ensured taxpayers and the GIs, the veterans would get a fair deal, get a good education, make sure they were treated the way we would want them to be treated.

There is a huge loophole in the 90–10 rule, and it is a loophole we need to fix. We need to fix it.

My colleagues who talked here earlier today—including my colleague from Missouri—about the quality of VA health care—I want to say that we are providing the best health care by far in the history of our country. For too long, a number of our for-profit colleges and universities and postsecondary-training programs have been taking advantage of GIs, taking advantage of the taxpayers, and it should stop. It should stop.

Having said that, there are a number of for-profit colleges and universities and training programs that do a great job. They are not all bad actors. Some of them wear white hats. For them, good for you, and for those who are not, you need to change your ways.

I didn't come here to talk about that, but in the spirit of making sure we look out for our veterans, I thought I would mention that.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Let's take a look at some of the posters here this afternoon.

The first one looks like my State. It probably also looks like the Presiding Officer's State. It could look like any of the States our pages are from. But this is a traffic jam. It is a traffic jam that occurs almost every day, almost every business day, and frankly a lot of weekends on highways across America from coast to coast. We spend a lot of time sitting in traffic. It is actually quite a substantial cost that inures to our Nation's economy. The cost this year is believed to be about $160 billion, a hit on our national economy. I will talk in just a second about what that includes.

Part of the waste that is reflected in our Nation's economy is—you see right here it says ''82 hours wasted in big city traffic.'' That is per person, per driver, on average, across the country, big cities, people sitting—pretty much sitting in traffic. They could be in a minivan, they could be in a small car, a large car, they could be in a truck, but we are talking about 82 hours a year just pretty much sitting in traffic.

The average across the country, when you take in the more rural parts of the country and suburban areas, is about 42 hours. That is a whole lot of time. Time is money. So just think about that.

Here is one with a sense of humor. This is not Delaware. I am not sure where this is, but for those who can't read this, it says—the traffic sign that is up here says: ''You'll never get to work on time. Haha.'' It is some kind of construction program. You see the orange cones out there. Someone had a good sense of humor there. My guess is, the folks who maybe were working on the project had a good sense of humor. My guess is that for a moment it made the drivers smile but not for long, especially if they sat in traffic long enough. Eighty-two hours a year, that is long enough.

Not only is it expensive, a waste of time and money for us as individuals to sit in traffic for a long time, another part of the cost is caused by potholes and other problems with our roads. I think this is probably a bridge. It looks like it might be a bridge, but it is a construction project someplace. Here is a pothole. That is a bad pothole. In other parts—not too much in Delaware—I have seen in other States at least that bad and worse.

What is going to happen, vehicles will come along, they will hit that pothole, and may damage their tires, they may have to replace a tire or two, they may have to get their front end realigned. That costs money. How much? Actually, believe it or not, just like Texas A&M has actually figured out on average we waste 82 hours a year as drivers, somebody else actually spent the time to figure out how much we spend on our cars, trucks, and vans in order to fix them during the course of the year because of potholes like this and other problems, whether it is the surface of the roads we travel on or the surface of the bridges we travel on. It is over $350. I have seen the range of anywhere from $350 per year to $500 per year. Let's say it is just $350 a year. That is a lot of money. That is part of the cost of the damage to our economy.

The other thing I would say, our economy today, as we all know, is a ''just in time'' economy. I will give you a good example. We have a port in Wilmington that sits right on the Delaware River. As you come up the Delaware Bay, it becomes the Delaware River. The port that is closest to the Atlantic is the Port of Wilmington. Ships are coming in and out of there throughout the day, nights, and weekends. The ships don't come in and spend a week. Ships don't come into the Port of Wilmington and spend a day. They may come in for 4 hours, they may come in for 6 hours, but they are there and then they are gone, because when a ship is sitting in the Port of Wilmington or any other port, the shipper, whoever owns that boat, that ship cannot make any money. So they want to be in and they want to be out. That is the way they do their business.

It is important for whoever is coming in using a truck to bring goods to put on that ship to send around the world, there may be a very short window of time to get there. If you are stuck in traffic, the kind of traffic we saw early on, you may miss that window when the ship is in the port, whether it is Wilmington or some other port. That is another reason why, in a ''just in time'' economy, these kinds of delays mean time is money. Again, someone else with a sense of humor—if you cannot read this, it looks like a husband and wife driving along in their car. His wife says: ''Finally someone fixed that pothole.'' Here is the pothole. There is a car down there. The guy driving looks like he is having a bad day, not just a bad hair day, a very bad day.

A little humor there but not if you happen to be this guy, frankly—probably not if you happen to be this guy, because if you are running over somebody else's car in a pothole like this, the guy is going to spend a lot more than 350 bucks to repair his car and get it going again.

We are not making this stuff up. There is a national association, I think it is civil engineers, people who spend their life's work on transportation projects. Every year for years, they have given us a grade on what kind of shape our roads, highways, bridges, and transit systems are in. They could give an A, A-plus, A-minus, they could give a B, B-plus, B-minus, they could give a C, C-plus, C-minus or they could give a D-plus, D, D-minus. The last couple of years we have been right around D to D-plus. I think we are probably going down rather than going up. So what everybody knows—just about anybody who drives in our country these days knows we are not investing in our roads, highways, bridges, and transit systems the way we need to.

Look around the rest of the world, travel around the rest of the world. You can see in a lot of countries we compete with that they do. One of the components of certain investments we need to make in our country in order to strengthen our economy, to better ensure the jobs are going to be created or preserved—there a lot of things we can do to make sure businesses have access to capital, make sure the cost of energy is affordable, make sure the cost of health care is affordable, make sure we have public safety, make sure the people who are coming out of our schools can read, write, and have the skills that are needed in the workforce.

I know the big one is to make sure we have the ability to move people and goods where they need to go, when they need to go. Here is our current plan. It is pretty well summed up in this sign. It is meant to be funny. I suppose it is. But I like this part of the plan: ''Good luck.'' That is not a plan. That is not a plan that is going to get us where we need to go as a nation.

For those who may be unable to read this, there is a big traffic jam. A lot of people are saying—you see those little bubbles there—''I'd pay to be anywhere but here.''

I was Treasurer of Delaware. I studied economics, got an MBA, and was Treasurer of Delaware when I was 29. I had a chance to serve in the house for a while and then as Governor. I was very much involved in the National Governors Association in trying to make sure we invested in our transportation infrastructure across the country. In the Senate, I am on the Environment and Public Works Committee. The last time I was privileged to serve

as chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

So I thought a fair amount about these issues. If you think about the way we pay for roads, highways, bridges, and transit, what we have used for years is a user pay system. The people, the businesses that use our roads, highways, bridges, and transit systems, we pay for them. In some places, we have sort of gotten away from that. There is an unwillingness to ask people to pay for what they want to use. Everybody wants to have better transportation systems. There seems to be a lot of reluctance to pay for that.

When I was Governor of Delaware, three times I asked for modest—very modest—increases, just a couple of cents in the fee for gas and diesel tax. I think out of three efforts, we succeeded one time. Not a whole lot was raised, but we cobbled together some other money from other user fees and we were able to continue to fund transportation funding.

For a number of years in the Nation, we have had a transportation trust fund. Most of the money for that transportation trust fund comes from user fees, and two primary user fees are a gas tax. It has been about 18.3, 18.4 cents since, I think, 1993. It has been a little bit over 18 cents since 1993. It has not changed. The cost of concrete has gone up. The cost of asphalt has gone up. The cost of steel has gone up. The cost of labor has gone up. What has not gone up is the user fee we are asking people to pay to have better roads, highways, bridges, and transit to get people off our roads, highways, and bridges. If we can do that, we can save a lot of money.

We have a tax on diesel—a Federal tax. It has been about 24 cents per gallon. It has been at that level since 1993—since 1993. Again, concrete, asphalt, steel, and labor have all gone up, but in 22 years we have not changed the user fee, if you will, on diesel.

The money we collect from the gas and diesel tax does not go to pay for health care, it does not go to pay for wars, it does not go to pay for agriculture and other things. The money we collect from these user fees goes to pay for roads, highways, bridges, and to some extent for transit systems, to get people off our roads, highways, and bridges so the rest of us will have some extra room to maneuver.

I will go back in time. Thomas Jefferson said a lot of things that are worth remembering. My favorite Jefferson quote is this: ''If the people know the truth, they won't make a mistake.''

If the people know the truth, they won't make a mistake. The truth is, we are not investing in our transportation infrastructure in this country the way our competitors are and the way we ought to be.

To do so does not mean we have to raise—in some places they have gas taxes or diesel taxes that are $4 or $5 a gallon. We don't have that. It is 18 cents, and 24 cents for gas and diesel combined. If we had increased them by the rate of inflation in the past, the gas tax would be not 18 cents; it may be even closer to twice that. The diesel tax would not be 24 cents; it might be closer to twice that. But we have not changed them.

Here is the way we pay for transportation improvements: We don't pay for them. We don't raise anything, in some cases. We just simply go out and borrow money for the transportation fund from the Federal general fund. When the general fund runs out of money, we borrow money from countries around the world like China and other places and replenish the general fund, and use that to replenish the transportation fund.

I think that is pretty foolish, especially to be beholden to the folks in China for our transportation system. It does not make a whole lot of sense to me, maybe it does not to you either. There are other things we do—we have these—I call them cats and dogs, sort of sleight of hand. One of the more recent examples, we do something called pension smoothing, where—I will not get into how that works, but it is just an awful idea to mess with, muck with people's pensions in order to be able to provide funds for road improvements. That does not make much sense.

Another thing we do is we maybe raise the TSA fees when people want to fly. Instead of using that to make our friendly skies safer, we put a little of that money in roads, highways, and bridges or maybe we sell some of the oil we have in our Strategic Petroleum Reserve. We paid a lot of money several years ago to buy gas, to buy oil when it was expensive. People think it would be a smart thing to sell that oil out of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, when prices are low, to help pay for roads, highways, and bridges. Remember the old saying ''buy low, sell high.'' Well, this is really buy high and then put that oil in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and then sell low. That is insanity.

We can do a lot better than this. For a number of years, some have encouraged us to do what we have been doing for years, to actually be honest and pay for improvements to our roads, highways, and bridges. And that is to raise the user fees—not all at once, not by $1 or $2 or anything like that, but by 4 cents a year starting next year for 4 years. Then after that index—then index the fees and the taxes on gas and diesel according to the rate of inflation.

If we did that, I think we would have a combined State and Federal user fee, if you will, for gas. I think it would be at that time 53 cents. It would be about 53 cents. Compared to what? Compared to pretty much any other developed nation in the world, we would have the lowest combined Federal, State, and local user fees on gas and diesel. It is the lowest as far as I can tell. We can actually double that. We are not going to do that. We could actually double it again—we are not going to do that—from 53 cents to $1.06 per gallon. Again, I don't suggest we would do that, but if we did, we would still be among the lowest compared to the rest of the world.

Sometimes we say: Well, 16 cents—what could I buy with that? If I didn't have to pay 4 years from now an extra 16 cents when I buy a gallon of gas, what would that add up to in a week for the average driver?

I will tell you this—maybe brings it home—basically the price of a cup of coffee a week is the cost that would be incurred by the average driver even after the full increase, the 4 cents times 4 years. That is what it is worth. That would be the out-of-pocket expense for the average driver, the price of a cup of coffee a week.

We saw earlier from some of these charts that, on average across the country, people are sitting in traffic for 42 hours per year. We saw some of the graphics with the pothole and were reminded that the cost of damage to our cars, trucks, and vans is anywhere from $350 to some estimates as high as $500. We are learning that for the price of a basic cup of coffee, if we invest that money instead—people can still drink coffee, but if we put that in our roads, highways, bridges, and transit systems, we can have a transportation system we can be proud of. Those four pennies add up over time, and they add up over the next 10 years to $220 billion to have for investments. So instead of having roads or potholes that look like the one I saw and the kinds of traffic jams we see here from coast to coast, we can have a transportation system again in this country we can be proud of. We just have to have the will to do it.

Again, Thomas Jefferson reminded us that things that are worth having are worth paying for, and if people know the truth, they won't make a mistake. Roads, highways, bridges, transit—that is what we are paying for. The truth is, it doesn't have to break us. It doesn't have to break our banks or our budgets. We can have those roads, highways, and bridges again that we can be proud of. I hope we will do that.

Senator DICK DURBIN of Illinois and I have introduced legislation to essentially do that, to raise the user fees by 4 cents a year for 4 years, at a time when the price of oil is as low as it has been for some time and is expected to stay low for the foreseeable future.

If the Iranians work with us and the other five nations that negotiated the Iranian agreement in order to gradually lift sanctions from their economy, they will be able to start producing oil and selling it across the world as long as they agree not to create that nuclear weapon. We are going to make sure they don't.

But it turns out that Iran is the No. 4 nation in the world in oil reserves. Think about that. We live in a world that is awash in oil. Very soon, the Iranian oil will be added to the oil that is

available to consumers to use on this planet of ours. All that oil will not push up the price of oil or gasoline or diesel; it will push it down—supply and demand. Let's keep that in mind.

With that, I have spoken for long enough. I see one of my colleagues has been waiting patiently, and I will bid you all adieu. Have a good weekend. Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

MILCON-VA APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I wish to say a few words about the bill that we voted on this afternoon and put it into a broader context. This was the bill to begin the vote and debate on the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill, which passed out of the Appropriations Committee in a strong bipartisan vote.

There has been a lot of talk and a lot of stories in the media over the last several weeks about the government running out of money, a government shutdown. In a lot of those stories, the narrative talked about the Republican Party being the one focused on a government shutdown. The media actually loves this narrative, but, like a lot of narratives in the media, they are not always so accurate. So I wanted to give what I think is the much more accurate story, what is really going on here in the Senate.

Many of us are new Senators—the Presiding Officer and myself included—13 of us, actually. A lot of us came to Washington and a lot of us actually ran for the Senate because we were fed up. We thought the American people were fed up; we knew they were fed up with the dysfunction of the Federal Government. There are a lot of examples of that. You know many of them.

In the last several years we have run the debt of our Nation from $10 trillion to $18 trillion. Think about that. Looking at these interns here on the floor, that is going to be their responsibility if we don't get ahold of that—$18 trillion. An economy that can't grow is what we call the new normal here in Washington, 1.5 percent, 2 percent GDP growth. No budget. The previous Senate was not even passing a budget—the most basic function of government. Households do it, businesses do it, and States do it. The Federal Government was not even taking the time to pass a budget. There were no appropriations bills, no spending bills out of the Appropriations Committee. These were all signs of a Federal Government that was not working, that was dysfunctional.

So we came with the new majority, new leadership committed to change this. We meant to change this. We were very focused on changing this, and we have begun in a serious way to do that. What are we doing? First, we passed a budget. It hadn't happened in years, but we did that. It was a lot of hard work. My hat is off to the Budget Committee. We took what was the President's budget, 10-year budget, and slashed that by $5 trillion to $7 trillion in terms of spending. We didn't raise taxes.

Then the next step—what the government is supposed to do—we started to work on appropriations bills in the Appropriations Committee. Again, this was very hard work, very bipartisan work, and for the first time in years, the Appropriations Committee passed out 12 appropriations bills to fund our government.

Most of these were very bipartisan. Let me give you a few examples. The Agriculture appropriations bill passed out of the Appropriations Committee 28 to 2. It doesn't get much more bipartisan than that. The Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill passed 27 to 3; Energy and Water, 26 to 4. This is strong bipartisan work in the Appropriations Committee with our government getting back to work.

The dysfunction that had previously existed here for many years—none of this was happening—was going away, and we were working. Very importantly, in terms of appropriations bills, the Defense appropriations bill passed out of the committee 27 to 3, and the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill, 21 to 9.

So we passed a budget, passed appropriations bills—so far so good. The Senate is working again. We are back to regular order. We are moving forward in a bipartisan way—very bipartisan. We are doing the work of government. It is what the American people wanted, asked for, and we are starting to deliver on that as part of our promises last fall.

So what is the next step? The next step is to take these appropriations bills and bring them to the Senate floor for a vote. It shouldn't be a problem, particularly because the bills I am talking about are so bipartisan. They came out of committee with bipartisan numbers and support, so that is what we are doing. That is what is we have done. That is what we are supposed to do. That is what the American people want us to do.

We started to prioritize. Where should we begin? Turn on the news. I think most people know where we should begin—funding our military, the men and women protecting us, the men and women risking their lives on a daily basis for our freedom.

So we brought the Defense appropriations bill to the Senate floor. Again, we certainly need that. One gets the sense that the world is careening into chaos. We need a strong military. We need to fund our military. It shouldn't be an issue. It passed out of committee with a strong bipartisan vote. Everybody likes to make sure we have a strong military.

So what happened? We brought it to the floor of the Senate and it was filibustered, not one but two times. That is irresponsible—filibustering the defense of our Nation, defunding the support for our troops.

So that brings us to what we did today. We turn to another appropriations bill—Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations—again, a very bipartisan bill. It is very focused, building military infrastructure throughout our country, throughout the world. One of the most sacred responsibilities of this body, of our government is taking care of our veterans.

This is a huge issue for my State. Alaska boasts the highest number of veterans per capita of any State in the Nation, and we need to take care of our best. So what happened today? It seems pretty noncontroversial. The appropriations bill—a very nonpartisan bill—came to the floor, and it was filibustered again.

In the past few weeks, we have had critical votes to fund our military, to fund our troops, to fund our veterans, and we cannot move forward. What is going on here? I really don't know. It is hard to say. I sit on the Armed Services Committee. I sit on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. These are two of the most bipartisan committees in the Senate. I know all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle truly respect, truly support our troops and our veterans, and truly want what is best for them. I recognize that.

Then why is the other side filibustering the funding of these incredibly important bills, in essence defunding our troops and defunding our veterans? I think the American people deserve answers. I think our veterans deserve answers. I think our troops in harm's way deserve answers.

One thing for sure is the next time the media wants to write a story with a narrative about a government shutdown, they ought to ask those who voted against these bills—to even start debating them—why they are defunding these critical groups and veterans. They need to ask those who are voting against these bills, filibustering these bills, why they are leaving our troops and our veterans in the lurch.

Mr. President, we are doing our job—what the American people asked us to do, demanded from us last November. They wanted us to pass a budget like they do, even though we hadn't done that in years. We did. They wanted us to pass appropriations bills and to work in a bipartisan manner to get these bills through the committee—all 12 to fund the government. We did. And they wanted us to prioritize our spending, our activities, and our focus in terms of government funding on the things that matter most—our military and our veterans. And we did.

I have no idea why our colleagues on the other side of the aisle refuse to move with us in terms of the next step. The American people want the next step. They want the Senate to vote on these bipartisan bills that fund our military and fund our veterans. Today, once again, we are seeing that is not happening. I think the American people need answers, I think our troops

need answers, and I think our veterans need answers on why it is not happening.

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. 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.

NATIONAL KINSHIP CARE MONTH

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, last night, this body approved a resolution authored by Senator WYDEN and myself designating September 2015 as National Kinship Care Month.

While many may not be aware, there are approximately 2,700,000 children living in kinship care around this country. That means millions of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other relatives are looking after children in every urban, rural, and suburban county of the United States.

These caregivers have stepped forward, often at great personal expense, out of love and loyalty to care for children during times in which biological parents are unable to do so. They provide safety, promote well-being, and establish stable homes and environments for extremely vulnerable children during very challenging circumstances.

They serve in a time of upheaval and great change for these children, assisting them to recognize their self-worth and potential.

Kinship care also enables the children to maintain family relationships and cultural heritage as they continue residence in the native community of the child.

This resolution sends a clear message that the Senate is proud of and wishes to honor these everyday heroes, kinship caregivers, who throughout the history of the United States, have provided loving homes for parentless children.

It is my hope that National Kinship Care Month can provide each of us with an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the sacrifice and devotion of kinship caregivers. And while there is still a great deal of work we can do to ensure that all children have a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent family, regardless of age or special needs, kinship care providers exhibit a template of care and sacrifice that should be provided for every child in this great country.

I am very proud of this resolution and this acknowledgement, and I thank my colleagues for giving it their unanimous support.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID WOLK

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to recognize the achievements and contributions of a remarkable educator, a personal friend, and a celebrated leader in my home State of Vermont.

For decades, David Wolk has successfully distinguished himself as an educator and public servant to the people of Vermont. Now in his 11th year as president of Castleton University, formally known as Castleton State College, David likes to call Castleton ''the small college with a big heart.'' As the longest serving president in its history, he has increased the college's involvement in the community and has expanded the university's commitment to civic engagement and service among students and faculty alike. His personal commitment to his hometown of Rutland, VT, is evidenced through his service as a former State senator and current role as a local justice of the peace.

As David has emboldened Castleton's primary mission to serve Vermonters, the institution has forged new partnerships and expanded its opportunities to reach far beyond its footprint in Rutland County. David's leadership is currently enabling the Castleton Polling Institute, which conducts surveys for Vermont politicians and media outlets, to expand to a national audience. Meanwhile, the Castleton Center for Schools continues to serve hundreds of Vermont educators by offering advanced continuing education opportunities each summer. Under his leadership, Castleton athletics has expanded from 12 sports at his inauguration to 27 varsity offerings, enabling Vermont students to play Division III sports. Most recently, David has provided the vision and guidance for Castleton to undergo its own transformation as the college seeks to grow its prestige and opportunities as newly named Castleton University.

David held a distinguished career in education even before stepping foot at Castleton. He served as chief of policy for former Vermont Governor Howard Dean and as the Vermont commissioner of education. Dedication to his native community of Rutland may also be witnessed by his impressive resume as a school principal, superintendent of the Rutland City Public Schools, a guidance counselor and teacher, and a college instructor. He has also served as a member of numerous boards, including the Vermont Business Roundtable, the Vermont Public Education Partnership, and the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation. In recognition of these achievements, he received the 2009 Eleanor M. McMahon Award for Lifetime Achievement from the New England Board of Higher Education.

If his career is not inspiration enough, David's commitment to family surely is. The proud father of four children, David led his family through the celebration of the life and legacy of his wife, Diane, when she passed away this summer, nearly a decade after being diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's. A lifelong educator herself, Diane and David, together, gave more to their community than most. And David's compassion and commitment to Diane leaves a lasting impression on those of us who call him a friend. Marcelle and I admire him.

In recognition of David Wolk's service and resiliency, I ask unanimous consent that Terri Hallenbeck's article from the August 26, 2015, edition of Seven Days be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From Seven Days, Aug. 26, 2015]

RESILIENT DAVID WOLK CHAMPIONS CASTLETON UNIVERSITY

Between the playing fields that serve the Castleton Spartans, a marble monument tells the story of the Greek king Leonidas and how he bravely resisted an army of invaders.

David Wolk chose the 22,000-pound stone from a Rochester quarry and had it polished and engraved in Barre. As Castleton's longest-serving president and its cheerleader-in-chief, he hoped the monument's message, titled ''Spartan Pride,'' would inspire students. He installed it six years ago, just after the college football team's inaugural season in a brand-new stadium.

Players quickly made the monument the focus of a new Castleton tradition, stopping to touch it on their way to practices and games. It offers no guarantees of victory on the field but is an apt symbol for the little college's fighting spirit to survive—and make a name for itself—in the increasingly competitive world of higher education.

For the past 14 years, Wolk has labored to transform Castleton from a tiny, isolated college into a growing university with adequate funding, marketable programs and satisfied students. Last month, it got a new name: Castleton State College became Castleton University.

''Not a lot of colleges are planning on increasing their enrollment these days,'' said Vermont State Colleges chancellor Jeb Spaulding, who oversees Castleton and four other state colleges. ''Dave's different. His plan is, 'I'm building something that's attractive.' ''

''He's the pied piper of Castleton and Rutland County.''

Just as impressive is the fact that 62–year-old Wolk managed to remake Castleton while he waged another, personal battle. Beneath the engraved tale of the Spartan king, there's a hint at that story, too. In small type at the bottom of the rock, it reads, ''In honor of Dr. Diane Wolk.''

Wolk's life is so intertwined with his work at Castleton that he brought in this monument, at his own expense, not just to create a Castleton tradition, but as a tribute to his wife. Diane Wolk was a longtime teacher, school principal, chair of the State Board of Education and one-time director of student teaching at Castleton. She was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's disease in 2007, on her 57th birthday, four years after she first started noticing symptoms.

David Wolk watched in awe as his wife accepted her fate and even strove to demystify

the cruel disease. In 2008, she rallied 400 friends to take part in a ''Walk With Wolk'' Alzheimer's fundraiser, and, while the disease had already started to affect her mind, she addressed the crowd. Quoting Lou Gehrig, she said she felt like the luckiest person in the world.

''She just stood up and was very brave,'' Wolk recalled. ''The monument is a testament to a woman who had a lot of courage.'' Diane Wolk died last month.

''THE CASTLETON WAY''

Tony Volpone was the football coach for opposing Endicott College when his team visited Castleton State College in 2013. Endicott defeated Castleton 43–7 that day, but the ''losing'' side left an indelible impression on Volpone.

He saw a stately new stadium filled with an enthusiastic crowd, a marching band, fans holding tailgate parties in the parking lot, a bouncy house for kids. And at the end of the game, the team locked arms and led the crowd in the singing of the alma mater.

''I was so impressed with what I saw,'' Volpone said. ''It made me go, 'Wow, I could really see myself here.' '' A year later, he became Castleton's head coach. Volpone credits Wolk for the scene that sold him.

For most of those home-game Saturdays, Wolk is in the crowd, beaming, with his soon-to-be-96-year-old father, Arthur. ''It's a beautiful thing,'' he said. It's what Wolk envisioned when he became Castleton president in 2001 and set in place a 10-year plan to boost the college's profile.

Wolk was uniquely positioned when he took the job running the public college in his native Rutland County. The son of a local pediatrician, he graduated from Rutland High School and Middlebury College and went on to a career as a teacher, principal and school superintendent. Wolk also represented Rutland County for four years in the state Senate, made an unsuccessful bid for lieutenant governor in 1992 and served as chief of policy for governor Howard Dean before becoming state education commissioner.

By the time he took over at Castleton, he had experience navigating educational and political waters. Wolk also brought boundless optimism and salesmanship to the job.

Zachary Devoid of St. Albans, a senior computer information systems major and lacrosse player at Castleton, remembered meeting Wolk at the start of his freshman year. The president hosts a barbecue for new students every year at his on-campus house. Later, when Devoid's lacrosse team was holding an all-night fundraiser in memory of a student, Wolk came by with pizza.

''He eats in the dining halls. He goes to sporting events,'' Devoid said. ''He's very personable.''

''At orientation last year, he shook everybody's hand and introduced himself. It was really cool,'' said Cassie Papandrea, a senior English major from Orwell who was on campus last month getting ready for this year's orientation.

Spaulding said he visited Wolk at Castleton recently and went off on his own to the gym. When he returned to Wolk's house, he said, ''I asked him, 'How come all these students look me in the eye and open the door for me?' He said, 'It's the Castleton way. They have to open doors for people, and they have to pick up trash.' ''

In fact, there's no rule about acting responsibly, but Devoid said the campus is so close-knit that people just do.

Wolk has created a campus atmosphere that makes students want to stay, said Scott Giles, president of Vermont Student Assistance Corp., whose organization administers college loans and interacts with a wide variety of colleges. Although its student-retention rate hasn't budged much in the last decade—it's average, at 73 percent—Castleton's six-year graduation rate has climbed by nearly 10 percent. Enrollment has grown from 1,598 in 2000 to 2,183 last year. The goal is to reach 2,500 by 2023.

Students, faculty and outsiders have noticed a difference.

''Castleton has been one of the real success stories,'' Giles said, likening its emergence to Champlain College's transformation from a two-year to a four-year school a decade and a half ago.

''Dave has been really, really successful in taking an institution that had a reputation as something of a suitcase college—where you can get a solid degree but you leave to do other things on the weekend,'' Giles said. ''What he's really done is transform the campus. It's a community that meets a student's full range of needs.''

DOUBLE DUTY

Not every faculty member was convinced Castleton needed football, according to Louis ''Tersh'' Palmer, a union rep and English professor. Some ''would like to see more emphasis on academics,'' he said, and ''throw all the rest of that stuff out.''

The football program has had some problems. In 2011, its first coach was forced to resign after allegedly violating National Collegiate Athletic Association rules by arranging loans for an athlete. In 2013, six players were suspended from the team following a scheme to steal sporting goods from a store.

In both cases, Wolk publicly acknowledged the fumbles and recovered the ball. ''We will stay positive and upbeat as we move forward together as a family,'' he said in response to the 2013 case.

He took the same approach to his wife's illness. Diane Wolk, who'd been named the state's teacher of the year in 1984, was the popular principal of Rutland's Northeast Primary School when Alzheimer's began to manifest itself. In his Woodruff Hall office, Wolk keeps a photo of her 2006 retirement; it shows his wife surrounded by smiling children—a happy spin on a somber moment.

Wolk likes to focus on the positive. He hands out cards printed in Castleton green that say, ''Keep smiling.'' And, amazingly, it works.

He tried to follow his own advice during the nine-year ordeal that Wolk calls the ''long goodbye.'' But he also acknowledged it's been a roller-coaster ride. Asked how he managed the double duties of handling his wife's illness and raising the college's profile—two long but very different journeys—Wolk said candidly, ''I didn't.''

He relied on his team at Castleton, he said, and there were times he considered quitting to become his wife's full-time nurse. But as the disease progressed, Wolk realized she needed professional care. Diane had chosen to move to Florida, where she could participate in Alzheimer's research and access different levels of specialized care. Wolk said his wife actually preferred being far away because it spared her friends and colleagues the pain of watching her decline. ''She didn't want to make them sad,'' he said with admiration. But for Wolk, who visited many weekends, it was a long haul.

''I think it's been very difficult,'' said Spaulding, who served in the state Senate with Wolk in the 1980s. ''But I think Castleton University is part of his family. It's part of what's enabled him to continue.''

Wolk confirmed that Castleton was his salvation during that decade of decline. ''I was able to dive into the college,'' he said. ''It gave new meaning to my life.''

Castleton had 12 athletic teams when Wolk arrived on campus. It now has 27, which is more than any other Vermont state college or the University of Vermont. The school is providing Vermont students with an opportunity to play college sports in their home state. And they're tuition-paying students. Because it is Division III, Castleton doesn't offer athletic scholarships.

The school has added a lot more than sports teams. It has invested more than $75 million in new construction and renovations to every building on campus. The college has gone from offering one master's degree to 10, with plans to add doctorates in education and nursing practice.

While some Vermont state colleges have endured layoffs, Castleton has avoided them, according to Wolk. The college does plan to cut one program next year, though: its associate's degree in nursing, a program that Vermont Technical College offers.

Wolk has also launched a variety of branded initiatives that are generating revenue: The Castleton Polling Institute, which conducts paid surveys for Vermont politicians and media outlets, is expanding and going national; the Castleton Center for Schools brought 800 Vermont teachers to campus this summer for continuing education; the Castleton Downtown Gallery showcases art—and the Castleton name—in downtown Rutland. The university also owns the Spartan Arena at Rutland's Diamond Run Mall, a public operation that gives students real-world business experience. The college bought the building to accommodate its men's and women's hockey teams, which Wolk started in 2003. When they aren't practicing or playing there, it's a rental rink and fitness center.

The income-generating programs have been developed in response to a shrinking pool of college-age students and declining state funding. Vermont routinely ranks near the bottom in state support for its public colleges. This year, Vermont State Colleges will receive $24.4 million from the state, which is split equally among the five colleges. Castleton's allotment pays just 10 percent of its budget.

''We're getting less money from the state this year than we got in 2008 or '09,'' Wolk said, and he knows enough about Vermont politics to realize that is unlikely to change anytime soon.

The name change is also intended to counteract the lack of state funding. Wolk said he hopes Castleton University will attract more out-of-state students, who pay higher tuition. Currently, 74 percent of its students are in-staters. By 2023, Castleton's goal is to have a 60–40 in-state versus out-of-state split. Wolk said Castleton's main mission remains to serve Vermonters but will reflect the reality that there are fewer college-age students in the state. Castleton's other programs within the community, including the polling institute and the Spartan Arena, are examples of other ways it's contributing to the public good.

Particularly for international students who equate the word ''college'' with high school, the ''university'' designation should send a clearer message. Castleton had 25 students from other countries last year and expects 50 this year, Wolk said. The college upped its overseas admissions efforts by hiring a Chinese-American recruitment coordinator and making two trips to China last year, he said. As part of a residency, 13 Chinese scholars are due on campus this fall.

During the 15 years he's taught at Castleton, English prof Palmer has seen enrollment and programs expand and the quality of students grow. ''There really has been an improvement in morale, in offerings,'' he said. Football, he acknowledged, helped.

WHAT'S IN A NAME CHANGE?

As Vermont's colleges struggle with dwindling resources and occasional layoffs, can

the state afford to keep all five alive—plus the University of Vermont? In a recent commentary, Hinesburg author Bill Schubart took on the issue, arguing, ''Vermonters can't adequately fund six colleges in a time of declining enrollments.'' He contended that renaming Castleton was not the answer.

''I really doubt that their new name will do much to solve the enrollment and cost challenges facing all our small state colleges, to say nothing of our students,'' he said.

Spaulding, who took over as chancellor last year, said he's heard all of those arguments before, but he sees no reason to consolidate. ''We actually need the colleges we have,'' he said.

Spaulding argued that Castleton's name change will be good for all of them, adding that none of the other college administrators objected.

Each of the state colleges has—and should have—its own identity, Spaulding said. Lyndon has the largest percentage of out-of-staters, a strong meteorology program and an innovative electronic journalism program. Johnson is known for external degrees for nontraditional students, social service programs and the performing arts. The bread and butter of Vermont Technical College is its two-year engineering degree. Community College of Vermont offers an affordable start for students of all ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Castleton's specialty is being less specialized. ''It's a small university that has a robust graduate program combined with broad academic programs,'' Spaulding said. ''It's the only public higher ed institution in Vermont with a football team, and it's got a very lively campus.''

Wolk acknowledged that the name change is really about perception.

When Richard Stockton College of New Jersey became Stockton University this year, the goal was to ''raise the school's profile, helping it attract faculty, students—especially graduate and international students—and raise funds,'' the Philadelphia Inquirer reported.

Massachusetts state colleges changed their names in 2010, though they retained the word ''state,'' so that Bridgewater State College became Bridgewater State University.

Castleton students are buying into the idea that Castleton University carries just a little bit more prestige. ''It means we're expanding, we're growing,'' said Papandrea.

''It's going to help the college bring in more students,'' Devoid said. It might look a little jazzier on his résumé, too, he said.

For Wolk, the name change marks a major milestone for Castleton, which has actually had seven other appellations since 1787: It's been Rutland County Grammar School, Vermont Classical High School, Castleton Seminary, State Normal School at Castleton, Castleton Normal School and Castleton State Teachers College. The Castleton State College designation dates to 1962.

''Modernizing our name reflects who we've become and who we aspire to be,'' he said. ''It's a wonderful turning point for a wonderful institution.''

The idea for the name change emerged two or three years ago as Castleton administrators crafted Wolk's second 10-year plan. Although he was a driving force behind it, the visionary president had to miss some of the meetings that made it happen, during which his staff pitched the idea to the Vermont State College committees. In the last few months, as his wife's health worsened, he spent more time in Florida than Vermont. He was with Diane when she died there on July 4.

''Our goal was that her death be peaceful and painless,'' he said. ''It was that.'' In the weeks after, Wolk received hundreds of messages from his wife's former students, colleagues and friends telling him how much Diane had meant to them.

''Kids just loved her,'' said David Blow, a Castleton journalism professor who had Diane as a first-grade teacher. His mother, Lucille, who taught alongside her at Barstow Memorial School in Chittenden, told her son that Wolk's was the most difficult condolence card she has ever had to write.

When the full Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees gathered July 23 to make a final decision on the name change, David Wolk traveled to Montpelier for the meeting. ''I just wanted to be there, because it was historic,'' he said. The vote was unanimous. Word went viral as Castleton spokesman Jeff Weld announced the move on Twitter and Facebook, and the university's website got more than 10,000 hits.

Afterward, Wolk continued on to Burlington to board a plane for Florida, where two days later family gathered for a celebration of Diane's life. In his eulogy, Wolk spoke about his wife's courage.

''Her life was full of teachable moments, and this was the final one,'' he said.

Diane Wolk's family members divided her ashes for each to scatter as he or she wished. The next week, Wolk returned to Castleton. That Friday afternoon, he and two of their four children went to the Spartan monument and spread her remains at the base of the rock that honors and encourages brave souls.

REMEMBERING DOUG KENDALL

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this past weekend, I learned of the untimely passing of Doug Kendall, founder of the Constitutional Accountability Center. Doug was a true visionary who helped transform how the American public views our Constitution. Despite a recent movement to interpret our founding charter in a cramped manner that too often leaves our most vulnerable populations unprotected, Doug was able to serve as a forceful counterweight and guardian of an inclusive, progressive, and faithful understanding of our National Charter, based on both the text and history of the document.

Under his leadership, the Constitutional Accountability Center revitalized the debate over the original understanding of the Constitution. Doug refused to cede the intellectual ground of originalism and textualism to conservative advocates. Significantly, the organization he founded was defined as much by its scholarship as its effective advocacy.

Doug made myriad contributions to the world of law and policy, but I will point out just two. First, I asked him to testify in March 2010 before the Senate Judiciary Committee on the Supreme Court's decision in Citizens United v. FEC because I knew that no one could better articulate the harm that the decision would cause to our democracy. As he eloquently testified before the Committee, ''Since the Founding, the idea that corporations have the same fundamental rights as 'We the People' has been anathema to our Constitution. . . . Corporations do not vote, they cannot run for office, and they are not endowed by the Creator with inalienable rights. 'We the People' create corporations and we provide them with special privileges that carry with them restrictions that do not apply to living persons. These truths are self-evident, and it's past time for the Court to finally get this right, once and for all.'' While the Court was unable to get it right in Doug's lifetime, I believe his views will come to be vindicated in time.

Second, this past year, I introduced a joint resolution with Senator MIKE LEE of Utah, celebrating the sesquicentennial or the 150th anniversary of the 13th Amendment, which, along with the 14th and 15th Amendments, make up our Nation's ''second founding.'' The second founding, which has served as the bedrock and inspiration to procuring equality for racial minorities and women, has too often been overlooked by the general public and constitutional scholars. Doug and his organization were the intellectual driving force behind advancing this important resolution. His contributions to the world of law and policy will be sorely missed.

As accomplished as he was as an advocate and scholar, Doug was an even better person. My staff met with him countless times and always came away inspired by his intellect and humanity. An article in the Washington Post from January 2008 about the historic endorsement that then-candidate and Senator Barack Obama received from Senator Ted Kennedy noted that Doug was there with his then 8-year old daughter, Miracle. Doug had pulled Miracle out of her elementary school that day so that she could experience the historic nature of the President's candidacy and the bridge between former President Kennedy and future President Obama. He stated in the article that he wanted his daughter, Miracle, to be inspired. What she will come to know—if she does not already—is that her father's life and his accomplishments have helped to inspire a new generation. Doug Kendall has reminded us about the ever-more inclusive story that is reflected in our Constitution. His life was cut short, but his vision—like the Constitution itself—will continue to endure and inspire. The Nation has lost a true patriot with his passing.

RECOGNIZING KING ARTHUR FLOUR

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, each year, it is with great pride that I participate in a reception here on Capitol Hill to showcase some of the best products conceived, developed, and produced in Vermont. One such company featured at the annual Taste of Vermont event is King Arthur Flour, where, for 225 years, generation after generation has produced quality cooking and baking ingredients.

A firm that was born in Boston more than two centuries ago, in 1984 then-owners Frank and Brinna Sands moved King Arthur Flour to Norwich,

Vermont, and the company has become a staple in Vermont's business community. In the 1990s, the Sands made the decision to sell their company to their employees. The returns have been considerable, and the company has seen growth ever since.

In ways that are typical of Vermont businesses, King Arthur Flour has evolved into a quality company offering quality products to its customers. The company's business model reflects one that is committed to its customers, its employees, the environment, and its community, even offering employees 40 hours of paid volunteer time to give back. Those commitments are backed up in its status as a certified B Corporation, a designation that independently recognizes the company's social sustainability and environmental performance standards.

From breads to cakes, cookies to pies, King Arthur Flour's products have become staples in bakers' kitchens across the country, including in the Leahy kitchen, where Marcelle regularly shares her recipes with our grandchildren. In fact, many of our visits to the Upper Valley include a detour to King Arthur's terrific cafe where all of their superb products are available. It is yet another example of a tried and true Vermont-based company, revolutionizing and enticing the market with its quality products.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an August 28, 2015, article from the Burlington Free Press recognizing King Arthur Flour's ''225 years of baking history.''

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Burlington Free Press, Aug. 28, 2015]

KING ARTHUR FLOUR: 225 YEARS OF BAKING HISTORY

(By Susan Reid)

Some 225 years ago George Washington delivered the first State of the Union address in January. In February, the U.S. Supreme Court met for the first time. Vermont itself wasn't yet a state. According to King George, it belonged to New York, despite also being known as the New Hampshire Grants.

In this world, miles away in Boston, a man named Henry Wood started a company that imported flour from England. The brand new United States of America numbered fewer than four million souls. Wood correctly assumed this growing country was going to need flour for baking, and his commitment to pure, high-quality flour fueled a successful business.

ENTER JOHN LOW SANDS

One of the early employees was John Low Sands, who joined the firm in 1820. It was the beginning of generations of Sands family association with, and eventual ownership of the company. Also a clue to how the company came to be based in Vermont, as you'll soon see. By 1853, the company was doing well enough to buy a large building on the Long Wharf in Boston. There, in the middle of one of the world's busiest ports, the business continued to grow, taking on partners as it expanded. In less than 10 years the city of Boston had filled in the harbor around the wharf, and the company became landlocked without ever having moved. It stayed in the same spot, with the revised address of 172 State St. until 1904, when the company moved up the street to the Custom House.

By 1895, the company was named Sands, Taylor, & Wood. The third generation of the Sands family to be part of the company, Orrin Sands, was its president. During this decade, roller milling was developed in Hungary. As a result, it was now possible to grind large quantities of wheat into flour very quickly. This led to a boom in flour production, as well as wild fluctuations in the quality of flour being produced.

At the same time, George Wood and his business partners attended a musical play based on the story of King Arthur and his knights. They left the theater inspired by the realization that the values portrayed in the play exemplified what their company stood for: quality, integrity, purity, loyalty, strength, and dedication to a higher purpose. They resolved to rename their new flagship product, their all-purpose flour, after King Arthur. It was introduced at the Boston Food Fair in September 1896, and became an immediate success. The distinctive image of the medieval knight on his horse adorned the tops of 196 pound barrels of flour for the next four decades, until he started being printed on newfangled paper bags.

In the 1920s King Arthur on his steed appeared on the back of a flatbed calliope truck that roamed the streets of Boston and New York. In later decades the company gave scholarships to promising young professional bakers, inserted collectible picture cards of American military ships, airplanes, and weapons in its flour bags during World War II, and after the war sponsored radio shows where ''New England's Food Expert'' Marjorie Mills endorsed King Arthur Flour on the air.

THE MOVE TO VERMONT

The Sands family became the sole owners of the company in 1932, and in 1984, Frank (a Dartmouth alum) and his wife Brinna Sands moved the company to Vermont. Tired of lugging bags of flour to the post office to mail to retirees in Florida who couldn't buy King Arthur outside of New England, Brinna started The Baker's Catalogue in 1990.

She also published the ''200th Anniversary Cookbook,'' which has sold well over 100,000 copies to date.

In a pivotal move, Frank and Brinna decided to sell the company to their employees, launching King Arthurs Employee Stock Ownership plan. The company has seen steady growth since then.

By 1999, the company officially changed its name to King Arthur Flour, and the Baker's Catalogue was mailing six million catalogues per year. Distribution of the flour to grocery stores up and down the East Coast was well established, and expanding steadily westward. In 2000, Vermont Gov. Howard Dean was on hand to break an oversized baguette in two to celebrate the opening of the bakery and school in Norwich. In 2004 the company became 100 percent employee-owned.

With all of these changes, the principles that the company began with survived and thrived. In 2007, King Arthur Flour was a founding and certified B Corp. Its bylaws reflect a commitment to all stakeholders, including the community and the environment, as well as shareholders and business partners.

Now a national brand known for its quality, customer service, and expertise in all things baking, King Arthur has grown both the brand and its service programs. Bake for Good: Kids teaches 8- to 12-year olds how to bake bread in a curriculum-based program that provides a community service component of giving a loaf back to someone in need. King Arthur has long had a policy of giving 40 paid hours of volunteer time to all employees, full- and part-time.

King Arthur's mission and personality is to be a resource for all bakers. It maintains a robust social media presence on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and on its blog, Flourish. The website has thousands of tested recipes, and there's a crew of baking experts on the Baker's Hotline ready to answer any baking question, either by phone or via online chat.

King Arthur is poised to further the quest for honest, homemade, local food, by providing everything one needs to bake. Lucky for the company, and Vermont, that appetite is timeless, and a good apple pie is never going to go out of style.

WHAT'S BAKING IN NORWICH

Baking classes: You can always come and take a class at the Baking Education Center in Norwich (no dishwashing required!). The calendar of classes for home bakers, kids, and professionals can be found at kingarthurflour.com/school.

Cafe and bakery: The cafe and bakery are open daily 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. In September, the store's demonstration kitchen will be showing all comers how to make their best pie crust and baking with apples and cinnamon, chocolate and pumpkin.

Baker's Conference. From Sept. 9 to Sept. 12, King Arthur will sponsor its Third Annual Baker's Conference, Tasting Supper, and Harvest Festival at the King Arthur Baker's Store and School in Norwich.

The two-day conference features demonstrations, hands-on classes, and breakout sessions with a roster of well-known bakers, authors, recipe developers, photographers and editors.

The conference wraps up Friday evening, Sept. 11, with a Tasting Supper to benefit Hunger Free Vermont, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Local food and beverage establishments will offer samples, featuring fresh local foods and drink.

The festival happens from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 12, with hands-on activities for kids, live baking competitions, entertainment, and great food.

For more festival information, go to kingarthurflour.com/bakers-harvest.

ABOUT KING ARTHUR FLOUR

Celebrating its 225th Anniversary, King Arthur Flour is America's oldest flour company and premier baking resource, offering ingredients, mixes, tools, recipes, educational opportunities and inspiration to bakers everywhere since 1790. The company's flour is available in supermarkets nationwide. Additionally, more than 1,000 tested and trusted baking tools and ingredients are available through King Arthur Flour's Baker's Catalogue, online at kingarthurflour.com and at The Baker's Store in Norwich.

2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise to address an important event that occurred this week at the United Nations, which is marking the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly, UNGA.

Over the weekend, over 150 world leaders gathered at UNGA to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is built on the progress achieved by Millennium Development Goals, MDGs, which were

launched in 2000. The Millennium Development Goals brought together nations, businesses, international organizations, and foundations in a focused and coordinated effort to reduce poverty and disease by 2015.

By any and every metric, the initial set of MDGs has resulted in tangible, concrete progress. One goal was to cut extreme poverty by half as measured by the proportion of people living on less than $1.25 a day. That goal was met 5 years ahead of schedule. Meanwhile, maternal mortality was cut nearly in half. We've also made progress in global education, with a 20 percent increase in primary school enrollment in sub-Saharan Africa and a nearly 50 percent decrease in the number of out-of-school children of primary school age. When it comes to combating HIV/AIDS, we've made truly incredible strides over the past 15 years. New HIV infections have dropped by 40 percent between 2000 and 2013, and the number of people living with HIV that were receiving antiretroviral therapy increased seventeenfold from 2003 to 2014.

In some areas, like gender equality, we still have a long way to go. But we can cheer the fact that, in 90 percent of countries today, women have greater parliamentary representation than they did just 20 years ago.

So there is no doubt that we've seen real growth around the world. Millions of lives have been saved and enriched. But we still have more progress to make.

The old Millennium Development Goals have laid the groundwork for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by the U.N. over the weekend. The new agenda sets out an ambitious global development framework that includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

These new goals were negotiated with strong engagement by the U.S. government, business leaders, and civil society members over the last 3 years. American and international corporations worked closely with the U.N. because many businesses leaders correctly believe that, to end extreme poverty and open new markets, we must increase government transparency, root out corruption, and accelerate inclusive economic growth.

Many of these new goals focus on the areas where we hope to see additional progress, such as maternal and child health, environmental sustainability, and gender equality. But they also focus on good governance and corruption.

I am particularly pleased at the addition of goal No. 16, which is to ''promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.'' Including that goal wasn't easy—it was met by resistance from many other countries—but no one can ignore the fact any longer that good governance and anticorruption efforts are critical to development.

Truly sustainable and inclusive development depends on governments and institutions that are accountable and transparent and that respect human rights and deliver justice for everybody, not just some. The U.N. has noted that ''lessons learned from MDG implementation showed the importance of incorporating human rights, the rule of law and personal security to ensure progress towards development goals. Effective and inclusive governance and robust institutional capacity are instrumental in achieving this.''

The necessity of incorporating good governance and strong anticorruption measures in sustainable development efforts is most evident when we look at resource rich countries in Africa and the extraordinary development challenges there. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC, for example, is a country rich in minerals, water resources, and agricultural potential. And it has experienced high annual economic growth in recent years. Yet most of its people continue to live in extreme poverty. DRC's progress on sustainable development is hindered by minimal central government control over large parts of the national territory, poor transportation and electricity infrastructure, the government's inability to manage and monitor extraction of its natural resources, and broad governance problems including endemic corruption and barely functional state institutions.

Without progress on justice and effective and accountable institutions, corruption will continue to infect governments around the world, like the DRC, creating greater economic and political instability, which often leads to violent conflict.

The DRC is just one example of why we need goal 16. The desperate refugees streaming into Europe provide another sad example. Most of these people are coming from places where ordinary people have experienced long-term repression and other human rights abuses at the hands of deeply corrupt governments. Consequently, many of these countries are now consumed by violent conflict. Most of the people crossing the Mediterranean in rafts are fleeing wars in Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia.

The Syrians are the largest group. They are fleeing a deadly combination of their own government's indiscriminate barrel bomb attacks on crowded markets, schools, and clinics; suffocating sieges; and atrocities committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, ISIS and other extremist groups. We know that only a minority of migrants arriving in Europe are motivated solely by economic betterment.

As the world focuses on the wave of refugees and migrants arriving in Europe, we must not lose our focus on the roots of this crisis. We must pay attention to why these desperate men, women, and children are on the move. The misery of many of these refugees is the direct result of the conflicts and human rights abuses of governments that are ineffective or illegitimate, or both, and mostly likely corrupt.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals is remarkable for the historic inclusion of goal 16. It acknowledges the centrality of good governance and accountable and transparent institutions as prerequisites for sustainable development. If nations across the globe truly embrace goal 16, I am convinced we will also witness far fewer men, women, and children being forced to endure extraordinary misery, violence, displacement, and exploitation as refugees. Surely, that must be our collective goal.

RENAMING OF THE U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING FOR ADMIRAL CHARLES R. LARSON

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, this Friday, October 2, 2015, the U.S. Naval Academy will honor ADM Charles R. Larson, class of 1958, by naming the administration building in his honor. Coming just a week before the Naval Academy celebrates its 170th anniversary, this is fitting tribute to man who has made such immeasurable contributions to this fine institution.

Chuck Larson grew up thousands of miles from the nearest ocean. However, the calling of the sea brought him to Annapolis and the start of a career dedicated to the service of this great Nation. It was at the Academy where I had the distinct pleasure of getting to know this great man. Chuck's Academy experience was somewhat different than mine, where he would go on to become the brigade commander, president of the class of 1958, and graduate near the top of the class. I finished some distance behind that mark. Even though our paths were different, I cherished our friendship forged in those shared Academy experiences, a friendship that would last a lifetime.

After graduation in the summer of 1958, Chuck would continue his exemplary career, eventually attaining the rank of admiral. He has led at every level from command at sea to theater command, as commander of the 2nd Fleet, a Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, commander of the Pacific Fleet, and finally as the commander of United States Pacific Command. Impressive as this resume was, the two jobs Chuck cherished most were his two tours as the Superintendent of the Naval Academy.

As the only two-time Superintendent of the Academy in its 170-year history, Chuck left an indelible mark on the institution he so loved. Returning from retirement in 1994 to lead the Academy after serious problems left the institution with an uncertain future, Chuck focused on character development and fundamental leadership training to return to the founding principles of the Academy. In 4 years, he returned the institution to greatness and, in the process, trained the officers that would

become the leaders in the fight against terrorism that would define a generation.

As a result of Chuck's tireless efforts and the lasting initiatives he put in place, today the Naval Academy consistently ranks among the top schools in the Nation. His legacy of service to the Academy and the Nation will be felt in the decades to come as graduates from the institution become leaders in the military, government, and corporate venues. I can think of no better way to honor the legacy of Chuck's service than with the rededication of the administration building as Larson Hall. It will stand as an ever present reminder to the dedication and the ideals of great naval officer, leader, and dear friend.

NATIONAL MANUFACTURING DAY

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I join with my colleagues, led by Senators COONS and BALDWIN, to recognize the significant role manufacturing plays in the United States and in my home State of Rhode Island. According to facts compiled by the National Association of Manufacturers, over 41,000 Rhode Islanders, nearly 9 percent of the workforce, work in manufacturing. Those workers were responsible for $4.1 billion in economic output, just under 8 percent of the State's total output, in 2013. On average these workers brought in over $67,000 in annual compensation.

Manufacturing is a highly technical and innovative industry that creates good-paying jobs for skilled workers. It is also an industry that is expanding; in Rhode Island manufacturing jobs have increased by 1,100 compared to a year ago. And just last week I joined a Rhode Island advanced manufacturer, Yushin America, Inc., to celebrate a ribbon cutting for its $2 million expansion.

This sort of expansion is representative of the type of highly technical growth we see in manufacturing. Moreover, these good-paying, highly-skilled, middle-class jobs are what will help further support widespread economic growth. That is why I look forward to celebrating National Manufacturing Day with the mayor of Providence and my delegation colleagues on Monday and continuing to work to advance measures that support manufacturers and job creation back home.

TRIBUTE TO JEFFREY F. PANIATI

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to an outstanding civil servant and constituent, Jeffrey F. Paniati, executive director of the Federal Highway Administration, FHWA, who is retiring after 32 years of Federal service.

Jeff Paniati received his master of science degree in civil engineering from the University of Maryland. He joined FHWA in 1983 as a highway engineer trainee and rose through the ranks to join the Senior Executive Service in 2000 and eventually became executive director in April 2008. The executive director, the number three official in FHWA, is the only civil service position in the agency that requires the approval of the President. As executive director, Jeff assists the Federal Highway Administrator and Deputy Administrator in establishing policies, programs, and priorities for the $40 billion annual Federal aid highway program. As FHWA's chief operating officer, he oversees a workforce of approximately 2,900 transportation professionals and an annual operating budget of $400 million.

One of the biggest challenges Jeff faced came just months after he became executive director. The economic collapse in the fall of 2008 brought the country into the worst recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s. On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, ARRA, into law. ARRA, also known as the stimulus act, authorized $26.6 billion for road and bridge projects that would create construction jobs to help the economy recover while providing transportation facilities to make our communities safer, greener, more livable, less congested, and economically stronger. This funding was in addition to the regular $40 billion a year Federal aid highway program.

At the time, Jeff was the highest ranking FHWA official because the President had not yet nominated a new Federal Highway Administrator or Deputy Administrator. It fell to Jeff, serving as acting Deputy Administrator, to ensure the agency was able to absorb the additional funds, deploy them to State and local officials for shovel-ready projects, ensure proper oversight of record numbers of projects, and help deliver the jobs the country so desperately needed. The result was more than 13,000 highway and bridge projects across the country that put tens of thousands of people to work, in addition to the thousands of projects and jobs resulting from regular program funds. All of this was accomplished within ARRA's deadlines, without any increase in staff by FHWA but with the full cooperation of State and local transportation officials under the familiar Federal-State partnership of the Federal aid highway program.

President Obama remarked that there has never been a program of this scale, moving at this speed, enacted as effectively, and meeting such high standards of transparency and accountability. The stimulus provided by implementation of the Recovery Act paved the foundation for the economic growth that has continued to this day. Many people deserve credit for this outstanding accomplishment, including FHWA employees around the country, especially Jeff Paniati.

Throughout Jeff's earlier career in FHWA, he accumulated a diverse range of experience in helping to make America's transportation systems work safely and efficiently. He served as chief of the safety design division, a research office helping to advance the state of the art in highway safety. As program manager for Intelligent Transportation Systems, ITS, he led the more than $100 million annual Federal ITS program. He directed day-to-day operations of the ITS Joint Program Office, which focuses on bringing advanced communication and information system technologies to the management and operation of our Nation's surface transportation system. At the time of his appointment as executive director, he was FHWA's associate administrator for operations; in this capacity, he provided national leadership in system management and operations, ITS deployment, and freight management. Throughout Jeff's career, he has worked closely with the Transportation Research Board, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and ITS America—to name just a few of FHWA's many partners and stakeholders.

Jeff's extensive experience throughout the agency gave him the background to move FHWA forward. He oversaw the successful implementation of the many program changes required under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, MAP–21, in 2012. Perhaps the most significant change was that MAP–21 shifted FHWA to risk-based stewardship and oversight that redefined FHWA's role in working with its State and local partners. It also gave FHWA the leadership role in transitioning with its partners to a transportation performance management focus that emphasizes a strategic approach by using data to make investment and policy decisions to achieve national performance goals. These dramatic changes in operation of the Federal aid highway program required extensive outreach, which Jeff coordinated, to explain the shifts to FHWA's partners and gain their support for them.

Jeff played a leadership role in advancing U.S. interests and bolstering international cooperation under the auspices of the World Road Association, where he served as U.S. first delegate and chair of the strategic planning commission. He led an international team in overseeing the work of the association's 15 technical committees and the development of its next strategic plan. He also facilitated efforts to advance special reports on the importance of road maintenance and helped produce a climate change adaptation framework. Jeff's involvement in the association enabled the U.S. to further enhance our international leadership and expertise in the design, delivery, and operation of highway and road networks.

Closer to home, Jeff never forgot the importance of giving all FHWA employees the opportunity to advance in their careers. He listened to employee feedback, administered a strategic

workforce assessment, established a formal mentoring program, developed the leadership for innovation decision-making program and expanded the Leadership Development Academy, and instilled in leadership ranks throughout the FHWA the value of expanding opportunity. Initiatives of this type are valuable to employees and their families, but are also critical to ensuring the FHWA can meet the challenges of the future by helping the agency to recruit and retain the best public servants our Nation has to offer. Through these and other initiatives, Jeff helped make FHWA successful not only in accomplishing its vitally important mission, but in making the agency a better place to work. Among agencies of its size, FHWA has ranked in the top 10 best places to work in the Federal Government among agency subcomponents for the past 3 years. Under Jeff's leadership, FHWA moved from No. 33 in 2009 to No. 5 in 2013, an impressive achievement in a short period of time.

Jeff will be retiring this month after 32 years of Federal service to become president and chief executive officer of the Institute of Transportation Engineers. After his long career and especially his 7½ years as executive director, Jeff leaves FHWA a better place, which is good for America. I am proud to represent Jeff and so many other Federal workers. I believe our Federal workforce is the best in the world. We are fortunate to have dedicated, talented, creative, hard-working, and patriotic public servants like Jeff. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Jeff for serving the American public with such distinction and devotion and wishing him much success as he leaves Federal service. We also need to thank his wife, Kim, and his children Chris and Lauren for supporting him in his public career.

TRIBUTE TO SYLVIA OLIVER

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, there are many people who work behind the scenes to help the Senate function. We tend to take them for granted, but we shouldn't. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge one such Senate staffer, Sylvia Oliver, who is leaving at the end of this week. I won't say that Sylvia is retiring because there is a chance we can coax her into returning at some point. But she is leaving her job as coordinator of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD in the Office of the Official Reporters of Debates because she wants to spend more time at home with her daughter, Lily, who is a senior in high school. That is a completely understandable and laudable desire.

Few people appreciate that even though the Office of the Official Reporters of Debates has embraced the latest information technology, producing the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD remains a painstaking, labor-intensive process. Even fewer people appreciate that the officials and employees like Sylvia who are responsible for its production typically have to work for several hours each night after the Senate has adjourned making sure the RECORD is accurate and complete before sending it to the Government Publishing Office. We take for granted that a printed copy of the RECORD, one of the most important documents in our Nation, will be delivered to our offices the next morning. There are many people who work late into the night without fanfare or accolades to make this possible. They are an invaluable part of what I call the Senate family.

Sylvia is a Vermont native and graduated from the University of Vermont. She still visits her mother, Betty Reid, in Barre as often as possible and is close to her siblings, John Reid, Betsy Reid, David Reid, and Sarah Schroeder. She started her congressional service on the House side in 1988 working for then-Representative Jim Jeffords of Vermont. She came with him to the Senate in 1989. She returned to the House for a few years, working as an executive assistant to the House Sergeant at Arms. Then, she came back to the Senate in 1993, where she worked as a scheduler and executive assistant for Senator Byron Dorgan of North Dakota and the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs before assuming her current job with the Office of the Official Reporters of Debates. She is unfailingly professional and polite. We will all miss her, but I know her colleagues in the Office of the Official Reporters of Debates will miss her the most because she is such a kind and gentle and pleasant person.

I am proud to have Sylvia as a constituent. She lives near Annapolis; and, true to the rural roots of her Vermont upbringing, she has made her home atop a converted barn. Even though she works long hours in the Senate, she has usually done more each morning before she arrives here than most people accomplish in a week. She maintains a small farm and looks after three horses whose names are Conge, Chance, and Love It. She starts most mornings by mowing acres of pasture, hauling dozens of bales of hay, and feeding the chickens. She also has a small pumpkin patch. But that is not enough for Sylvia—she has a number of bee hives to look after, too.

Lily Oliver, who has graciously shared her mother with us, has said, "My mom is the most beautiful person I know. She makes the world a better place by always treating those around her with compassion and patience. I am so fortunate to have such a strong, genuine, resourceful, mother to emulate throughout life." Well, we have been so fortunate to have Sylvia in the Senate family for the past 20-plus years. The American people are so fortunate to have talented and dedicated public servants like Sylvia. I truly believe our Federal workforce is the best in the world.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Sylvia Oliver for her exemplary service and wishing her well as she begins the next chapter in her life with the most important family of all, her own.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

ROBIN TRIPOD PATTEN

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I wish to honor Robin Tripod Patten as a 2015 Angel in Adoption award recipient for her outstanding advocacy of adoption issues. Robin serves as Director of Social Services at Arkansas Methodist Medial Center, AMMC, in Paragould, AR. One of her many responsibilities in this position includes coordinating adoptions.

Being a bereaved parent herself, Robin offers a unique perspective to the adoption process because she understands the pain of giving birth and leaving the hospital without a baby. She provides emotional support to both the birth mother and the adoptive parents and assists new and prospective parents in navigating complicated legal matters when contemplating adoption.

Robin is a Licensed Master Social Worker, LMSW, and dedicates her life to children. She is a mandated child abuse reporter who directs care of infants whose birth mothers had illegal substances in her system during pregnancy. For 11 years, she has served on the Greene County multidisciplinary child abuse task force working to ensure no child is overlooked or forgotten.

I am proud of Robin for her dedication to adoption services and for investing in the lives of families in northeast Arkansas and am glad to recognize Robin as an Angel in Adoption for her efforts to connect children to permanent families. I commend her for her service and ask my colleagues to join me in honoring her and the many other advocates who continue to selflessly work to ensure that all children grow up in safe, healthy, and loving homes.•

OBSERVING THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REPUDIATION OF THE BRITISH STAMP ACT

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to honor the actions of "12 immortal justices" of the Frederick County Court in Maryland who refused to discharge the British Stamp Act on November 23, 1765. This first official act of defiance against the British Government's "taxation without representation" in the Thirteen Original Colonies—8 years before the Boston Tea Party—helped set the stage for the American Revolution that would lead to a free and independent United States of America.

The Stamp Act the British Parliament passed in early 1765 exacted revenue from the Colonies by imposing a stamp duty on newspapers and legal and commercial documents. Colonists

in Maryland quickly realized that the Stamp Act and other new taxes would severely impede trade in the Colonies and hinder their economic growth. Jonas Green, the publisher of the Maryland Gazette at the time, used his platform as the only news outlet in the colony to stir opposition to the actions of the British Parliament among Marylanders. As protests turned to revolts, plans to distribute stamped paper were delayed, which made stamped paper in Frederick County and Western Maryland unavailable. When the county's clerk of the court refused to carry out the business of the court without stamped paper, Frederick County's 12 justices responded by holding him in contempt and unanimously passing the resolution that would come to be known as the Repudiation Act, allowing business to continue without the use of stamped paper and effectively nullifying the act of Parliament. The text of the Repudiation Act stated: ''that all proceedings shall be valid without the use of stamps . . . and ordering all sheriffs, clerks, counsellors, and officers of the Court to proceed with their several avocations as usual, without delay occasionded from the want of stamped paper, parchment or vellum.'' The justices took this action at great peril to their livelihood and even their lives.

Since 1894, Repudiation Day has been marked by the Maryland General Assembly as an official bank half-holiday in Frederick County and by the Frederick Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution with celebratory events. This year, which marks the 250th anniversary of this courageous act of defiance by 12 Maryland justices, will be particularly special with a parade, dedication of an interpretive plaque, educational presentations, and public display of the original court act. In addition, Frederick's Brewer's Alley has collaborated with the Sergeant Lawrence Everhart Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution on the release of the 250th Anniversary Commemorative ''Twelve Immortals Ale'' inspired by the beers of the 18th Century.

I commend the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Sons of the American Revolution, Brewer's Alley, the Tourism Council of Frederick County, the city of Frederick, and everyone else involved in the effort to honor the brave actions of these 12 Marylanders and encourage every American to commemorate the 250th anniversary of an event that sparked the first flames of liberty in the American Colonies.●

TRIBUTE TO SALLY ASCHIM

● Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of Sally Aschim, who is retiring after 38 years of dedicated teaching.

Not only has Sally aided in the achievements and successes of Montana's youth, but she also has spearheaded multiple community outreach projects aimed at helping those in her community. She took her passion for helping Montana's youth outside of the classroom as well and helped design and build a playground in Sunburst, Montana.

In Montana, we know how important it is to give back to our communities and help one another, and Sally is a perfect example of this. Sally started the Christmas Stroll in Sunburst over a decade ago, which has enhanced the holiday for hundreds of community members.

Sally has a selfless heart and does everything with a giving spirit. The State of Montana is sad to see her teaching career come to an end, but her incredible legacy will continue to live on.●

CARNEGIE HALL

● Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, with great pleasure and pride, I wish to recognize the 125th anniversary of Carnegie Hall in New York City. At the ceremonial laying of the cornerstone of Carnegie Hall in 1890, Andrew Carnegie declared: ''It is built to stand for ages, and during these ages it is probable that this Hall will intertwine itself with the history of our country.''

The Hall has intertwined itself with the history of the United States but also with the history of the world. Today Carnegie Hall is the world's most recognized performing arts center and is a global symbol of artistic excellence. For 125 years the Hall has defined and shaped the future of music, and it continues in that leadership role today.

The Hall has hosted world leaders, American presidents, authors, activists and intellectuals. The Hall's greatest influence, however, is through sound. Carnegie Hall's three performance centers project all forms of music to listeners around the world. Musicians from all corners of the globe strive to perform at Carnegie Hall. The Hall is a beacon inspiring and attracting the world's finest musicians in all genres.

Less known but equally important, Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute produces an extraordinary range of music education and community programs that extend far outside the physical walls of its concert halls. Its music education in New York City schools serves as a laboratory of best practices for performing arts centers in major urban areas. Carnegie Hall provides and supports a partnership curriculum for 81 orchestras throughout the United States and abroad to work with local school students in urban, suburban, and rural settings. Its highly acclaimed National Youth Orchestra of the United States—recently returned from a tour of China—helps build the next generation of musicians into lifelong community leaders and contributors. In the 2015–2016 season these programs will reach millions people in New York City, across the United States, and around the globe.

In the spirit of Andrew Carnegie and of bold endeavors to tackle contemporary challenges, Carnegie Hall has recently initiated work to eliminate the music education ''access gap'' in schools throughout our nation. Carnegie Hall's leadership, from volunteers, trustees, to staff at all levels, are committed to quality and to equity of opportunity regardless of circumstance.

Carnegie Hall's 125th opening night will occur on October 7th. I rise to commend the Hall's leadership, volunteers, contributors, performing artists, and staff. Carnegie Hall is a global icon symbolizing artistic excellence, achievement, and the power of music to feed our souls and bring people together. Congratulations, Carnegie Hall.●

CONGRATULATING ALICIA REBAN

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today, I wish to congratulate Alicia Reban on receiving the Ambassador of the Year award from the Land Trust Alliance. It gives me great pleasure to see her receive this national award recognizing her years of hard work within the Nevada community.

Throughout her 17 years working at the Nevada Land Trust Alliance, Ms. Reban has been a shining example of someone who dedicated her career to the betterment of her community and Nevada's open spaces. In 2000, she led a successful campaign on a ballot initiative focused on improving Washoe County's parks, libraries, and trails. Additionally, in 2002, she served on the campaign executive committee for Nevada's State Question 1 for clean water, parks, and wildlife, the largest conservation bond measure in Nevada history.

Throughout her tenure, Ms. Reban has demonstrated professionalism, an unwavering commitment to conservation, and dedication to the highest standards of the Nevada Land Trust Alliance. I have been fortunate during my time in Congress to work with Ms. Reban on federal legislation, the Conservation Easement Incentive Act, S. 330, which makes the Federal enhanced conservation easement income tax deduction permanent. This important policy would provide Westerners with important tools to preserve our proud tradition of ranching, fishing, hunting, and other outdoor recreational activities. She has been a tireless advocate and an invaluable ally on this effort.

Alicia's advocacy on behalf of Nevada's vast natural resources and wildlife is unmatched, and I am thankful for all of the work that she has done for our great State. Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Nevada Land Trust Co-Executive Director Alicia Reban on receiving this award. I look forward to continuing to work with her on conservation issues important to our State.●

CONGRATULATING STEVE TETREAULT

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today, I wish to congratulate Steve Tetreault on his incredible career, bringing Nevada in-depth political news coverage from our Nation's Capital. It gives me great pleasure to recognize Steve for his unwavering dedication to the people of Nevada and for showcasing journalistic integrity and excellence throughout his tenure. Though he will be greatly missed by Nevada journalism and the Las Vegas Review-Journal, his future with the United States Department of Energy will be of great service to our country.

Throughout my time serving Nevada in the United States Congress, Steve has been there to convey accurate and truthful news stories to the people of Nevada. From covering my very first experiences in the United States House of Representatives to writing about the most recent events in the United States Senate, Steve was there to capture both sides of the argument, bringing fair coverage from the entire Nevada delegation. Our relationship operated with a great amount of respect and understanding, and I am grateful for his professionalism. However, his jealousy of my impeccable beard-growing skills prompted him to also grow one of his own.

Steve's insatiable appetite to cover important news stories and bring Nevadans pertinent political information made him an incredible journalist. He was always one step ahead, ready to share breaking political news, and had a genuine interest in painting the most accurate story for his readers. He will always be remembered for his top tier work at the Las Vegas Review-Journal.

The insight and knowledge he gained throughout his career could never be replicated. He truly left his footprint in Nevada journalism, specifically at the Las Vegas Review-Journal, where he served as the Washington bureau chief. His writing has given the Silver State a detailed archive of Nevada's delegation throughout his years in Washington, a truly unique piece of our State's history.

Steve has demonstrated absolute dedication to excellent reporting, bringing pertinent political news stories outside of the walls of the United States Capitol to audiences across Nevada. I am both humbled and honored by his hard work and am proud to call him a friend. Today, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Steve Tetreault on his long and meaningful career at the Las Vegas Review-Journal. I give my deepest appreciation for all that he has done and offer him my best wishes for many successful and fulfilling years to come with the United States Department of Energy.•

TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN LAWSON ALMAND

• Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I wish to honor CAPT Lawson Almand, JAGC, USN, Retired, a son of North Carolina who is retiring after 39 years of Active Duty and civilian service to our Nation with the U.S. Navy.

CAPT Almand is a native of Cary, NC. He received his B.A. in linguistics from the University of California, San Diego, a J.D. from the University of Puget Sound, and an LL.M. in international and comparative law from the National Law Center, The George Washington University.

In 1976, CAPT Almand began his dedicated service to our Nation as a commissioned officer in the Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps. During the next 32 years, Captain Almand served on Active Duty in a wide variety of roles, traveling throughout the United States and overseas. His assignments included Naval Air Station, Agana, Guam; Naval Support Office, La Maddalena, Sardinia, Italy; Naval Legal Service Office, Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines; commander, Submarine Group 10, Kings Bay, GA; commander, Patrol Wings, U.S. Pacific Fleet; executive officer and commanding officer, Naval Legal Service Office Southwest, San Diego, CA; commanding officer, Naval Legal Service Office Northeast, Groton, CT; director, Defense Institute of International Legal Studies, Newport, RI; professor and associate dean, College of International and Security Studies, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Garmisch, Germany; force judge advocate, Naval Surface Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet, San Diego; and Deputy Assistant Judge Advocate General, General Litigation Division.

Following his retirement from Active Duty in July 2007, CAPT Almand continued his superlative service to the Navy as a civilian, serving for another 7 years as Deputy Director of the Administrative Law Division in the Office of the Judge Advocate General in the Pentagon.

For his outstanding service to our Nation, CAPT Almand earned numerous awards, including the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, and the Superior Civilian Service Award.

I commend CAPT Almand for his commitment to our country and the sacrifices he made on its behalf. On the occasion of his retirement from the Federal service, I thank him and his family for his honorable service to our Nation and wish him fair winds and following seas as he concludes a distinguished career.•

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGES

REPORT RELATIVE TO THE DESIGNATION OF FUNDING FOR OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS/GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM, RECEIVED DURING ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2015—PM 26

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on the Budget:

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 114(c) of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016, also titled the TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act of 2015 (the ''Act''), I hereby designate for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism all funding (including the rescission of funds) and contributions from foreign governments so designated by the Congress in the Act pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, as outlined in the enclosed list of accounts.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed memorandum from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *September 30, 2015.*

NOTIFICATION OF THE PRESIDENT'S DESIGNATION OF AN EMERGENCY REQUIREMENT IN EMERGENCY FUNDING FOR URGENT WILDLAND FIRE SUPPRESSION ACTIVITIES, RECEIVED DURING ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2015—PM 27

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on the Budget:

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 135 of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016, also titled the TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act of 2015 (the ''Act''), I hereby designate as an emergency requirement all funding so designated by the Congress in the Act pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, for the following account: ''Department of Agriculture—Forest Service—Wildland Fire Management.''

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed memorandum from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *September 30, 2015.*

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:25 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2617) to amend the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 to postpone a scheduled increase in the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa, and that the House has agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the title of the bill.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 81. Concurrent resolution providing for corrections to the enrollment of the bill H.R. 1735.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the report of 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.

At 2:45 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1020) to define STEM education to include computer science, and to support existing STEM education programs at the National Science Foundation.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 3:52 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. UPTON) has signed the following enrolled bills:

H.R. 1020. An act to define STEM education to include computer science, and to support existing STEM education programs at the National Science Foundation.

H.R. 2617. An act to amend the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 to postpone a scheduled increase in the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

ENROLLED BILLS PRESENTED

The Assistant Secretary of the Senate reported that on September 30, 2015, she had presented to the President of the United States 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.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–3018. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Benzovindiflupyr; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9933–03) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3019. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Acibenzolar-S-methyl; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9933–27) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3020. A communication from the Acting Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Importation of Kiwi From Chile Into the United States'' ((RIN0579–AD98) (Docket No. APHIS–2014–0002)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 25, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3021. A communication from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a violation of the Antideficiency Act; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC–3022. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a violation of the Antideficiency Act that involved fiscal years 2010 and 2011 Operation and Maintenance, Navy, funds, and was assigned Army case number 14–02; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC–3023. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report 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; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–3024. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, a semiannual report entitled, ''Acceptance of Contributions for Defense Programs, Projects, and Activities; Defense Cooperation Account''; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–3025. A communication from the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Contract Debts-Conform to FAR Section Designations'' ((RIN0750–AI70) (DFARS Case 2015–D029)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 29, 2015; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–3026. A communication from the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Electronic Copies of Contractual Documents'' ((RIN0750–AI29) (DFARS Case 2012–D056)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 29, 2015; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–3027. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Enhancing Support for the Cuban People'' (RIN0694–AG67) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 28, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3028. A communication from the Certifying Officer, Bureau of the Fiscal Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Cuban Assets Control Regulations'' (31 CFR Part 515) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 23, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3029. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Suspension of Community Eligibility'' ((44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA–2015–0001)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 30, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3030. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Suspension of Community Eligibility'' ((44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA–2015–0001)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 23, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3031. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12978 of October 21, 1995, with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3032. A communication from the Regulatory Specialist of the Legislative and Regulatory Activities Division, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Regulatory Capital Rules: Regulatory Capital, Final Revisions Applicable to Banking Organizations Subject to the Advanced Approaches Risk-Based Capital Rule'' (RIN1557–AD88) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 28, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3033. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the export to the People's Republic of China of items not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3034. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''National Priorities List'' (FRL No. 9934–75–OSWER) received in the Office of the

President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3035. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Hazardous Waste Management System; Identification and Listing of Hazardous Waste; Direct Final Rule'' (FRL No. 9934–78–Region 7) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3036. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of State Plans for Designated Facilities and Pollutants; Missouri; Control of Mercury Emissions from Electric Generating Units'' (FRL No. 9934–68–Region 7) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3037. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Mississippi; Miscellaneous Changes'' (FRL No. 9934–73–Region 4) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3038. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Florida; Combs Oil Company Variance'' (FRL No. 9934–72–Region 4) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3039. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Plan Approval; CO; Revised Format for Material Incorporated by Reference'' (FRL No. 9931–73–Region 8) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3040. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of State Plans for Designated Facilities and Pollutants; Missouri; Control of Mercury Emissions from Electric Generating Units'' (FRL No. 9934–68–Region 7) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3041. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Interim Staff Guidance on Acceptable Acute Uranium Exposure Standards for Workers'' (FCSE–ISG–014, Revision 0) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3042. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Consolidated Guidance About Material Licenses: Applications for Sealed Source and Device Evaluation and Registration'' (NUREG–1556, Volume 3, Revision 2) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3043. A communication from the Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Kentucky Regulatory Program'' ((SATS No. KY–253–FOR) (Docket No. OSM–2009–0014)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 30, 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–3044. A communication from the Deputy Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pennsylvania Regulatory Program'' ((SATS No. PA–154–FOR) (Docket No. OSM–2010–0002)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 30, 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–3045. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards'' (RIN1991–AB94) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 28, 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–3046. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Single Package Vertical Air Conditioners and Single Package Vertical Heat Pumps'' (RIN1991–AC85) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 28, 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–3047. A communication from the Division Chief, Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Minerals Management: Adjustment of Cost Recovery Fees'' (RIN1004–AE44) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 30, 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–3048. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Medical, Physical Readiness, Training, and Access Authorization Standards for Protective Force Personnel'' (RIN1992–AA40) received in the Office of the President of Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–3049. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to recommendations concerning energy performance requirements for fiscal years 2016 through 2025; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–3050. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Dividend Equivalents from Sources Within the United States'' ((RIN1545–BJ56) (TD 9734)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3051. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Reorganizations Under Section 368(a)(1)(F)'' ((RIN1545–BF51) (TD 9739)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3052. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Update to Weighted Average Interest Rates, Yield Curves, and Segment Rates'' (Notice 2015–61) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3053. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Investments Made for Charitable Purposes'' (Notice 2015–62) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3054. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Special per diem Rates 2015–2016'' (Notice 2015–63) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3055. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Per Capita Distributions of Funds Held in Trust by the Secretary of the Interior'' (Notice 2015–67) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3056. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fringe Benefits Aircraft Valuation Formula'' (Rev. Rul. 2015–20) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3057. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Applicable Federal Rates—October 2015'' (Rev. Rul. 2015–21) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3058. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Additional First Year Depreciation'' (Rev. Proc. 2015–48) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 22, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3059. A communication from the Chairman of the U.S. International Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the biennial report relative to the impact of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3060. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Evaluations of Hospitals' Ambulance Data on Medicare Cost Reports and Feasibility of Obtaining Cost Data from All Ambulance Providers and Suppliers''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3061. A communication from the Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations

Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Disclosure of Information for Certain Intellectual Property Rights Enforced at the Border'' (RIN1515–AD87) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 16, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3062. A communication from the Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Disclosure of Information for Certain Intellectual Property Rights Enforced at the Border'' (RIN1515–AD87) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 17, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3063. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to section 36(c) and 36(d) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 15–051); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3064. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to section 36(c) and 36(d) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 15–062); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3065. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 15–032); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 750. A bill to achieve border security on certain Federal lands along the Southern border (Rept. No. 114–150).

S. 991. A bill to establish the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–151).

By Mr. ALEXANDER, from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 481. A bill 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, and for other purposes.

By Mr. ALEXANDER, from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and an amendment to the title:

S. 799. A bill to combat the rise of prenatal opioid abuse and neonatal abstinence syndrome.

By Mr. ALEXANDER, from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1893. A bill to reauthorize and improve programs related to mental health and substance use disorders.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. CORKER for the Committee on Foreign Relations.

*Lucy Tamlyn, of New York, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Benin.

Nominee: Lucy Tamlyn.

Post: Benin.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: 0.
2. Spouse: 0.
3. Children and Spouses: Filipa Tamlyn Serpa (single): 0. Benjamin Tamlyn Serpa (single): 0.
4. Parents: Ann D. Tamlyn (widow), 0; Thomas T. Tamlyn (deceased), 0.
5. Grandparents (none living).
6. Brothers and Spouses: Thomas T. Tamlyn, 0; Spouse: Maria Sramek, 0; Benjamin W. Tamlyn (single), $300, 2013, DSCC; $300, 2013, DCCC; $300, 2014, DCCC; $200, 2014, DSCC. Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC), Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC).
7. Sisters: none.

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*Jeffrey J. Hawkins, Jr., of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Central African Republic.

Nominee: Jeffrey Jones Hawkins, Jr.

Post: Bangui.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: None.
2. Spouse: Annie Chansavang-Hawkins: None.
3. Children: Maxime Hawkins: None. Alexandre Hawkins: None.
4. Parents: Jeffrey Hawkins, Sr.: None. Susan Wester: None.
5. Grandparents: Issac Hawkins:—Deceased; Annie-Claire Hawkins—Deceased; Jack Hensley—Deceased; Jean Hensley—Deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: None.
7. Sisters and Spouses: None.

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*David R. Gilmour, of Texas, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Togolese Republic.

Nominee: David R. Gilmour.

Post: Togo.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: 0.
2. Spouse: 0.
3. Children and Spouses: Miles D. Gilmour, none; Tristan J. Gilmour, none; Schyler B. Gilmour, none.
4. Parents: John T. Gilmour, none; Shirley A. Gilmour—deceased.
5. Grandparents: John T. Gilmour—deceased; Molly Gilmour—deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: John and Deanna Gilmour, none; Gregory and Kathy Gilmour, none; Aaron Gilmour, none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: Kathryn Gilmour, none; Lydia Gilmour, none; Jayne Gilmour, none.

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*Edwin Richard Nolan, Jr., of Massachusetts, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Suriname.

Nominee: Edwin Richard Nolan, Jr.

Post: Suriname.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: None.
2. Spouse: None.
3. Children and Spouses: Ryan P. Nolan: none; Katherine A. Nolan: none.
4. Parents: Edwin R. Nolan: deceased; Agnes H. Nolan: deceased.
5. Grandparents: John. J. Nolan: deceased; Mary C. Nolan: deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: Maryann K. Steele: none; William Steele: none.

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*John L. Estrada, of Florida, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Nominee: John Learie Estrada.

Post: Trinidad & Tobago.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: $250.00, 05/12/2012, John Estrada; $250.00, 10/16/2012, John Estrada; $400.00 01/29/2013, John Estrada. Self and Spouse Joint: $250.00, 04/03/2014, John Estrada, Elizabeth Cote; $100.00, 10/10/2014, John Estrada, Elizabeth Cote; $50.00, 09/18/2014, John Estrada, Elizabeth Cote; $100, 09/08/2014, John Estrada, Elizabeth Cote; $200.00, 07/28/2014, John Estrada, Elizabeth Cote.
2. Spouse: None.
3. Children and Spouses: None.
4. Parents: None.
5. Grandparents: None.
6. Brothers and Spouses: None.
7. Sisters and Spouses: None.

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*Carolyn Patricia Alsup, of Florida, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of The Gambia.

Nominee: Carolyn Patricia Alsup.

POST: The Gambia.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: $50.00, 3/31/15, DSCC; $50.00, 2/25/15, DNC; $50.00, 4/2/14, DNC; $64.00, 1/29/14, DNC; $75.00, 10/28/12, Obama for America; $100.00, 10/1/12, Obama for America; $22.00, 12/30/11, Obama for America.

2. Spouse: N/A.
3. Children and Spouses: N/A.
4. Parents: Fred W. Alsup, M.D. (father) (deceased 2002), none; Edith Laurence Alsup (mother) (deceased 1980), none.
5. Grandparents: Mitchinson Laurence (deceased), none; Maude Laurence (deceased), none; Eules Alsup, Sr. (deceased), none; Nora Tubbs Alsup (deceased), none.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Fred W. Alsup, Jr. (not married), none; Alan R. Alsup (deceased 2001), none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: Peggy Ann Alsup (not married), none.

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*Daniel H. Rubinstein, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Tunisia.

Nominee: Daniel Howard Rubinstein.

Post: Ambassador to the Republic of Tunisia.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self: none.
2. Spouse: Julie D. Adams: none.
3. Children: Jonah G. Rubinstein: none; Simon L. Rubinstein: none.
4. Parents: Morris L. Rubinstein (deceased): none; Mildred Rubinstein: none.
5. Grandparents: David Rubinstein—(deceased); Fay Rubinstein—(deceased); Philip Hochberg—(deceased); Ruth Hochberg—(deceased).
6. Brothers: Aaron B. Rubinstein (spouse Sharon Rubinstein), none; David E. Rubinstein (unmarried), none.
7. Sisters: Naomi B. Weiss (spouse Stephen Weiss), none; Judith D. Massarano (spouse Glenn Masserano), none.

Ann Calvaresi Barr, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, United States Agency for International Development.

*David Malcolm Robinson, of Connecticut, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization.

*David Malcolm Robinson, of Connecticut, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Conflict and Stabilization Operations).

*Scott Allen, of Maryland, to be United States Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

*Susan Coppedge Amato, of Georgia, to be Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking, with the rank of Ambassador at Large.

*Barbara Lee, of California, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the Seventieth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

*Christopher H. Smith, of New Jersey, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the Seventieth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, for the Committee on Foreign Relations I report favorably the following nomination lists which were printed in the RECORDs on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

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

Foreign Service nominations beginning with Jennifer Ann Amos and ending with Holly Rothe Wielkoszewski, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on July 8, 2015.

Foreign Service nominations beginning with Kreshnik Alikaj and ending with Brett David Ziskie, I which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 8, 2015.

Foreign Service nominations beginning with Jason Douglas Kalbfleisch and ending with Stuart MacKenzie Hatcher, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 21, 2015. (minus 1 nominee: DereII Kennedo)

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

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 Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 2114. A bill to correct inconsistencies in the definitions relating to Native Americans in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. FLAKE:

S. 2115. A bill to continue job creation and the promotion of investment through improvements to targeted employment areas; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. VITTER):

S. 2116. A bill to improve certain programs of the Small Business Administration to better assist small business customers in accessing broadband technology, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. CORNYN:

S. 2117. A bill to prevent certain discriminatory taxation of natural gas pipeline property; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 2118. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to extend the application of the Medicare payment rate floor to primary care services furnished under Medicaid and to apply the rate floor to additional providers of primary care services; to the Committee on Finance .

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. COONS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. WARNER, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 2119. A bill to provide for greater congressional oversight of Iran's nuclear program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BENNET, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2120. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a program to support veterans in contact with the criminal justice system by discouraging unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and other nonviolent crimes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN:

S. 2121. A bill to facilitate and enhance the declassification of information, including in the Legislative Branch, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. PAUL:

S. 2122. A bill to increase the worldwide level of employment-based immigrants and to reauthorize the EB–5 regional center program; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. LEE, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. SCOTT):

S. 2123. A bill to reform sentencing laws and correctional institutions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. STABENOW:

S. 2124. A bill to establish a Federal tax credit approximation matching program for State new jobs training tax credits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 2125. A bill to make the Community Advantage Pilot Program of the Small Business Administration permanent, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. VITTER, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 2126. A bill to reauthorize the women's business center program of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. JOHNSON (for himself and Ms. AYOTTE):

S. 2127. A bill to provide appropriate protections to probationary Federal employees, to provide the Special Counsel with adequate access to information, to provide greater awareness of Federal whistleblower protections, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. UDALL:

S. Res. 273. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the need for reconciliation in Indonesia and disclosure by the United States Government of events surrounding the mass killings during 1965 and 1966; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. JOHNSON):

S. Res. 274. A resolution commemorating the 25th anniversary of the peaceful and democratic reunification of Germany; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. Res. 275. A resolution calling on Congress, schools, and State and local educational agencies to recognize the significant educational implications of dyslexia that must be addressed and designating October 2015 as ''National Dyslexia Awareness Month''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. ENZI, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. Res. 276. A resolution designating the week beginning October 18, 2015, as ''National Character Counts Week''; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 298

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 298, a bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to provide States with the option of providing services to children with medically complex conditions under the Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program through a care coordination program focused on improving health outcomes for children with medically complex conditions and lowering costs, and for other purposes.

S. 697

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 697, a bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act to reauthorize and modernize that Act, and for other purposes.

S. 1014

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1014, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to ensure the safety of cosmetics.

S. 1099

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1099, a bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to provide States with flexibility in determining the size of employers in the small group market.

S. 1178

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1178, a bill to prohibit implementation of a proposed rule relating to the definition of the term ''waters of the United States'' under the Clean Water Act, or any substantially similar rule, until a Supplemental Scientific Review Panel and Ephemeral and Intermittent Streams Advisory Committee produce certain reports, and for other purposes.

S. 1214

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1214, a bill to prevent human health threats posed by the consumption of equines raised in the United States.

S. 1455

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1455, a bill to provide access to medication-assisted therapy, and for other purposes.

S. 1817

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1817, a bill to improve the effectiveness of major rules in accomplishing their regulatory objectives by promoting retrospective review, and for other purposes.

S. 1831

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1831, a bill to revise section 48 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

S. 1874

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1874, a bill to provide protections for workers with respect to their right to select or refrain from selecting representation by a labor organization.

S. 1989

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1989, a bill to improve access to primary care services.

S. 2032

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2032, a bill to adopt the bison as the national mammal of the United States.

S. 2045

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2045, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage.

S. 2066

At the request of Mr. SASSE, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2066, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit a health care practitioner from failing to exercise the proper degree of care in the case of a child who survives an abortion or attempted abortion.

S. 2067

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor 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. 2089

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2089, a bill to provide for investment in clean energy, to empower and protect consumers, to modernize energy infrastructure, to cut pollution and waste, to invest in research and development, and for other purposes.

S. 2108

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CORNYN:

S. 2117. A bill to prevent certain discriminatory taxation of natural gas pipeline property; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2117

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

SECTION 1. LIMITATION ON DISCRIMINATORY TAXATION OF NATURAL GAS PIPELINE PROPERTY.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) ASSESSMENT.—The term ''assessment'' means valuation for a property tax that is levied by a taxing authority.

(2) ASSESSMENT JURISDICTION.—The term ''assessment jurisdiction'' means a geographical area used in determining the assessed value of property for ad valorem taxation.

(3) COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY.—The term ''commercial and industrial property'' means property (excluding natural gas pipeline property, public utility property, and land used primarily for agricultural purposes or timber growth) devoted to commercial or industrial use and subject to a property tax levy.

(4) NATURAL GAS PIPELINE PROPERTY.—The term ''natural gas pipeline property'' means all property (whether real, personal, and intangible) used by a natural gas pipeline providing transportation or storage of natural gas subject to the jurisdiction of the Federal Regulatory Commission.

(5) PUBLIC UTILITY PROPERTY.—The term ''public utility property'' means property (excluding natural gas pipeline property) that is devoted to public service and is owned or used by any entity that performs a public service and is regulated by any governmental agency.

(b) DISCRIMINATORY ACTS.—A State, subdivision of a State, authority acting for a State or subdivision of a State, or any other taxing authority (including a taxing jurisdiction and a taxing district) may not do any of the following:

(1) ASSESSMENTS.—Assess natural gas pipeline property at value that has a higher ratio to the true market value of the natural gas pipeline property than the ratio that the assessed value of commercial and industrial property in the same assessment jurisdiction has to the true market value of such commercial and industrial property.

(2) ASSESSMENT TAXES.—Levy or collect a tax on an assessment that may not be made under paragraph (1).

(3) AD VALOREM TAXES.—Levy or collect an ad valorem property tax on natural gas pipeline property at a tax rate that exceeds the tax rate applicable to commercial and industrial property in the same assessment jurisdiction.

(4) OTHER TAXES.—Impose any other tax that discriminates against a natural gas pipeline providing transportation or storage of natural gas subject to the jurisdiction of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

SEC. 2. JURISDICTION OF COURTS; RELIEF.

(a) GRANT OF JURISDICTION.—Notwithstanding section 1341 of title 28, United States Code, and without regard to the amount in controversy or citizenship of the parties, the district courts of the United States shall have jurisdiction, concurrent with other jurisdiction of the courts of the United States, of States, and of all other taxing authorities and taxing jurisdictions, to prevent a violation of section 1.

(b) RELIEF IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in this subsection, relief may be granted under this Act only if the ratio of assessed value to true market value of natural gas pipeline property exceeds by at least 5 percent the ratio of assessed value to true market value of commercial and industrial property in the same assessment jurisdiction. If the ratio of the assessed value of commercial and industrial property in the assessment jurisdiction to the true market value of commercial and industrial property cannot be determined to the satisfaction of the court through the random-sampling method known as a sales assessment ratio study (to be carried out under statistical principles applicable to such a study), each of the following shall be a violation of section 1 for which relief under this Act may be granted:

(1) An assessment of the natural gas pipeline property at a value that has a higher ratio of assessed value to the true market value of the natural gas pipeline property than the ratio of the assessed value of all other property (excluding public utility property) subject to a property tax levy in the assessment jurisdiction has to the true market value of all other property (excluding public utility property).

(2) The collection of an ad valorem property tax on the natural gas pipeline property at a tax rate that exceeds the tax rate applicable to all other taxable property (excluding public utility property) in the taxing jurisdiction.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. LEE, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. SCOTT):

S. 2123. A bill to reform sentencing laws and correctional institutions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SENTENCING REFORM AND CORRECTIONS ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today I am pleased to introduce, along with a broad bipartisan group of colleagues, a truly landmark piece of legislation.

It is the result of months of hard work and thoughtful deliberations. It is the largest criminal justice reform bill in a generation.

This bill represents a consensus among my colleagues and me.

There are elements of the criminal justice system that we agree can and should be improved. We all agree that statutory mandatory minimum sentences can serve an important role in protecting public safety and bringing justice to crime victims, and this bill will preserve the primary mandatory minimums to keep some certainty and uniformity in Federal sentences and to encourage criminals to cooperate with law enforcement. We even add two new mandatory minimums for crimes involving interstate domestic violence and supplying weapons or other defense materials to prohibited countries or terrorists, but our current system has produced some specific instances of severe and excessive sentences.

So we all agree that we need to lower some of the harshest enhanced mandatory minimums, and we all agree that we can do a better job of targeting those enhanced mandatory sentences to the most serious violent and repeat offenders.

This bill does just that. It even expands some of those enhanced mandatory minimums to criminals with prior violent felonies and State crimes involving the unlawful use of firearms. That will be a big help in cities across the country who face rising homicide rates from violent offenders who have been released from prison.

We also all agree that our current system could benefit from giving judges a bit more discretion in sentencing. That is why we are expanding the current safety valve.

We also create a second safety valve so that nonviolent offenders who have minor criminal histories or play low-level roles in drug organizations are not improperly swept up by mandatory minimums.

Finally, we all agree that we must improve our prisons and stop the revolving door. Those of us introducing the bill have agreed to give lower-risk inmates a chance to return to society earlier and with better prospects to become productive, law-abiding citizens.

There are other parts of this bill that are also important, but I will not go into them at this time. As I said, this is the biggest criminal justice reform in a generation.

Instead, I wish to end with the idea that this bill is about the Senate. Senators from both sides of the aisle and Senators with very different perspectives have come together to solve an important problem facing the United States. This is how the U.S. Senate can work, should work, and I am pleased to be a part of it and the chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

Finally, I extend my sincere thanks to my colleagues who joined me in this effort: Senators DURBIN, CORNYN, WHITEHOUSE, LEE, GRAHAM, SCHUMER, BOOKER, and SCOTT, and my friend Ranking Member LEAHY.

I close by again thanking the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, Senator LEAHY, for the great help that he has been, not only as my friend, but also for his work on this piece of legislation.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 2125. A bill to make the Community Advantage Pilot Program of the Small Business Administration permanent, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Small Business Lending and Inequality Reduction Act of 2015.

It is a simple bill with a straightforward goal: to increase economic activity in underserved communities to help create jobs and reduce economic inequality. We must help low and moderate income communities grow by partnering with organizations that can channel expertise and resources to these communities. The bill I am introducing today would assist community development institutions provide more funding to small businesses.

This bill would increase their ability to lend in underserved communities and promote development and economic growth. The more lending they can offer to underserved communities, the more those communities can prosper.

One example of this process can be found from CDC Small Business Finance, an organization that has created more than 165,000 jobs and funded more than 10,000 small businesses. In Anaheim, CA, for example, they provided $178,000 in financing to help Gretchen Shoemaker and her family successfully launch a restaurant based on Gretchen's grandmother's Southern-style cooking in an historic area of Anaheim.

Another example is Leatherby Family Creamery, an ice-cream parlor in Sacramento that opened in 1982 with the goal of creating a family-friendly community gathering place. They received a loan backed by the Small Business Administration that allowed them to modernize and expand their business. Leatherby's now has three locations and has sustained itself for over 30 years despite bumps in the economy. It is truly dedicated to its communities as well, donating to over 180 associations, schools, and organizations in 2015 alone.

Overall, it should be clear: these loans provided real dividends back to the communities.

With more access to financial services—which my bill would provide—there will be more improvements to businesses, nonprofits, and our communities.

The bill I am introducing today would do two main things: First, it allows community development institutions to increase their lending by providing them access to loans backed by the Small Business Administration.

It would do this by authorizing and making permanent an existing pilot program run by the Small Business Administration and raising the maximum loan amount so that small businesses have access to additional funding. There are currently over 95 approved

lenders in the pilot program, which has approved over $214 million in over 1,650 loans.

Small businesses eligible for loans under the program include small businesses located in areas of high poverty and unemployment; small businesses that have more than 50 percent of employees living in low- or moderate-income communities; and Small businesses owned by veterans.

Second, this bill would expand the ability of Community Development Financial Institutions to access funding from the Federal Home Loan Bank System, which in turn allows them to provide more loans to low-income communities.

These are two simple actions that can have a significant impact on small businesses and communities in California and across the country.

I am proud to say that the Opportunity Finance Network, which is an association of community development financial institutions, supports this bill.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this legislation and am hopeful that this Congress will move it forward.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 273—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE NEED FOR RECONCILIATION IN INDONESIA AND DISCLOSURE BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT OF EVENTS SURROUNDING THE MASS KILLINGS DURING 1965 AND 1966

Mr. UDALL submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 273

Whereas, on October 1, 1965, 6 Indonesian Army generals were killed by military personnel, including members of Indonesia's Presidential Guard, and these killings were blamed on the Indonesian Communist Party and labeled an ''attempted Communist coup d'état'';

Whereas this alleged coup was used to justify the mass killing of alleged supporters of the Indonesian Communist Party, with estimates of the number of dead ranging from 500,000 to 1,000,000 killed;

Whereas the targeted individuals were predominantly unarmed civilians, and often included members of trade unions, intellectuals, teachers, ethnic Chinese, and those involved in the women's movement;

Whereas these killings and the imprisonment of up to 1,000,000 targeted individuals were done without due process of law;

Whereas the targeted individuals were subject to extrajudicial execution, torture, rape, forced disappearance, forced labor, and forced eviction;

Whereas the United States Central Intelligence Agency, in a 1968 research study, described the period as one of the worst mass murders of the twentieth century;

Whereas the United States Government provided the Indonesian Army with financial, military, and intelligence support during the period of the mass killings, and did so aware that such killings were taking place as recorded in partially declassified documents in the Department of State history, ''Foreign Relations of the United States'', pertaining to this period;

Whereas, within months of military leader Suharto's assumption of the Presidency following the mass killing, the United States Government began sending economic and military support to Suharto's military regime, and played an indispensable role in its consolidation of power;

Whereas aid to the Suharto government continued for more than 3 decades, despite on-going crimes against humanity committed by the Suharto government, including mass killing and other gross violations of human rights during the invasion and subsequent 24-year occupation of East Timor;

Whereas perpetrators of the 1965 and 1966 mass killings have largely lived with impunity, and the survivors and descendants of the victims suffer continuing economic discrimination and had limited civil and political rights for decades, as noted in the 2012 report by the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights;

Whereas the United States Government has not yet fully declassified all relevant documents concerning this time period, and full disclosure could help bring historical clarity to atrocities committed in Indonesia during 1965 and 1966;

Whereas the United States Government has recently supported the declassification and release of documents in support of truth and reconciliation efforts following periods of violence in countries such as Chile and Brazil;

Whereas open dialogue about alleged past crimes against humanity and past human rights violations is important for continued efforts to reconcile populations of Indonesia and to ensure a stable, sustainable peace that will benefit the region and beyond;

Whereas, Indonesia has undergone a remarkable democratic transition over the last 2 decades, and is the world's third largest democracy with the largest Muslim population in the world;

Whereas through free and fair elections, the people of Indonesia have elected new leaders who now have the opportunity to establish a culture of accountability in partnership with the country's vibrant civil society, press, academia, and human rights activists;

Whereas the relationship between the United States and Indonesia is strong and involves many shared interests, as reflected in the 2010 United States-Indonesia Comprehensive Partnership, including democracy and civil society, education, security, climate and environment, energy, and trade and investment;

Whereas the economic relationship between the United States and Indonesia is strong, with bilateral goods trade exceeding $27,000,000,000 and with major United States companies making significant long-term investments in Indonesia; and

Whereas strong relations between the United States and Indonesia are mutually beneficial to both countries: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the mass murder in Indonesia during 1965 and 1966;

(2) expresses great concern about the lack of accountability enjoyed by those who carried out crimes during this period;

(3) urges political leaders in Indonesia—

(A) to consider a truth, justice, and reconciliation commission to address alleged crimes against humanity and other human rights violations; and

(B) to work to mend differences and animosity that remain after the mass killings during 1965 and 1966; and

(4) calls on the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, and others involved in developing and implementing policy towards Indonesia during this time period to establish an interagency working group—

(A) to locate, identify, inventory, recommend for declassification, and make available to the public all classified records and documents concerning the mass killings of 1965 and 1966, including records and documents pertaining to covert operations in Indonesia from January 1, 1964, through March 30, 1966;

(B) to coordinate with Federal agencies and take such actions as necessary to expedite the release of such records to the public; and

(C) to submit a report to Congress that describes all such records, the disposition of such records, and the activities of the Interagency Group.

SENATE RESOLUTION 274—COMMEMORATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACEFUL AND DEMOCRATIC REUNIFICATION OF GERMANY

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. JOHNSON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 274

Whereas more than 22,000,000 people of the United States served in the Cold War by supporting the efforts to bring military, economic, and diplomatic pressure to bear in the defense of Germany and the West, and ultimately helping more than 400,000,000 people gain freedom from the bondage of communism in the Soviet Bloc;

Whereas the United States supported the promulgation of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany, under which Germany was eventually reunited;

Whereas the United States created the Reconstruction Loan Corporation, which, under West German leadership, became the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau that invested in the reconstruction of West Germany and lay the economic groundwork for the reunification of Germany;

Whereas on November 4, 1989, more than 1,000,000 people gathered in Alexanderplatz in East Berlin and 40 other cities and towns in East Germany to demand free elections and basic civil rights, such as freedom of opinion, movement, press, and assembly;

Whereas on November 9, 1989, East German politbureau member Guenter Schabowski announced that the Government of East Germany would allow ''every citizen of the German Democratic Republic to leave the GDR through any of the border crossings'' and East German leader Egon Krenz promised ''free, general, democratic, and secret elections'';

Whereas thousands of people in East Berlin immediately flooded the border checkpoints at the Berlin Wall and demanded entry into West Berlin, causing the overwhelmed border guards of East Germany to open the checkpoints to allow people to cross into West Berlin;

Whereas in the days following the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, hundreds of thousands of people from East Germany freely crossed the border into West Berlin and West Germany for the first time in more than 28 years;

Whereas German Chancellor Helmut Kohl demonstrated leadership and vision when he

announced a 10-point program calling for the 2 Germanys to expand mutual cooperation with the view toward eventual reunification on November 28, 1989;

Whereas in March 1990, East Germany held free elections for the first time and those elections led to the defeat of the Party of Democratic Socialism and demonstrated the desire of the East German people to reunify Germany and rejoin the world community, which led to the May 1990 treaty on monetary, economic, and social issues and the signing of the Unification Treaty on August 31, 1990;

Whereas on October 2, 1990, President George Herbert Walker Bush told the German people: ''The United States is proud to have built with you the foundations of freedom, proud to have been a steady partner in the quest for 1 Germany, whole and free. America is proud to count itself among the friends and allies of free Germany, now and in the future.'';

Whereas on October 3, 2015, the people of Germany will celebrate in Frankfurt and across Germany, the 25th anniversary of the reunification of Germany; and

Whereas the reunification of Germany demonstrated the end of the division of Europe and the triumph of democracy over communism: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) with the people of the former communist countries and Western Europe, celebrates 25 years of a united Germany, free from the oppression of communism;

(2) honors the courage and sacrifice of the people of Germany, the United States, and other countries who served in the Cold War to bring freedom to Central and Eastern Europe;

(3) recognizes the importance of the alliance between the United States and Germany in—

(A) common defense;

(B) an enduring shared commitment to the free and unified Europe; and

(C) an expanding and deepening economic prosperity under the rule of law throughout Europe;

(4) expresses to the people of Germany an appreciation for the commitment of the people of Germany to the promotion of freedom through leadership in providing international assistance, support for peacekeeping and international security efforts, and acceptance of refugees, including efforts by the people of Germany in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Lebanon, Sudan, and Ukraine; and

(5) reaffirms the deep and historical friendship between the Government and people of the United States and the Government and people of Germany.

SENATE RESOLUTION 275—CALLING ON CONGRESS, SCHOOLS, AND STATE AND LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNIFICANT EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF DYSLEXIA THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED AND DESIGNATING OCTOBER 2015 AS ''NATIONAL DYSLEXIA AWARENESS MONTH''

Mr. CASSIDY (for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 275

Whereas dyslexia is—

(1) defined as an unexpected difficulty in reading for an individual who has the intelligence to be a much better reader; and

(2) due to a difficulty in getting to the individual sounds of spoken language, which affects the ability of an individual to speak, read, spell, and often, learn a language;

Whereas dyslexia is the most common learning disability and affects 80 percent to 90 percent of all individuals with a learning disability;

Whereas an individual with dyslexia may have weakness in decoding or reading fluency and strength in higher level cognitive functions, such as reasoning, critical thinking, concept formation, or problem solving;

Whereas great progress has been made in understanding dyslexia on a scientific level, including the epidemiology and cognitive and neurobiological bases of dyslexia; and

Whereas early diagnosis of dyslexia is critical for ensuring that individuals with dyslexia receive focused, evidence-based intervention that leads to the promotion of self-awareness and self-empowerment and the provision of necessary accommodations so as to ensure school and life success: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) calls on Congress, schools, and State and local educational agencies to recognize that dyslexia has significant educational implications that must be addressed; and

(2) designates October 2015 as ''National Dyslexia Awareness Month''.

SENATE RESOLUTION 276—DESIGNATING THE WEEK BEGINNING OCTOBER 18, 2015, AS ''NATIONAL CHARACTER COUNTS WEEK''

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. ENZI, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 276

Whereas the well-being of the United States requires that the young people of the United States become an involved, caring citizenry of good character;

Whereas the character education of children has become more urgent, as violence by and against youth increasingly threatens the physical and psychological well-being of the people of the United States;

Whereas, more than ever, children need strong and constructive guidance from their families and their communities, including schools, youth organizations, religious institutions, and civic groups;

Whereas the character of a nation is only as strong as the character of its individual citizens;

Whereas the public good is advanced when young people are taught the importance of good character and the positive effects that good character can have in personal relationships, in school, and in the workplace;

Whereas scholars and educators agree that people do not automatically develop good character and that, therefore, conscientious efforts must be made by institutions and individuals that influence youth to help young people develop the essential traits and characteristics that comprise good character;

Whereas, although character development is, first and foremost, an obligation of families, the efforts of faith communities, schools, and youth, civic, and human service organizations also play an important role in fostering and promoting good character;

Whereas Congress encourages students, teachers, parents, youth, and community leaders to recognize the importance of character education in preparing young people to play a role in determining the future of the United States;

Whereas effective character education is based on core ethical values, which form the foundation of a democratic society;

Whereas examples of character are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, citizenship, and honesty;

Whereas elements of character transcend cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences;

Whereas the character and conduct of youth reflect the character and conduct of society, and, therefore, every adult has the responsibility to teach and model ethical values and every social institution has the responsibility to promote the development of good character;

Whereas Congress encourages individuals and organizations, especially those that have an interest in the education and training of the young people of the United States, to adopt the elements of character as intrinsic to the well-being of individuals, communities, and society;

Whereas many schools in the United States recognize the need, and have taken steps, to integrate the values of their communities into teaching activities; and

Whereas the establishment of ''National Character Counts Week'', during which individuals, families, schools, youth organizations, religious institutions, civic groups, and other organizations focus on character education, is of great benefit to the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week beginning October 18, 2015, as ''National Character Counts Week''; and

(2) calls upon the people of the United States and interested groups—

(A) to embrace the elements of character identified by local schools and communities, such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship; and

(B) to observe the week with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 1, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 1, 2015, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''American Crude Oil Export Equality Act.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 1, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Improper Payments in Federal Programs.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 1, 2015, at 10 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 1, 2015, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Reviewing the Civil Nuclear Agreement with South Korea.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 1, 2015, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Nominations.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. BLUNT. 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 October 1, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Achieving the Promise of Health Information Technology.''

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

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 1, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SR–428A of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Examining the Significant Cost and Related Burdens for Small Businesses Resulting from the Gold King Mine Waste Water Spill near Silverton, CO.''

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 1, 2015, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION AND THE NATIONAL INTEREST

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on October 1, 2015, at 2 p.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Oversight of the Administration's FY 2016 Refugee Resettlement Program: Fiscal and Security Implications.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS, FORESTS, AND MINING

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources' Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 1, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that floor privileges be granted this Congress for David Palmer and Zach Terwilliger, detailees from the Department of Justice.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 5 p.m. on Monday, October 5, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 138; that there be 30 minutes for debate on the nomination equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; that following disposition of the nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

NATIONAL CHARACTER COUNTS WEEK

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 276, which was submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 276) designating the week beginning October 18, 2015, as ''National Character Counts Week.''

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 276) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

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

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 4 p.m., Monday, October 5; 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 until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; finally, that following morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session as under the previous order.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2015, AT 4 P.M.

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 5:54 p.m., adjourned until Monday, October 5, 2015, at 4 p.m.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

DIRECTING THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN THE ENROLLMENT OF H.R. 719

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H. Con. Res. 79, which seeks to add language to the underlying Continuing Resolution before it is sent to the President to eliminate federal funding for Planned Parenthood and its affiliates for one year.

H. Con. Res. 79 is nothing more than a political exercise in futility, and yet another attempt to appease extremists in the Republican Conference who are determined to limit women's access to critical health care services.

This concurrent resolution is substantively identical to both the language in H.R. 3134, which the House has already passed and the Senate has refused to consider, and the Continuing Resolution that was rejected by a bipartisan majority of 47 to 52 in the Senate last week. With just hours left to pass legislation to keep our government open, we should not be hindering access to women's health care.

Mr. Speaker, opposition to these political gimmicks is not limited to Democrats in Congress. Earlier this week the fight over defunding Planned Parenthood and similar scuffles facilitated by fringe elements of the Republican party lead to the resignation of the Speaker of the House, and has divided the Republican conference so fervently that we can again expect a very real threat of a government shutdown in December.

The reality is, the Continuing Resolution we are currently considering does not provide one cent of federal funding for Planned Parenthood, as my Republican friend Representative TOM COLE, Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies, astutely points out. Knowing this, I am both bewildered and outraged that we are using precious time considering another bill designed to restrict the constitutional reproductive rights of women to satisfy the extreme political agenda of a few in Congress.

Planned Parenthood has long served as a critical health safety net for millions of men and women. Over 90 percent of the services it provides are preventative in nature, including cancer screenings, testing for sexually transmitted infections, and family planning services. Indeed, each year Planned Parenthood centers provide an average of 400,000 cervical cancer screenings, 500,000 breast cancer screenings, and nearly 4.5 million tests and treatments for sexually transmitted infections. Defunding this important organization and its affiliates would do an immeasurable disservice to millions of Americans.

Like it or not, the Supreme Court's ruling in Roe v. Wade conferred upon women the right to do with their own bodies what they determine best until the point of viability. This decision acknowledges the notion that the choice to have an abortion is excruciatingly difficult, and belongs exclusively with a woman, in consultation with her doctor and god. To subject this right to the ideological whims of politicians flies in the face of years of Supreme Court jurisprudence and is an unconscionable affront to women's health.

TSA OFFICE OF INSPECTION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to stop the government from shutting down.

What we are doing today is budgeting or appropriating but a desperate Hail Mary to save thousands of jobs and prevent another waste of $24 billion in lost economic productivity like we saw the last time House Republicans succeeded in shutting down the government.

Today I will vote for H.R. 719 even though it goes against sound fiscal practice by including the budget gimmickry known as sequestration, a fiscal bludgeon that makes across the board cuts in funding for the valuable services depended upon by American children, seniors, workers, veterans, students, and small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 719, "Continuing Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2016," which extends current Fiscal Year 2015 government funding for nearly all agencies through December 11, 2015, at a rate equal to an annual level of $1.017 trillion, a level consistent with the combined top-line post-sequester discretionary spending caps for Fiscal Year 2016 set by the Budget Control Act.

H.R. 719 also provides funding for Overseas Contingency Operations, which are exempt from the BCA caps, at a rate of $74.8 billion, an amount roughly equal to a continuation of the Fiscal Year 2015 level.

Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that we have again been placed in the position of having to fund the government through the device of a continuing resolution rather than through the normal appropriations process of considering and voting on the twelve separate spending bills reported by the Committee on Appropriations.

Although the House considered and passed several of the annual spending bills, none of them received consideration in the Senate because of the refusal of the House leadership to reach agreement with the Senate on an appropriate framework for all appropriations bills that does not harm our economy or require draconian cuts to middle-class priorities.

Without such an agreement, House Republican appropriation bills will result in:

1. hundreds of thousands of low-income children losing access to Head Start programs,
2. tens of thousands of children with disabilities losing federal funding for their special education teachers and aides,
3. thousands of federal agents who will not be able to secure the border, enforce drug laws, combat violent crime or apprehend fugitives; and
4. thousands of scientists without medical grants to conduct research to find new treatments and cures for diseases like breast cancer and Alzheimer's.

As a result of the failure to reach a budget agreement, we now find ourselves facing the Hobson's choice of rejecting the Continuing Resolution now pending which likely will result in a cessation of government operations or approving the Continuing Resolution and continuing adherence to the draconian spending limits imposed by the Budget Control Act of 2011.

Faced with this dilemma, I reluctantly will vote for H.R. 719 because in the circumstances it would be irresponsible to do otherwise.

H.R. 719 is not perfect—far from it—but it is a modest and positive step toward preventing Republicans from shutting down the government again and manufacturing crises that only harm our economy, destroy jobs, and weaken our middle class.

The government shutdown of 2013, which was manufactured by the Republican majority lasted 16 days and cost taxpayers $24 billion.

The cost to federal employees and the people they serve cannot be calculated.

Mr. Speaker, as with any compromise there are some things in the agreement that I support and some things that I strongly oppose.

For example, I support the provisions in the Continuing Resolution ensuring that funding for appropriated entitlements continue at a rate maintaining program levels under current law.

I also support the provisions allowing the State Department, USAID, BBG, and related agencies to expend funds in the absence of an authorization, and authorizing continuation of certain intelligence activities.

I support the provisions in H.R. 719 that provide $700 million in emergency funding for government efforts to fight wildfires in Western states and that give the VA budget flexibility to finish construction of a facility in Denver.

Finally, I am very pleased that House Republicans have jettisoned any serious efforts to shut down the government over the obsession with defunding Planned Parenthood and opposition to women's reproductive rights.

On the other hand, I am very disappointed that the Continuing Resolution again misses the opportunity to reauthorize two critical programs: the Export-Import Bank and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

The Export-Import Bank provides critical financing assistance—at no cost to taxpayers—to small, medium, and large-sized U.S. businesses, helping them to create jobs at home and sell products overseas.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a bipartisan, popular, 50-year program that uses royalties from federal oil and gas leases for land acquisition and parks across the country.

The LWCF program supports more than 6 million U.S. jobs connected with outdoor recreation at no cost to taxpayers.

Without action by Congress, LWCF will expire on September 30, authorization for the Ex-Im Bank expired June 30, 2015, and has been hurting U.S. exporters and workers daily ever since.

I also strongly disapprove of the rescission of $1.7 billion from the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and the across the board reduction in funding levels for most programs and activities from their FY 2015 levels by 0.21%.

Nevertheless, the agreement allows Congress to keep the federal government open to serve the American people and gives the Congress and the Administration ten weeks to reach agreement on a fair and balanced budget that provides the funds for the investments in human capital and physical infrastructure needed to maintain American competitiveness in the global economy of the 21st century.

And one of the most important things we can do is end the draconian sequestration that has been in effect since 2011.

Mr. Speaker, to illustrate how strongly I feel about the need to end sequestration, let me chronicle the severity of the suffering and pain inflicted by sequestration on the most vulnerable residents of Texas and the constituents that I serve.

Head Start and Early Head Start services were eliminated or severely impacted with approximately 4,800 children being impacted throughout the state of Texas.

Families in my district who rely on Federal Government programs like Head Start are hurting.

The pain did not start with the 2013 shutdown, but with sequestration which hit Head Start programs for 3 to 4 year olds in the Houston area hard: $5,341 million cut; 109 Employees cut; 699 Slots for children cut.

Head Start and Early Head Start Programs were further stressed by the federal government shutdown.

My support of Head Start and Early Head Start is based on what I have seen and heard about programs like the AVANCE-Houston Early Head Start program serving parents and children in the 18th Congressional District.

The AVANCE-Houston Early Head Start is a program serving low income families in my Houston Texas District.

I have visited with AVANCE-Houston administrators many times to get an update on how low-income families with infants and toddlers and pregnant women served by the program were doing.

The AVANCE-Houston Early Head Start's mission is simple: AVANCE-Houston works for healthy prenatal outcomes for pregnant women, enhances the development of very young children, and promotes healthy family functioning.

AVANCE-Houston serves nearly 1,800 children city wide; each of these families and their children are suffering the effects of the sequestration.

Sequestration has cost AVANCE-Houston over $842,518 Head Start and Early Head Start in lost funding and put on hold the head start on the future our children deserve.

As I stated, Mr. Speaker, this Continuing Resolution is not perfect and it only funds the government until December 11, 2015, but it is better than the alternative we faced in 2013 when House Republicans shut down the government for 16 days and cost our economy $24 billion in lost economic productivity.

For that reason, I will vote for H.R. 719 and renew my call that all members of the House and Senate work together and with the President to reach agreement on an appropriate budget framework that ends sequestration but does not harm our economy or require draconian cuts to middle-class priorities.

MALNUTRITION AWARENESS WEEK

HON. MARCIA L. FUDGE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring attention to Malnutrition Awareness Week. I salute those who fight against this underestimated but very important disease. While we often talk about hunger, obesity, food insecurity and other topics that deal with what and how we eat, we do not talk nearly enough about the common thread that links these issues together: malnutrition.

Though not commonly viewed as a medical concern in the U.S., malnutrition is a serious disease that largely affects certain demographic groups, such as older adults, hospitalized patients and minorities. For example, older African Americans have a significantly higher risk of malnutrition compared to their white counterparts.

A recent study estimated the economic burden of community-based diseases associated with malnutrition to be $157 billion per year. Studies have further shown that chronic disease is often linked with malnutrition, and 1 in 3 patients arrive at our hospitals malnourished. This translates into higher health care costs, increased readmission rates, and longer hospital stays. We need real, cost-effective solutions, particularly for those who need care the most.

We also need more vigilance and action in the area of good nutrition. Malnutrition screening, assessment, and appropriate nutritional interventions for older adults could be vital to them leading healthier lives and saving on healthcare costs. We cannot afford to ignore such low-cost solutions.

September 28 through October 2 has been designated as Malnutrition Awareness Week. Hopefully increased awareness about this problem will lead to healthier aging of citizens across all our communities.

BOB BRIGGS

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Bob Briggs for receiving the Jefferson County 2015 Hall of Fame Award from the West Chamber.

The Hall of Fame Award recognizes outstanding individuals who have had significant, long-lasting impacts through their leadership and contributions to Jefferson County's economy, community and legacy.

As a third-generation Coloradan, Bob earned a degree from Colorado State University in horticulture. In 1961, Bob founded Briggs Flower Shop and Garden Center. From there, Bob became engaged in various community and political activities in Jefferson County, such as serving as Adams County Commissioner.

As Commissioner, he helped prevent the expansion of Stapleton Airport on to the Rocky Mountain Arsenal which ultimately led to the construction of Denver International Airport (DIA). Bob also served as President of Adams County Economic Development for three years. During his tenure, he helped in efforts to secure the South West Mall and build the Front Range Airport. Bob went on to be elected as a Council Member for Westminster in 2007.

Bob's extracurricular work also had tremendous impacts including his work on the board of the Butterfly Pavilion where he helped spearhead the City Wide Trail system, a system that is responsible for 15 percent of Westminster's open space today. Bob also served as a board member of the Regional Transportation District where he approved the project ideas that became FasTracks, TREX, and Union Station Light Rail station.

Congratulations to Bob Briggs for this well-deserved honor by the West Chamber. I am grateful for his contributions to Jefferson County.

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CUMBERLAND COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS

HON. LOU BARLETTA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to help commemorate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Cumberland County Association of Township Officials. Over the past century, the organization has consistently endeavored to advance the interests of Cumberland County's 18 townships and has diligently served my constituents.

First established in 1915, the organization continues to provide an arena for the discussion of issues of local and regional importance. Furthermore, the association serves over 400 township officials in Cumberland County by hosting informational conferences, offering training opportunities, and advocating for its members at the county, state, and federal levels. Most importantly, the organization helps a range of supervisors, managers, secretaries, treasurers, tax collectors, and auditors develop a better understanding of the rights and duties of township officials—an invaluable educational service.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize the Cumberland County Association of Township Officials as it celebrates its 100th anniversary. I am incredibly grateful for this community organization that strives every day to ensure the future stability and prosperity of Cumberland County.

IN RECOGNITION OF DIANE CALLAHAN

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Diane Callahan, who is retiring after 15 dedicated years of public service in Highland Village. The city has benefited immeasurably from her unfaltering precision, unfailing commitment, and unwavering devotion to the residents she serves.

Ms. Callahan began serving the City of Highland Village in 2000 as an administrative secretary. She performed zealously in this role by compiling meticulous reports and utilizing her comprehensive knowledge of city policy to the benefit of constituents and businesses alike. In 2008, after several years of ardent work and study she earned her Texas Registered Municipal Clerk certification. In 2011, Ms. Callahan was appointed City Secretary of Highland Village. In large part due to her efforts, the City of Highland Village has operated efficiently and reliably, thereby solidifying the quality of life residents of the city have come to enjoy.

Ms. Callahan had an extensive breadth of duties as Highland Village's City Secretary. She was responsible for keeping all seven council members informed on city events and developments as well as maintaining city ordinances, coordinating municipal and special elections, and responding in a timely manner to public information requests. Ms. Callahan performed these duties with sterling customer service.

In 2014, Ms. Callahan attained the title of Certified Municipal Clerk, an award distributed by the International Institute of Municipal Clerks, in recognition of her vast experience and attendance at an exhaustive number of educational programs. Additionally, Ms. Callahan was honored by the North Texas Municipal Clerks Association as the 2015 Municipal Clerk of the Year. This most recent achievement is a testimony to the professional reputation she has built with her commitment to excellence.

As Ms. Callahan retires, she is highly esteemed by her colleagues and the community she has served for 15 years, and she will be greatly missed. It is my privilege to honor such an outstanding citizen and serve the City of Highland Village in the U.S. House of Representatives.

JAMES E. DALE

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud James E. Dale for receiving the Golden Mayor's Award for Excellence.

The Golden Mayor's Award for Excellence recognizes organizations, businesses and individuals that significantly contribute to the wellbeing and improvement of the City of Golden.

Jim has served on the Citizens' Budget Advisory Committee and the Golden Planning Commission. He was a founding member of the Sustainability Taskforce, and he currently serves on the Citizens Sustainability Advisory Board and the Golden Visitors Center Board. Additionally, he supports the Golden History Museum, Landmarks Association, Foothills Art Center, Miners Alley Playhouse and Colorado Cowboy Gathering.

I congratulate James E. Dale for being the recipient of this well-deserved honor by Mayor Marjorie Sloan, and I thank him for his continued commitment to the City of Golden.

HONORING TAIWAN'S 104TH NATIONAL DAY

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Taiwan's 104th National Day on October 10th, also known as Double Ten Day.

Both the United States and Taiwan share the belief that remembering our countries' heritage is critical to forging a path to a better tomorrow. Only a few decades ago, Taiwan was an authoritarian state. Yet today, presidents and legislators are elected through a peaceful, democratic process. I applaud Taiwan for cherishing these liberties rather than taking them for granted.

The United States has been a close ally of Taiwan for many years, and our friendship is solidified by our core set of shared values. Justice, rule of law, human rights, and freedom of the press are treasured by people in both the United States and Taiwan. Furthermore, Taiwan is an important security and economic partner of the United States.

As a member of the Congressional Taiwan Caucus, I am pleased to see Taiwan's admission to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation group and World Trade Organization, as well as Taiwan's observer status at the World Health Organization. However, Taiwan and its 23 million people are still not fully represented in the United Nations. It is vital for the United States to continue to stand with Taiwan by supporting its meaningful participation in international bodies. This is why I have introduced H. Con. Res. 76, which supports Taiwan's full membership in the United Nations. I urge my colleagues in Congress to join me in supporting Taiwan's full and equal membership in the United Nations and other international organizations.

I would again like to congratulate the people of Taiwan on their 104th National Day. This anniversary is a time to remember the sacrifices of the past and to look ahead to a promising future.

IN VENERATION OF RETIRED MAJOR JOHN SPARKS

HON. DAVID SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the accomplishments of the retired Major John Sparks. Major Sparks is a trailblazer for the African American community, with a career that spans fifty-seven years and three very different industries.

Major Sparks joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1954. After finishing first in his Drill Instructor School in San Diego, Major Sparks went on to serve his country in the Vietnam War. He was one of two African Americans to receive Battlefield Commission. Furthermore, Major Sparks continued to make strides as a service man when he was the first African American officer to be chosen to command Marines aboard a ship. Despite facing pervasive racism and segregation, John Sparks climbed the ranks of the US Marine Corps until he retired as a Major in 1978.

With the asset of military training and service, Major Sparks joined the business world. After serving in the Marine Corps for over twenty years, he worked as Director of Educational Training at IBM for twenty years. Not done giving back to his community, Major Sparks subsequently taught at Booker T. Washington high school for thirteen years before retiring.

Major Sparks has spent his professional career educating, leading and serving the American people in a number of different industries. There is much that can be said about Major Sparks' diverse career. He undoubtedly opened doors for those that served after him in the armed services. He has helped educate and inspire both young minds and young professionals. He has been not only a leader in the military but also within his own community.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to not only honor the impressive achievements of this man, but also to commend his compassionate contributions to my Congressional district and to the great State of Georgia. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this distinguished individual.

RECOGNIZING MR. JOSEPH SCIAME, RECIPIENT OF THE SONS OF ITALY'S 2015 GUGLIELMO MARCONI AWARD

HON. KATHLEEN M. RICE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Miss RICE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Mr. Joseph Sciame, a resident of New Hyde Park, New York and life-long public servant who recently received the Sons of Italy's 2015 Guglielmo Marconi Award, which is presented biennially to an Italian American who has made significant contributions to the United States.

Mr. Sciame is truly deserving of this honor, as he has worked tirelessly throughout his life to serve others and strengthen the communities in which he lives and works. Mr. Sciame currently serves as Vice President of Community Relations at St. John's University, the largest Catholic university in the United States. As a St. John's alumnus and university administrator for three decades, Mr. Sciame has truly dedicated his life to serving the school and its surrounding community. He also serves as a board member of the Jamaica and Staten Island Chambers of Commerce, the Kupferberg Holocaust Center, and the Boy Scouts of America, and chairs the Board of Ethics of the Town of North Hempstead. Mr.

Sciame is the former Chairman of the National Association of Student Aid Administrators, and has long been active in the field of financial aid and higher education, both in New York and nationwide.

As a proud and active Italian American, Mr. Sciame's commitment to public service extends beyond St. John's University. He currently serves as Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major Italian American Organizations and was the former National and State President and Foundation Trustee of the Sons of Italy, the largest and oldest Italian American fraternal organization.

I would like to congratulate Mr. Sciame on receiving the 2015 Guglielmo Marconi Award, the Sons of Italy's highest honor, and thank him for his service to our district and country. Mr. Sciame is a testament to the valuable contributions that Italian Americans have made to the United States throughout our history, and it is a tremendous honor to count him among my constituents.

JOHN TRACY

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud John Tracy for receiving the Jefferson County 2015 Hall of Fame Award from the West Chamber.

The Hall of Fame Award recognizes outstanding individuals who have had significant, long-lasting impacts through their leadership and contributions to Jefferson County's economy, community and legacy.

John Tracy has shown a lifelong dedication to the Jefferson County community. John's extensive involvement in three local Chambers of Commerce—Golden, West and Wheat Ridge—has helped to bring in new members, create new community events, and support economic development in the region.

For the past ten years, John has served on the Jefferson County Business Lobby and the Lakewood Legacy Foundation. He has also held positions with the Golden Chamber Downtown Merchants and Golden Good Government League for more than 20 years. In addition, John helped found both the Applewood Business Association and the Wheat Ridge Business Association.

Currently, John owns his own publishing company, John Tracy Publishing. In 2011, the City of Golden awarded John with the 'Golden Living Landmark Award' for his exceptional and diverse involvement in the community. Additionally, he has been recognized with Golden Rotary's 'Service Above Self' award and the Golden Chamber's 'Charlie O'Brien Award.'

Congratulations to John Tracy for this well-deserved honor by the West Chamber. I am grateful for his contributions to Jefferson County.

HONORING MALAKOFF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to honor Malakoff Elementary School of the Malakoff Independent School District from the Fifth Congressional District of Texas for excellence in education. Malakoff Elementary School was named to the United States Department of Education's 2015 Blue Ribbon Schools Program, which: "recognizes public and private elementary, middle, and high schools where students perform at very high levels or where significant improvements are being made in students' levels of academic achievement."

Malakoff Elementary School's performance illustrates the commitment and dedication of the school board, administrators, teachers, and staff who provide students with a quality education. The school district, parents, students, and community should be applauded for this achievement.

Mr. Speaker, as the representative for the Fifth Congressional District of Texas, I would like to commend Malakoff Elementary School for their continued educational achievements.

NATIONAL DAY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, October 10th is the national day of the Republic of China (Taiwan). This day commemorates the launch of the Wuchang Uprising of 1911, which in turn led to the establishment of the Republic of China (Taiwan) on January 1, 1912. As the United States and Taiwan share a close relationship, I would like to take this opportunity to wish the people of Taiwan a very Happy Double Ten Day.

The relationship between the United States and Taiwan is both deep and longstanding, and encompass areas including security, culture, and trade. Taiwan is the 10th largest trading partner for the U.S., while the U.S. is Taiwan's largest foreign investor. In 2014, 24% of Taiwan's total agricultural imports came from the U.S. Since 1993, Taiwan has been the 7th largest overseas market for U.S. agricultural exports. In 2014, Taiwan imported nearly $3.5 billion of U.S. agricultural products, up 10 percent from the previous year, making Taiwan one of the world's largest consumers for U.S. agricultural products on a per capita basis. I am pleased that the 2015 Taiwan Agricultural Trade Goodwill Mission just completed a successful visit to the United States including my home state of Illinois.

Taiwan also has proven its leadership in the global arena through its commitment to democracy, by contributing to international development and humanitarian missions, and through bold diplomatic initiatives such as President Ma's East China Sea Peace Initiative and his South China Sea Peace Initiative, which seek to reduce tensions in those disputed waters. As a result of these efforts, a challenging world is in many ways a better place. I offer my thanks to Taiwan for their commitment democracy and stability in Asia and my best wishes to their people they observe and celebrate Double Ten Day.

EMMY DIMITROFF

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Emmy Dimitroff for receiving the Golden Mayor's Award for Excellence.

The Golden Mayor's Award for Excellence recognizes organizations, businesses and individuals that significantly contribute to the wellbeing and improvement of the City of Golden.

Raised and schooled in Golden, Emmy has become a community leader through her six years of service on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, her work at the Clear Creek History Park and her leadership in Mitchell Elementary School's Environmental Learning for the Future. Additionally, she is a substitute teacher in the Jefferson County School System.

I congratulate Emmy Dimitroff for being the recipient of this well-deserved honor by Mayor Marjorie Sloan, and I thank Emmy for her continued commitment to the people and families of Golden.

NATIONAL DAY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA (TAIWAN)

HON. BARRY LOUDERMILK

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, as America joins in the celebration of the National Day of the Republic of China (Taiwan), it is reflective of the strong relationship between Taiwan and the United States.

Located in a challenging regional environment, Taiwan has manifested its representative democracy as they strive to ensure a stable, strong government. Their thriving economy demonstrates their disciplined pursuit in fostering freedom and moral principles within their borders. The people of Taiwan are devoted to principles of liberty and self-governance, and they display a remarkable work ethic within their communities.

Since the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), signed in December of 1978, the United States stands with Taiwan, seeking to help maintain their peace and security. Marked by the TRA, America will continue to provide sufficient self-defense capabilities for Taiwan, in order to safeguard their homeland.

Taiwan has proven to be a generous contributor to global efforts in fighting against disease and illness, and has been heavily involved in humanitarian assistance. They aided West Africa when faced with the Ebola outbreak, they provided Latin America and the Caribbean region training in preparedness and response for emergency situations, and they

have responded to crises by delivering prefabricated shelters and disaster relief to numerous countries. They even charitably donated $1 million towards a memorial for President Eisenhower on the National Mall in Washington, DC. Their involvement in worldwide affairs shows their genuine care and concern for America and our neighbors across the globe.

The United States is committed to supporting Taiwan and remaining their ally, and will help them in their efforts to pursue freedom and democracy.

HONORING THE SERVICE AND SACRIFICE OF DEPUTY SHERIFF WILLIAM ''BILL'' MYERS

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is with both profound sadness and deep gratitude that I pay tribute to Deputy Sheriff William Myers, of the Okaloosa County, Florida Sheriff's Office, who gave his life in the line of duty on September 22, 2015. Deputy Myers served our Nation and the Okaloosa Sheriff's Office with honor and distinction, and I am humbled to recognize his service and selfless sacrifice.

Deputy Sheriff William ''Bill'' Myers dedicated his life to serving his country. He faithfully served in the United States Air Force for 20 years, during which he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal. After he left the military, Deputy Myers worked as a part-time Officer with the Valparaiso Police Department. In December 1989, he joined the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office as a Deputy Sheriff serving the local Northwest Florida community. During his tenure, he served in the Patrol Division, Court Security, and the Traffic Unit. Deputy Myers retired from the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Department on November 30, 2013 with 25 years of service, but continued his work with the agency as a volunteer. In January of this year, Deputy Myers returned to the Sheriff's Office as a part-time Deputy in Judicial Process. Upon serving a Domestic Violence Injunction on Tuesday, September 22, 2015, the suspect who was expected to turn over his firearms, instead opened fire, fatally injuring Deputy Myers.

Through his military service and his law enforcement career, Deputy Myers made a choice to stand up and serve his country and community. There is no greater honor than to serve and protect the lives of your fellow man at the risk of your own. Deputy Myers exemplified the dedication to service and courage that is needed to make that decision and put on the uniform. As a law enforcement officer, Deputy Myers put himself in danger each and every day to protect and serve our community. We all entrust our lives to law enforcement officers because we know that when faced with serious criminal threats, they are trained to act quickly and effectively to neutralize the threat and protect civilian lives. We all pray that our officers do not have to confront a serious armed threat, but we sleep well at night knowing that if necessary they stand ready to protect and defend our community, even if that means making the ultimate sacrifice.

In addition to his successful career and unwavering leadership in his community, Deputy Myers will be remembered as a dedicated officer and a man full of integrity and kindness. To his family and friends, he will always be remembered as a loving husband, father, and grandfather.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of a grateful community and Nation, I am humbled to honor the service and sacrifice of this local hero. My wife Vicki and I offer our sincere condolences to his wife, Jan; sons, Sean, Eric, and Adam; and the entire Myers family. May God bless them and all members of our Nation's law enforcement community.

GRETCHEN CERVENY

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Gretchen Cerveny for receiving the Jefferson County 2015 Hall of Fame Award from the West Chamber.

The Hall of Fame Award recognizes outstanding individuals who have had significant, long-lasting impacts through their leadership and contributions to Jefferson County's economy, community and legacy.

Gretchen started her career as a physical therapist and served as the president of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) Colorado chapter. Her work in this area received several awards, including the Bob Doctor Service Award from the Colorado Chapter of the APTA, Outstanding Physical Therapist of the Year from the APTA (1980), and a recognition from Lutheran Medical Center for her twenty-five years of service, some of which as the Physical Therapist Department Head (1976–1994).

In 1997, Gretchen was elected Mayor of Wheat Ridge where she participated in groups such as the Colorado Municipal League, Strategic Visioning Committee, Juvenile Justice Committee, Transportation Committee, and Tax Policy Committee, among others. She worked extensively with the Senior Resource Center (SRC) and helped to reauthorize the Older Americans Act. Her efforts as Mayor have been recognized by the Denver Regional Council of Governments and the National Association of Parliamentarians.

Gretchen spent five years on the Colorado Commission on Aging and remains involved with the SRC. Gretchen also serves on the Jefferson County Aging Well Committee and is an active member of the Wheat Ridge Business Association.

Congratulations to Gretchen Cerveny for this well-deserved honor by the West Chamber. I am grateful for her contributions to Jefferson County.

HONORING HAITI RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LINEMEN

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of 7 volunteer electric linemen from White River Valley in Branson, Missouri, who traveled to Haiti this June and August to help provide sustainable seven-day-a-week electric service to Haitians.

Cory Brandon Sanders, Raymond Roy, William Gyger, William Marr, Matthew Maggard, Mark Visnosky, and Jacob Kennedy donated their time and talents as part of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Haiti Rural Electric Cooperative (HREC) program.

This project is the first formal privately owned and operated distribution utility in the country, which intends to demonstrate the feasibility of solar-diesel hybrid power generation for isolated rural mini-grids. The goal that these men worked toward making 1,600 connections within a grid to unite the underserved Haitian communes of Roche-a-Bateau, Coteaux, and Port-a-Piment.

Mr. Speaker, these 7 selfless linemen from Southwest Missouri deserve our thanks and recognition for their dedication to the HREC's noble goal of bringing affordable and reliable power to the southern coast of Haiti. Stories like theirs make me ever-prouder to serve Missouri's Seventh Congressional District.

REAUTHORIZE THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to speak out in favor of reauthorizing the Land and Water Conservation Fund. As you know, the Land and Water Conservation Fund was established fifty years ago and has since become our nation's most successful conservation program—all without spending a single dime of taxpayer dollars. I wish to show my strong support for reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a crucial component of our nation's conservation initiatives. As an avid hunter and outdoorsman, I believe that preserving our nation's natural treasures for future generations is a responsibility that we must take seriously. Not only is stewardship of our lands the right thing to do, but it's also a sound investment. We know that every dollar spent acquiring LWCF land creates a return of four dollars to local communities. Outdoor recreation activities contribute significantly to our national and state economies. In my home state of Wisconsin, outdoor recreational activities contribute over $9.7 billion to our state economy each year.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund has helped to create outdoor recreation opportunities for each and every state. Wisconsin has received $211 million to fund such projects as the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, the Lower St. Croix National Scenic River, and the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, where the Land and Water Conservation Fund participated in a highly successful public-private partnership to preserve additional sections of the trail. LWCF's grant programs have also allowed state and local governments to decide which conservation programs work best for them. The Land and Water Conservation Fund's highly successful grant program

matches federal dollars with state and local contributions to ensure a cooperative approach to conserving our nation's environment. In Wisconsin, the LWCF has contributed $3,675,681 to match state and local conservation projects and to help us preserve Wisconsin's beautiful outdoors.

For the past fifty years, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has played an integral role in achieving our nation's conservation goals. I urge my colleagues to support reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund so that we can continue to protect our wildlife, create opportunities and access to public lands for sportsmen and women, and provide economic benefits to our state and local communities.

PREMIUM PANELS, INC.

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Premium Panels Inc. in Arvada, Colorado for being honored by Colorado Companies to Watch (CCTW).

CCTW is a unique awards program that recognizes and celebrates the contribution and innovation of diverse second-stage companies that exemplify strong management and community service involvement. While there are many outstanding companies in Colorado, Premium Panels Inc. was chosen based on their positive impact on economic growth in the region.

Premium Panels began in 2000 as a singular operation in Arvada, Colorado with Jeff Patch at the helm. Today, the company has approximately 34 employees and has grown to be a leader in metal roofing panels for commercial and residential roofing.

The spirit of the Premium Panels organization is fueled by strong company values of integrity, respect, customer satisfaction, and education. They are strong advocates for the roofing industry. Through volunteerism with the Colorado Roofers Association, Premium Panels helps educate roofers on safety measures and new and improved installation methods.

I congratulate Premium Panels Inc. and all of their employees for being recognized as a Colorado Company to Watch. I am proud of the service they provide our community and am certain their service will continue to benefit the roofing industry and our communities for decades to come.

RECOGNIZING EDWARD SORGE

HON. DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the untiring dedication of Staten Island's Edward Sorge in his service to the community.

Born on October 6, 1934, Edward has remained a lifelong Staten Islander. After graduating from New Dorp High School in 1952, Ed's patriotism led him to enlist in the U.S. Air Force, where he served his country honorably. In addition to his love of country was his love of golf. It goes without saying that as a two-time Staten Island Amateur Golf Champion, he certainly knows his way around the greens.

After his service in the Air Force, Ed became a PGA Professional at Silver Lake Golf Course, where he served for over 20 years. Among his former students there include PGA Tour Member Bill Britton and Staten Island Amateur and Classic champions Pete Meurer, Rod Stilwell, and Ed Sorge, Jr. After leaving Silver Lake Golf Course in 1988, Ed continued his work as a PGA Professional for an additional 20 years, conducting numerous junior golf clinics.

Since 2009, Ed has volunteered with several charitable organizations in his community. He has devoted his time at myriad golf events to raise money for charity by directing clinics before the shotgun starts and participating in "Beat the Pro" competitions on a par three hole during the rounds. Alongside his devotion to volunteering, Ed's goal as a PGA professional is to make the game of golf enjoyable for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, Edward Sorge's dedication to charity and improving his community is the essence of the model Staten Islander. I thank him for all of his great work and I am proud to honor this great American from New York's 11th District.

CONGRATULATING THE HOYT LIBRARY OF SAGINAW ON THEIR 125TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DANIEL T. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask the United States House of Representatives to join me in recognizing the Hoyt Library on the occasion of their 125th year of continuous service. It stands today as a shining example of a beautiful, historic, and functional modern library.

In 1890, The Saginaw Evening News declared the Hoyt Library "a noble institution" and "the pride of all Saginawians." The library was a gift to the people of Saginaw from New York businessman Jesse Hoyt (1815 through 1882), who had real estate and lumber interests in the Saginaw Valley. Hoyt's will set aside $100,000 for a public library in East Saginaw. After a national competition among leading architects, the Hoyt Trust chose the Boston architectural firm of Van Brunt and Howe. When the Richardsonian Romanesque style building was completed it exemplified modern library construction. The present building includes a 1921 addition by Edward Tilton of New York and a 1960 addition by Frederick E. Wigen Architects of Saginaw.

Harriet Ames, the first librarian at Hoyt, was a Boston scholar and a pioneer in librarianship who brought her passion for good books and reading to a commercial Midwestern boomtown. She served Saginaw for over 30 years and brought cultural and educational advancement not just to Saginaw, but to the entire state of Michigan through her dedication to scholarly pursuits.

Sparked by Ms. Ames, the Hoyt Library remains a fixture in the cultural and educational realm in Michigan. It is home to one of the premier Local History and Genealogy collections in Michigan and the greater Midwest. Hoyt Library has served as a government documents depository for all 125 years of operation. Beyond its historically significant archives and up-to-date print collections, the Library provides meeting spaces and quiet reading nooks along with internet access computers and Wi-Fi for today's technologically savvy library users. The library staff remains dedicated to providing professional library programs and services to all who enter.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the work done by the Hoyt Library in Saginaw and thank them for the service they have provided to the city of Saginaw.

CHRISTIAN ACTION GUILD

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud the Christian Action Guild (CAG) for receiving the Golden Mayor's Award for Excellence.

The Golden Mayor's Award for Excellence recognizes organizations, businesses and individuals that significantly contribute to the wellbeing and improvement of the City of Golden.

For 49 years, the Christian Action Guild has provided food, clothing and financial assistance to Golden residents in need. Each month, CAG serves over 400 at-risk Golden families, individuals and members of the homeless community, providing personal products, canned goods, and fresh food items.

I congratulate the Christian Action Guild for being the recipient of this well-deserved honor by Mayor Marjorie Sloan and I thank all the members of the CAG for their continued commitment to the people and families they serve.

COMMEMORATING NATIONAL DAY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA

HON. LEONARD LANCE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the National Day of the Republic of China and to highlight the close relationship between Taiwan and the United States of America. October 10th marks the anniversary of the creation of the Republic of China in 1912. National Day celebrates Taiwanese democracy, its culture and its accomplished people and this occasion provides the United States an opportunity to celebrate our great ally.

As a leader in the Asia Pacific region, Taiwan has experienced incredible economic growth and stability throughout its history. With a population of over 23 million people and a trillion dollar GDP, Taiwan has proved to be one of Asia's economic engines. The Taiwanese economy has maintained an impressive economic growth rate and has risen to be the 10th-largest trade partner of the United States. Taiwan continues to be an example to other economies around the world.

The friendship between our two Nations has been mutually prosperous since we joined in unity in the Pacific Theatre in World War II. With this year marking 70 years since the end of the War, our Nation should reflect on how this unique alliance has had such a positive impact on both countries.

The trust and respect built between our two Nations since that time have resulted in tremendous technology innovation and global resources integration. The cooperation between Taiwan and the United States has enabled the two countries to enhance each other's strengths and nurture industries that create jobs and opportunities for both nations.

The cooperation between Taiwan and the United States should be a global model for civility, respect, prosperity and peace.

Mr. Speaker, on National Day we are all reminded how strategically important our mutually respectful relationship has been for the Republic of China and the United States.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, last week I attended my son's wedding in Japan causing me to miss the Pope's historic address to Congress as well as votes on September 24 and 25, 2015.

Had I been present, I would have voted in support of the following bills and amendments.

1. H.R. 322
2. Lowenthal Amendment to H.R. 348
3. Grijalva Amendment to H.R. 348
4. Gallego Amendment to H.R. 348
5. Jackson Lee Amendment #1 to H.R. 348
6. Dingell Amendment to H.R. 348
7. Jackson Lee Amendment #2 to H.R. 348
8. Peters/Polis/Lowenthal/Lieu Amendment to H.R. 348
9. Johnson (GA) Amendment to H.R. 348
10. Democratic Motion to Recommit H.R. 348

Had I been present I would have voted in opposition to the following bills and amendments.

1. Gosar Amendment to H.R. 348
2. Final Passage of H.R. 348

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 528, had I been present, I would have voted no.

SAL AND GAIL GLESSER

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Sal and Gail Glesser, the founders and owners of Spyderco Knives for receiving the Golden Mayor's Award for Excellence.

The Golden Mayor's Award for Excellence recognizes organizations, businesses and individuals that significantly contribute to the wellbeing and improvement of the City of Golden.

The Glessers founded Spyderco in 1978 and have expanded their company into a multimillion-dollar business, employing more than 80 people in their new facility. Sal and Gail contribute to the Golden community through their support of local events and organizations such as the USA Pro Challenge, the Jeffco Innovator's Workshop, Foothills Art Center, the local Alzheimer's Chapter, the Parkinson's Foundation, and the Pink Fire Trucks program. Additionally, Spyderco has raised tons of food and product donations through employee food drives.

I congratulate Sal and Gail Glesser for being the recipients of this well-deserved honor by Mayor Marjorie Sloan, and I thank them for their continued commitment to the people and families of Golden.

RECOGNIZING THELMA FAGIN HYMAN

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Thelma Fagin Hyman, who devoted her professional life to teaching in the segregated school system of the District of Columbia and who continued teaching for years after the historic U.S. Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education ended segregation in the District and elsewhere.

The Dunbar Senior High School class of 1955, which celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, particularly thanks Ms. Hyman for her dedication as a teacher and recognizes her as a mentor of the class of 1955.

Thelma Fagin Hyman was born January 29, 1917, at Freeman's Hospital (now Howard University Hospital) and educated in District of Columbia public schools. She received her Bachelor of Science from Howard University and her Master of Arts from Columbia University. Before returning to Dunbar High School in 1946, Ms. Hyman taught physical education at Cardozo High School and Turner Jr. High School in D.C. She remained at Dunbar until she retired in 1964. She was married to Vincent Fagin for 38 years until his death. Later, she married Harold Hyman.

Ms. Hyman taught physical education to many students in the Dunbar class of 1955. She personified the excellence and dedication Dunbar teachers brought to their work. The class of 1955 believes it most appropriate to recognize one of its outstanding teachers as the class celebrates its 60th anniversary. At 98, Thelma Fagin Hyman is as lively today as she was as a teacher at Dunbar.

Along with the class of 1955, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in commending Thelma Fagin Hyman for her dedication as a teacher in the District of Columbia public schools, particularly at Dunbar High School, and as a mentor of the Dunbar class of 1955.

THE CENTENNIAL OF CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM RODFE ZEDEK

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate the entire Congregation Beth Shalom Rodfe Zedek on their 100th year of providing a place for spiritual growth and gathering to the Jewish community in Chester and the surrounding area. This Congregation has grown from two small groups of farmers who more than a century ago sought a place to gather and worship, to a thriving community and religious center that is a cornerstone of my Congressional district.

In the 1800s, Jews in Connecticut primarily worshiped in small minyans in their homes. But as the Jewish community in our region grew, leaders sought larger, public places to worship. In the mid-1990s, Temple Beth Shalom and Congregation Rodfe Zedek merged to become the community that exists today. The building in which they hold services is also a testament to their creativity and collaboration. The new, permanent home for the congregation is the result of work by artist Sol LeWitt and local architect Stephen Lloyd. The synagogue pays homage to tradition, made with wooden beams in the style of old eastern European synagogues—many of which were destroyed in the Holocaust. It is this commitment to history—and an eye towards the future—that will continue to sustain this congregation for years to come.

I now ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Beth Shalom Rodfe Zedek on 100 years of community and congregation, and wish them all the best for the next century of Jewish life in eastern Connecticut.

HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION

HON. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, hunger and malnutrition affect millions of Americans every day. I have witnessed this in my home state of New Mexico, which has some of the highest hunger rates in the country. These rates are especially high among vulnerable populations, such as children and seniors. Many working families have to rely on food banks and church-sponsored meal programs to put food on the table. Often times, these families live in food deserts and cannot access affordable and healthy foods, which puts them at risk of becoming malnourished.

Nearly 16 million American children face hunger, and most of the food they receive is not considered healthy; rather, their parents are more inclined to buy the most affordable food available. The lack of access to healthy food hurts a child's development, including physical and mental health, academic achievement and future economic prosperity.

Seniors are among the most physically vulnerable to hunger. They face unique nutritional requirements, medical conditions and mobility restrictions. In addition to the lack of access to nutritious foods, many seniors are not able to absorb certain foods, compromising their health and putting them at risk for increased long-term care and hospitalization.

Although hunger and malnutrition affect so many in our communities, Congress is not doing enough to address these issues. Instead, we've seen Congress try time after time to cut funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides food for more than 45 million Americans. We've also seen Congress attempt to roll back school meal standards, which are aimed to improve nutrition among children.

Cutting funding for nutritional programs will not save the federal government money. We know that hunger and malnutrition increase risk of illness and result in longer hospital stays, slower healing, greater risk for re-hospitalizations and complications.

As a government so concerned about health care costs, how are we not laser-focused on the nutritional status of patients? We seek solutions for health care costs every day, particularly from those dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. However, it is clear that nutritional status deserves more attention.

September 28 through October 2 has been designated as Malnutrition Awareness Week. Let us use this as a call to action to increase awareness and find solutions that support better nutrition for our communities. Healthy citizens mean a healthy society and healthy economy.

THOMAS MURRAY

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Thomas Murray for receiving the Jefferson County 2015 Hall of Fame Award from the West Chamber.

The Hall of Fame Award recognizes outstanding individuals who have had significant, long-lasting impacts through their leadership and contributions to Jefferson County's economy, community and legacy.

Tom has certainly cemented his place in Jefferson County history by laying down the building bricks of the community. Tom, CEO of Lakewood Brick and Tile, inherited the business from his father and learned the values of hard work and leadership from a young age.

One of Tom's biggest passions is education. In the 1980s, he served as co-chair of the Steering Committee of the Education-Business Partnership for the Lakewood Chamber. Tom went on to become General Chairman of Education 2000 for Jefferson County Schools, a position he maintained for four years. He has also served on the boards of the Jefferson Foundation, Warren Vocational Technical High School, and Jefferson County Advisory Council for Vocational Education.

Today, Tom continues this dedication to education by serving on the Jefferson County Schools' Capital Improvement Plan Oversight Committee and coaching football at Lakewood High School. Tom's exceptional work has been recognized with several awards, including West Chamber Businessman of the Year, The Sentinel Newspaper Man of the Year, and The Rocky Mountain News Milestone Award.

Congratulations to Thomas Murray for this well-deserved honor by the West Chamber. I am grateful for his contributions to Jefferson County.

CELEBRATING THE 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF DALLAS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate 65 years of successful expansion of education and Christianity through Dallas Christian College founded right outside of downtown Dallas in 1950.

Dallas Christian College (DCC) was established by church leaders and an enthusiastic and determined man named Vernon Newland. Vernon had a tough childhood that would push him to strive for a better life for himself and others. Being sent to live with his grandmother at the age of nine Vernon wanted to share God with people all over the world. As Vernon and several family members were traveling to conduct mission work they were sent to a Japanese internment camp shortly after arriving in the Philippines. They remained there for almost three years as they were taken right after Pearl Harbor had occurred. It was when Vernon and his family members returned to the United States that he was motivated to increase involvement in the church amongst the population.

The Dallas Christian College was one of several schools Vernon had established, along with approximately two dozen churches and new ones coming along every two months or so. DCC was quickly expanding. With such growth, by the 1960s DCC needed more space and relocated to its current home in Farmers Branch, which resides in the 24th district of Texas. As DCC grew so did its mission, its reach expanded to troubled neighborhoods and was known for students and alumni to serve in urban centers all over the country. The school would also begin offering new programs teaching psychology, business, and education, attempting to broaden the horizons of its students and prepare them for different paths in life.

Today DCC aims to educate and mentor the student body under God's influence and prepare them for all that life may bring. Training for service to the church and Christian ministry has been significant to the school's mission. The college wants to ensure that the student body is well educated and mentored in many aspects of life.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to recognize the 65th anniversary of Dallas Christian College. I ask all of my distinguished colleagues to join me in celebrating this milestone in the college's history.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on roll-call No. 527, had I been present, I would have voted yes.

IN RECOGNITION OF WORKING AMERICANS AND MANUFACTURING DAY

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the hard working men and women of Northside and Eastside Houston and Harris County, Texas and the valuable contributions manufacturers give to our local economy.

The 29th District of Texas is one of the largest manufacturing districts in the country. Home to the Port of Houston, the Houston Ship Channel, and the largest petrochemical complex in the country, over 31,000 people work in the refineries, chemical plants, pipe and metal manufacturers and machine shops throughout our district.

Many of these jobs demand technical skills, training, and years of experience and have provided good, middle class wages that have paid off many house notes and college tuition bills in my district.

For the third year in a row, Houston leads the nation in merchandise exports—sending $119 billion in manufactured goods overseas. The majority of these exports are related to the oil, gas, and chemical industries.

I proudly stand with manufacturing workers in Houston and around the country, who go to work each day without complaint, and continue to make the label ''Made in America'' the gold standard in quality worldwide.

Now is the time for Congress to stand with working families and our nation's manufacturers and reauthorize the Export-Import Bank. Ex-Im supports thousands of jobs throughout our great country at no cost to the American people.

FAYE GRIFFIN

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Faye Griffin for receiving the Jefferson County 2015 Hall of Fame Award from the West Chamber.

The Hall of Fame Award recognizes outstanding individuals who have had significant, long-lasting impacts through their leadership and contributions to Jefferson County's economy, community and legacy.

Faye Griffin started her forty year career in Jefferson County working in the County Clerk & Recorder office for 24 years. Eventually serving as Chief Deputy of the department, Faye helped modernize technology and coordinated successful general and primary elections. In 2006, Faye was elected Treasurer

and served in this capacity until 2008 when she was nominated to the Board of County Commissioners.

In her six years on the Board of County Commissioners, Jefferson County reached a balanced budget every year and earned extraordinary financial ratings from several national rating organizations. As a Commissioner, she helped bring attention to Human Services programs to aid children and families in need and amended the Zoning Resolution to simplify the zoning application process.

Currently, Faye serves as Jefferson County Clerk and Recorder. She is also involved in the Child and Youth Leadership Commission, the Jefferson County Head Start Policy Council, the Rocky Flats Stewardship Council, and the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District Board. In 2012, Faye was honored as an Outstanding Woman of Jefferson County.

Congratulations to Faye Griffin for this well-deserved honor by the West Chamber. I am grateful for her contributions to Jefferson County.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VICKY HARTZLER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, September 28, 2015, I was unable to vote. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: On rollcall No. 519, yea. On rollcall No. 520, yea.

IN MEMORY OF FOREST ACRES POLICE OFFICER GREG ALIA

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, September 30, 2015, Officer Greg Alia was killed in the line of duty. A graduate of Richland Northeast High School and the University of South Carolina, Police Chief Gene Shealy described Officer Alia as ''an outstanding man and an outstanding police officer.'' As a seven year veteran of Forest Acres Police Department, Greg was a role model for new officers who showed courage and dedication in protecting the people of Forest Acres, South Carolina. He lived up to the highest standards of being an Eagle Scout of Troop 100 of St. Joseph Catholic Church of Columbia.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife, Kassy, and their five month old son, Sal, his parents, Dr. Richard and Alexis Alia of Forest Acres, and his fellow officers at Forest Acres Police Department. I am grateful for the outpouring of love and support for Forest Acres, for our community, and for our citizens during this tragic time.

God bless the memory and service of Greg Alia.

RECOGNIZING MINNESOTA'S OWN FEDERAL DUCK STAMP WINNER

HON. TOM EMMER

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Robert Hautman of Delano, Minnesota on his impressive second place finish in the 2015 Federal Duck Stamp Contest. Robert's stamp features several mallard ducks flying over a lake.

The Federal Duck Stamp contest began in 1949 as a result of growing concern among Americans over the destruction of wetlands, which are the home to migratory waterfowl. Of every dollar spent on duck stamps, ninety-eight cents is given to the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, which helps to conserve natural habitats.

Minnesota is home to some of the most amazing natural scenery and wildlife, and because of this, I am incredibly passionate about the great outdoors. I have always been of the strong belief that it is every global citizen's duty to help protect and maintain our environment for future generations to come. I think the Federal Duck Stamp contest is wonderful because it does exactly that.

I would like to applaud Robert Hautman for contributing to a contest with such a worthy cause. I would like to give him an extra shout out for being from my hometown as well.

As a result of Robert's effort, more funds will be raised to preserve the environment, and for that we—and our future generations—thank you.

TEANECK FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the brave men and women of the Teaneck Fire Department who will celebrate 100 years of serving and protecting the residents of Teaneck this Sunday October 4, 2015.

The first organized fire company in Teaneck was Defender Hook and Ladder Co., which was formed on August 12, 1895. It was not until 1915 that four of Teaneck's five companies were combined into the official municipal Teaneck Fire Department.

As they were growing in the 1920s, a very tough basement fire occurred on Maitland Avenue. Future Deputy Chief Harry Davis, then working for the Department of Public Works, made numerous entries without a breathing apparatus, manning a 2½" line. He passed out repeatedly, was revived, and continued to go back in until the house was saved. He is a great reflection as to how relentlessly the Teaneck Fire Department has attacked fires and how they continued to do so even today.

The Teaneck Fire Department stays committed to self-assessment and innovation. Since the 1970s, brush fires have been reduced by 90% and building fires declined by about a third, with arson now much less of a problem. New apparatuses, the four stations being staffed 24 hours a day with an adequate level of staffing, strict proactive code enforcement, the advanced municipal fire system, and the aggressive fire investigation programs have proven effective in reducing fires.

Beyond their roles in fire emergencies, the Teaneck Fire Department remains committed to serving the residents through their innovative Good Morning Check-Up Program. This program is designed for shut-ins and senior citizens who live alone and have no one to look in on them on a regular basis. The program provides subscribers with a telephone call seven days a week, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. If a resident is not-responsive to multiple phone calls then a firefighter is dispatched to the house to make sure all is well. This service has helped countless lives already.

When terrorists flew planes into the North and South Tower of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2011, the brave members of the Teaneck Fire Department volunteered to help their colleagues across the Hudson River. Their sacrifices during and after the tragedy continue to inspire the Teaneck Fire Department today as well as those they serve.

As Co-Chair of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus, I have had the honor of visiting and inspecting many fire stations throughout our great nation. Therefore it gives me pride to recognize the excellence of the Teaneck Fire Department and thank them for serving the residents of Teaneck.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join our colleagues and me in recognizing the 100 year anniversary of the Teaneck Fire Department.

IN RECOGNITION OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend the most sincere congratulations to Broward County, Florida on celebrating its 100th anniversary. From the back-breaking work and ingenuity of the industrial age to the modernity of this tech-savvy generation, Broward County's progress is a stark example of the progressive spirit of America. It is truly my honor to represent such a diverse and unique county in the United States Congress.

The theme of the centennial celebration is, ''Duende''. Duende is defined as the power to attract through personal magnetism and charm. That is exactly what Broward county has to offer. Whether you are one of the over 1.8 million people that call Broward County home, the tens of thousands that are winter residents, or the countless millions that visit for vacation, our county's charm is magnetic. The soul of this community comes from not only the beautiful 1,200 square miles that make up Broward County, but from the diverse and thriving culture found there. From the rich soil of the Everglades National Park to the white sandy beaches of the Atlantic Ocean, it is as charmingly diverse as the communities that reside within its borders.

Mr. Speaker, Broward County is undoubtedly a wonderful embodiment of the ''Sunshine State'' and all it has to offer. I once again want to congratulate the County on this

momentous occasion of its centennial anniversary.

IN HONOR OF SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH'S 145TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DAVID SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 145th anniversary of the Shiloh Baptist Church in Jonesboro, GA. Since the end of the Civil War, this church has stood as a beacon of worship and its congregation is a testament to how faith brings a community together.

In 1870, Reverend Frank Q. Graham, Reverend A.D. Delmarta and Reverend G.B. Austin, searching for a place to worship, organized Shiloh Baptist Church under a Brush Arbor. Meetings were held in the Arbor until the group was able to build a church across the street, near the church's present location. After the first building was burned down by a fire, the worshippers met in an old school until the church was rebuilt. In 1962, the church was struck by lightning and completely destroyed. Held together by their faith, the congregation met in an elementary school cafeteria until Shiloh Baptist was rebuilt.

Shiloh Baptist Church has also played its part in American history. When the NAACP chartered their membership in Clayton County, Georgia, Shiloh Baptist church was one of the first to purchase membership. When Atlanta, Georgia hosted the 1996 summer Olympics, the church was a reception for the Olympic torch,

The Shiloh Baptist Church of Jonesboro is an example to all of how worship and faith can bring a group of people together. Despite numerous damages and subsequent reconstruction and renovations to the physical structure, the Shiloh Baptist community is celebrating 145 years of worship. The strength or their congregation's faith has been demonstrated time and time again. The church has won awards for their wide attendance and continues to attract church-goers from the Jonesboro area. The congregation has not let their spirit falter and for this I congratulate them on 145 years of worship.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Shiloh Baptist congregation for 145 years of worship. I would like to commend them for being a cornerstone in the Jonesboro community as well as within the great State of Georgia. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the anniversary of Jonesboro's Shiloh Baptist Church. Thank you and God bless.

CELEBRATING ST. BEN'S NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION AWARD

HON. TOM EMMER

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the College of Saint Benedict in Collegeville, Minnesota. This college has a stellar reputation throughout the state of Minnesota, and for good reason.

It was recently announced that the College of Saint Benedict is a recipient of a National Science Foundation award for their collaboration in a project entitled "Collaborative Research: Developing and Assessing Effective Cyberlearning within the STEM Wiki Hyperlibrary." As a result of receiving this prestigious award, the college will receive $25,484 dollars.

While many things remain uncertain in this world, one does not. Science, mathematics and technology are keys to the future. It is so critical that colleges and universities throughout the United States place a strong emphasis on these fields so that our country can continue to evolve, succeed and remain competitive in this constantly developing world.

That is why I want to commend the College of Saint Benedict here, today. The emphasis put on science, mathematics and technology is evident by receipt of this award.

I thank the College of Saint Benedict for motivating students to look towards the future and do what is best for Minnesota, and the United States as a whole.

HONORING HABCO MANUFACTURING AND THE HABILITATION CENTER FOR THE HANDICAPPED

HON. THEODORE E. DEUTCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of HABCO Manufacturing, the Habilitation Center for the Handicapped, and the upcoming celebration of National Manufacturing Day.

HABCO Manufacturing's unique business partners a non-profit organization with the business community. HABCO Manufacturing has been named South Florida's "Manufacturer of the Year" and has received numerous accreditations in aviation and aerospace. It is also an integral part of the Habilitation Center for the Handicapped, Inc. Founded in 1978, the Center provides vocational training to adults with developmental disabilities and other special needs. The Center's mission is to equip these men and women with the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to lead useful and productive lives with dignity, respect, and independence.

For this National Manufacturing Day 2015, I recognize the achievements of the Habilitation Center and HABCO Manufacturing and its men and women with special needs. Their expertise in manufacturing, quality, education, and training is truly extraordinary. I am proud to honor them in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, and express appreciation for the community engagement.

JESSE H. JONES PARK—A CHAMPION OF LOCAL HISTORY

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in this digital age it is becoming more challenging to ensure our children have a strong connection to history, community and the great outdoors. Well, the Jesse H. Jones Park and Nature Center right in the heart of Harris County provides the kids and families of my district exactly that.

For the past three decades the park has been a place where the local community can gather and form important bonds of citizenship. But the space also serves an educational purpose. Home to the Akokisa Indian Village and Redbud Hill Homestead, the park preserves elements of life in Native American and pioneer communities, including demonstrations of traditional customs and crafts.

It also provides an important green space, with a wide range of local flora and fauna including ancient bogs, white sand beaches and wildflower meadows, in addition to play equipment, hiking trails, and sports and recreation amenities, giving local residents an opportunity to escape the trappings of modernity, engage with their local heritage, and developing greater physical well-being.

In the month of October alone, the park will host boat tours on Spring Creek, a workshop for local science teachers, an astronomy class, a tree-planting session, Halloween events and a settlers' soap-making demonstration.

The Jesse H. Jones Park and Nature Center brings out the best in one of America's best communities. The park has a dedicated team of staff and volunteers that exemplify the charitable and community-minded spirit Texas is famous for.

Harris County Commissioner Jack Cagle and his staff should be commended for their leadership in the community. The nature center will be long valued and maintained as a resource of cultural and environmental heritage.

ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE

HON. ELIZABETH H. ESTY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the Anti-Defamation League and the tireless work of the ADL's Connecticut Regional Office. Now more than ever, the world needs the bravery of League members and allies to confront anti-Semitism and defend the civil rights and humanity of all people.

Tonight I will have the privilege of joining friends and neighbors from across Connecticut at the Greater Hartford Torch of Liberty Award Reception. Created to recognize those who epitomize the Anti-Defamation League's values and commitment to community and public service, this year's Torch of Liberty Award honorees include our esteemed Lieutenant Governor, the Honorable Nancy Wyman, Mr. John J. Patrick, Jr., and Ms. JoAnn H. Price.

The timing could not be more appropriate. Their examples of selfless service are welcome reminders of the need for this House to eschew the dysfunction of rigid ideologies and selfish partisanship. The occasion is also a timely reminder of the broader importance of the values which this year's award winners embody.

Founded in 1913, the Anti-Defamation League's stated mission was "to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all." From that admirable spirit its members have fashioned a

legacy of confronting all forms of bigotry, educating our youth in order to guard against ignorance, and defending the ideals and civil rights that are necessary for people to live in a peaceful, just, and democratic society.

Recent and troubling world events now pose a unique and humbling challenge to this cause. We've witnessed a rise in anti-Semitic passions abroad, as in areas throughout Europe, but also sadly at home. Even this House has demonstrated in recent debates that honest and heart-felt differences of opinion can escalate into divisive arguments marked by coded language and insinuations that teach us to fear and dehumanize one another. We are better than that. If we engage one another respectfully, no disagreement need devolve into questioning our shared devotion to our allies. We can come to different decisions while still uniting in our support for Israel and against efforts to impugn the loyalty of fellow citizens with whom we may occasionally disagree.

I therefore urge this House to accept responsibility for leading by example. Let us reject the temptation to reinforce our divisions. Instead, let us bind ourselves together with appreciation for our differences and a commitment to defend the dignity and worth of every human being. I urge this House to undertake the work of protecting and expanding the civil, religious, and human rights that are the best evidence that America remains the home of the brave and land of the free.

TRIBUTE TO ED LITTLER, JR.

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Ed Littler, Jr. of Adair, Iowa. Ed has been awarded the very first Ed Littler Achievement Award from Adair-Casey Schools. The school has established the award to be presented to anyone who has contributed to the A-C Bomber family with large amounts of their personal time and hard work.

Ed has covered the local sports scene for the Adair News since 1948 and rarely missed a home or away football game until his retirement this year. He was cited for his contributions to all Adair-Casey sports and to the community. Ed played football as a quarterback for the Adair High School Rockets and graduated from Adair High School in 1947.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud and congratulate Ed for receiving this award and for dedicating his time and efforts in supporting the Adair-Casey Schools. I am proud to represent him and his family in the United States Congress. I know that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives will join me in congratulating Ed on this outstanding achievement.

CPB'S AMERICAN GRADUATE INITIATIVE

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, our public media stations are a force for positive change in communities all across this country.

The best example of this is the American Graduate initiative.

This initiative, made possible by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting which leverages public media to address America's high school dropout crisis;

And set an ambitious goal of seeing a 90 percent high school graduation rate by 2020.

This Saturday, October 3rd marks the fourth annual American Graduate Day, a live public media event broadcast on public media stations across the country.

And make no mistake—it is a crisis.

Each year, over one million students drop out of our high schools.

In turning the tide, the American Graduate initiative has been, and continues to be, a proven force for change.

Local stations extend the reach of this national broadcast content and have produced almost 1,000 hours of locally-focused programming.

Find a moment to tune in and see for yourself the incredible work happening in your community thanks to public media.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, on September 30, 2015, due to unforeseen circumstances, I was unable to vote for Roll Call votes 525 through 528. I would have voted in the following way:

Roll Call Number 525 on 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, nay;

On Roll Call Number 526 on the motion to suspend the rules and pass 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, yea;

On Roll Call Number 527 on agreeing to the resolution, H. Con. Res. 79, directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make corrections in the enrollment of H.R. 719, nay;

And on Roll Call Number 528 on concurring in the Senate Amendment to the House Amendment to the Senate Amendment for H.R. 719, the TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act of 2015, yea.

HONORING MR. TERRANCE KELLY

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Terrance Kelly for his extraordinary contributions to the music industry and to the faith community. Mr. Kelly is currently the Artistic Director of the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir, where he leads over 100 rehearsals and 50 performances annually.

Mr. Kelly graduated from the Texas Southern University with a Bachelor of Arts in Business Management. He went on to study at Holy Names University with a focus on Vocal Performance. Mr. Kelly began his career working with Jazz Camp West as Choir Director and Voice Teacher.

During his time with Jazz Camp West, Mr. Kelly led the popular All Camp Gospel Choir, helping select the songs, instruct the band, and lead performances. His dedication to music also led Mr. Kelly to begin working with Imani Community Church, where he is currently Minister of Magnification. Mr. Kelly coordinates all musical presentations for the church, as well as leading many different choirs. He also facilitates the Imani Ya Watume liturgical dancers.

Additionally, Mr. Kelly serves as Artistic Director of the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir. He has composed and arranged music for the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir, the Oakland Interfaith Youth Choir, and the Oakland Interfaith Community Choir. The incredible works of music he has worked on have inspired and moved audiences throughout the Bay Area, California, and the world.

In his long career in music and faith, Mr. Kelly received many honors. Most recently, Mr. Kelly taught workshops about gospel music at the International Gospel Music Academy of Denmark. His musical talent has been recognized by many influential people, such as Tramaine Hawkins, MC Hammer, John Lee Hooker, and Former President Jimmy Carter. He has received an Emmy Award for his choral arrangement of PSA for KGO-TV, as well as 2 Gospel Academy Awards for Outstanding Director of the Year and Excellence in Choral Music. The San Francisco Opera had the opportunity to work with Mr. Kelly in their rendition of Moby Dick in 2012.

Mr. Kelly has also mentored students of music, many of whom have gone on to attend schools such as the Berklee School of Music, Howard University, and Walt Disney's California Institute of the Arts. Throughout his prolific career, Mr. Kelly has impacted the lives of musicians and fans alike, throughout the Bay Area and the world.

On behalf of the residents of California's 13th Congressional District, Mr. Terrance Kelly, I salute you. I thank you for a lifetime of service and congratulate you on your many achievements. I wish you success as you continue to serve the residents of the East Bay.

IN HONOR OF COMMISSIONER JACKSON ''JACK'' ANDERSON STONE, SR.

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart and solemn remembrance that I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding public servant and civic leader of Georgia, Commissioner Jackson ''Jack'' Anderson Stone, Sr., longtime County Commissioner of District 6 in Dougherty County, Georgia. Sadly, Commissioner Stone passed away on Thursday, September 24, 2015. A funeral service was held on Saturday, September 26, 2015 at 11:00 am at Sunnyside Baptist Church in Albany, Georgia.

A Georgia man through and through, Jackson Stone was born in Meigs, Georgia in 1941 to the late Grady and Neda West Stone. He proudly served our nation in the United States Army, serving one tour in Okinawa, Japan. When Jack returned to the United States, he built a career in the auto sales business and became Co-Owner and General Manager at Albany Lincoln Mercury. He subsequently founded his own businesses: Quick Auto Sales, Creekside Auto Sales and Creekside RV and Mobile Home Park.

For Jack Stone, family and community took the utmost priority in his life. With this in mind, he sought to improve his community and serve his fellow citizens as District 6 County Commissioner in Dougherty County, Georgia. His leadership and work ethic were widely respected, resulting in his serving as County Commissioner for twenty-eight years. His long tenure makes it clear that Commissioner Stone was admired and loved by his constituents and countless others in Southwest Georgia.

In addition to his civic duties, Commissioner Stone also served as a member of the Albany Chamber of Commerce and several other public service organizations in Albany and Dougherty County.

In his spare time, Commissioner Stone and his family enjoyed RV camping. He also took great pleasure in managing his farm, tending his cows and riding around with his dog, B.J.

Commissioner Stone has achieved much in his life but none of this would have been possible without the love and support of his wife of 52 years, Charlotte; his children, Jack, Blair, and Karen; his grandchildren, Ande, Lexie, Reverend Matthew, Taylor, Mark, Hannah, McKenzie, Shannon, and Josh; four great-grandchildren, Savanna, Lucus, Carson, and Brock; and a host of other family members and friends.

Mr. Speaker, my wife Vivian and I, along with the more than 730,000 residents of the Second Congressional District of Georgia, salute Commissioner Stone for his exceptional public service and everlasting commitment to his community. I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join us in extending our deepest condolences to Commissioner Stone's family and friends during this difficult time. We pray that they will be consoled and comforted by an abiding faith and the Holy Spirit in the days, weeks and months ahead.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR THE AMVETS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION'S ATTORNEYS IN FACT

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following code of ethics for AMVET's Attorneys-in-Fact. AMVET is one of America's leading veterans' service organizations with over 250,000 members with a proud history of assisting veterans.

An attorney in fact is a person who is authorized to perform business-related transactions on behalf of someone else (the client), but not necessarily authorized to practice law. In order to become someone's attorney in fact, a person must have the client sign a power of attorney document (VA Form 21–22).

RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Rule 1: All AMVETS attorneys in fact will be honest when dealing with veterans and surviving family members. They will do the same when dealing with Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) employees and other officials.

Rule: 2 AMVETS attorneys in fact will submit quality claim packages for issues that may be granted; not sheer quantity to swell report numbers.

Rule 3: The attorney in fact claimant relationship is confidential by law and VA regulation. It will be protected at all times. The mandate to protect privileged information continues forever and applies equally to any clerical staff assigned to the office.

Rule 4: The attorney in fact will pursue a course of continuing education. They must stay current with new laws, regulations, VA's policies and procedures as well as all AMVETS policies and procedures promulgated by the AMVETS national service director.

Rule 5: The attorney in fact will determine all issues that occurred in-service. This is done through discussions with the client and a review of their supporting documents and records.

Rule 6: The attorney in fact will not sign off on any rating decisions that do not fully address, or defer for additional development, all issues contained in the claim.

Rule 7: Hardship claims will be expedited and closely monitored by the AMVETS attorney in fact to ensure a rapid decision and release of compensation and other benefits needed by the client.

Rule 8: AMVETS' attorney in fact will participate in all VA staff/veteran service organization (VSO) meetings called by the VA if available. Additionally, they will request staff meetings if problems arise due to VA's internal policy and procedures that need to be addressed.

Rule 9: AMVETS' attorney in fact will ensure VA examinations are complete, accurate and meet the current guidelines necessary for accurate rating decisions. Anything less than a complete examination may result in the client being denied benefits that are deserved under the current law.

Rule 10: It is not ethical for an attorney in fact to ask veterans to change their power of attorney (POA) from one VSO to another. Veterans represented by another organization should be referred to the organization that currently holds the power of attorney. However, if a veteran has a valid claim and insists on AMVETS' representation, then the POA may be accepted.

Rule 11: It is highly unprofessional to make any derogatory comments about another VSO.

Rule 12: AMVETS attorney in fact will establish rapport to educate and advise the client in the basics of VA law, policies procedures so they understand what documentation is required for their claim.

Rule 13: AMVETS will file an appeal only if the reason to appeal is based in fact (evidence contained in the client's record) or law (VA's failure to grant the benefit requested violates provisions contained in 38 Code of Federal Regulations). If a client wishes to file an appeal that the VA may never grant under the current law, then the AMVETS attorney in fact will not represent the claim since it has no merit.

Rule 14: Appeals should only be used as the last resort since they are a three to five year process. Other avenues such as a request for reconsideration based on overlooked evidence of record or new and material evidence should be used first.

Rule 15: An AMVETS attorney in fact will not tell a client that they may not file an appeal. However, they will explain to a client, based on current law, what they must do in order to win an appeal. If the client is unable to provide the necessary records then AMVETS will not represent that claim as an appeal.

Rule 16: Under no circumstances will an AMVETS' attorney in fact solicit or accept any monetary gifts, goods or products in appreciation or compensation for their professional services.

Rule 17: AMVETS attorney in fact will never present a membership application to a veteran during the initial claim process. Doing so is akin to extortion. However, if a client requests a membership application, then they will be provided with one after they explain that membership is not required for their services.

60-YEAR CLASS REUNION OF THE 1955 CLASS OF PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR HIGH SCHOOL

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in celebrating the class of 1955 of Paul Laurence Dunbar Senior High School in the District of Columbia as it celebrates its 60-year class reunion Saturday, October 3, 2015, its reunion committee and particularly Donald R. Wines for his phenomenal leadership with the Dunbar Alumni Federation, and Dunbar High School itself in history and today. I am fortunate to be an alumna of Dunbar High School and a member of this distinguished class.

Dunbar High School, which started in a church basement, was the first public high school for African Americans in the United States and remained segregated until 1954, when the District of Columbia was one of the six Brown v. Board of Education jurisdictions that successfully challenged segregated schools in the United States. Dunbar was instrumental in making the District of Columbia a bulwark of education for almost a century, attracting students from across the District, who were drawn by the school's excellent reputation. That same reputation was reinforced by Dunbar's remarkable record of graduating more distinguished African Americans than any high school in the country. Among them were Edward Brooke, the first Black popularly elected United States Senator; Robert C. Weaver, the first Black Cabinet member; Benjamin O. Davis Sr., the first Black general in the U.S. Army; Wesley Brown, the first Black graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy; Charles R. Drew, the discoverer of blood plasma; and Mary Jane Patterson, the first African American to achieve a college degree. Dunbar also drew teachers with advanced degrees who would have been college professors but for segregation in higher education that persisted at the time.

The 60-year Dunbar High School class reunion is another occasion for pride in Dunbar High School today and in the class of 1955. Dunbar has been recently rebuilt into a state-of-the-art facility and became a neighborhood school following the Brown decision. Its storied history continues to inspire generations of students.

The class of 1955 graduated the year following the historic Brown decision and has come together at important intervals to celebrate its class, the education received at Dunbar, and the school today. Keeping the class together did not take place spontaneously. This work has been a commendable team effort, but that team recognizes that the leadership of Donald R. Wines has been indispensable to its success. Donald has discouraged all acknowledgment of his extraordinary leadership on behalf of Dunbar and the class of 1955. However, the House of Representatives is free to commend and thank Donald for focusing his many talents, his organizational expertise, and the skills he honed as a Dunbar student to the class of 1955 Dunbar High School and the historic Dunbar tradition.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in celebrating the 60-year class reunion of the 1955 class of Paul Laurence Dunbar High School and the Dunbar High School Reunion Committee and Dunbar High School itself. I ask the House to particularly commend the leadership of Donald R. Wines, whose indefatigable energy and wise guidance have been the essential ingredients to the consistency of efforts that have enabled the Dunbar class of 1955 to celebrate 60 years of continuing friendship.

HONORING THE LIFE OF EDNA AND JOHN W. MOSLEY

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Edna and John W. Mosley, on the occasion of the grand opening of the school named in their honor in Aurora, Colorado.

Both Edna and John Mosley were trailblazers and public servants.

Lieutenant Colonel John Mosley graduated from Colorado State A&M College, where he participated in the Civilian Pilot Training Program during his senior year. In 1943, he completed the program, but was still denied the right to serve his country as a pilot due to his race. But John was not discouraged.

John and his family wrote letters to Congress and even the White House to petition for placement in the Tuskegee Airmen Pilot program, and due to his persistence and determination, he was finally accepted as a Tuskegee Airman. His accomplished military career spanned World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

After retiring from the Air Force, John served our country at the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) in Washington, D.C., where one of his most important responsibilities was overseeing the newly formed Head Start Program in 1970.

John received numerous awards, among them, the Congressional Medal of Honor in 2007 for his service as a Tuskegee Airman.

Edna Mosley was a lifetime member of the NAACP, and worked to establish the organization's chapter in Denver. She served 12 years on the Aurora city council, becoming the first African American elected to the council in 1991. On the council, she championed important and pressing issues—civil rights, gender equality, veteran's interests, affordable housing, and educational opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, Edna and John Mosley embody what truly makes our country and communities great—a selfless commitment to our neighbors, and fighting for the common good. I extend my best wishes for the academic success of the future graduates of the school, and their commitment to carrying forward the amazing legacy of Edna and John Mosley.

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE JOHN M. MCHUGH

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself, Congressman RUPPERSBERGER, and the House Army Caucus, I rise today to pay tribute to the Honorable John M. McHugh, former Member of the House, colleague, and friend, on the eve of his departure as one of the longest serving Secretaries of the Army in U.S. history.

After over 42 years of public service, Secretary McHugh leaves our Army and our Nation safer and more secure. His tireless advocacy and bold leadership for our Soldiers, Civilians, and their Family Members is legendary. From improvements in family and mental health programs to unprecedented strides to combat sexual assault and suicide, John has truly earned the reputation as ''The Soldier's Secretary.''

Having served as the House Armed Services Committee Ranking Member, Congressman McHugh's thoughtful, determined, and visionary leadership ensured the security of our Nation. As a Representative from New York's 24th and later the 23rd Districts, John ensured that cutting-edge facilities, upgrades, and programs directly supported our Warfighters. Fort Drum is but one example; it is truly the ''House that McHugh Built.'' He ensured the 10th Mountain Division had all the tools required to be at the tip of the spear for our Nation's defense.

John made unprecedented strides as the Co-Chair of the Army Caucus for over 15 years and served as a critical member of the West Point Board of Visitors. He was a dynamic leader in this House, a trusted Representative of his constituents, and an amazing advocate for our Soldiers and our country's national security.

During his tenure as the second-longest serving Secretary in history, John was at the forefront of national and international strategy, military policy, and Soldier programs. His expert leadership, bold initiatives, and pragmatic management ensured that our Army remained the finest fighting force the world has ever known.

John presided over some of the toughest missions the Army has ever faced. He oversaw the largest retrograde in military history as our troops departed Iraq, held the Army together as it was hit by sequestration, and worked tirelessly to reorganize, revamp, and restructure our force. Secretary McHugh led these efforts with distinction as our Soldiers conducted simultaneous combat operations around the world.

Secretary McHugh's determination, devotion, and love of our Service Members also ensured that our most sacred and hallowed ground, Arlington National Cemetery, overcame years of neglect to become the epitome of a well-run and well-led resting place for our Nation's heroes. In fact, it is now the gold standard for cemetery administration because of his personal and unwavering commitment and leadership.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation is safe and secure because of the drive, determination, and leadership of Secretary John M. McHugh. Today, we join with all Americans in our profound admiration and deep respect for this true Patriot. We thank Secretary McHugh for his dedication and sacrifice and wish him the fullest measure of peace and happiness as he enters the next phase of his life.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

See Résumé of Congressional Activity.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S7055–S7107.

Measures Introduced: Fourteen bills and four resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2114–2127, and S. Res. 273–276. **Pages S7102–03**

Measures Reported:

S. 750, to achieve border security on certain Federal lands along the Southern border, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 114–150)

S. 991, to establish the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 114–151)

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.

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. **Page S7101**

Measures Passed:

Border Jobs for Veterans Act: Senate passed H.R. 2835, to actively recruit members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service to serve as Customs and Border Protection officers. **Pages S7065–67**

Protecting Affordable Coverage for Employees Act: Senate passed 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. **Page S7084**

National Character Counts Week: Senate agreed to S. Res. 276, designating the week beginning October 18, 2015, as "National Character Counts Week". **Page S7107**

Measures Considered:

Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act: Senate continued 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 S7062–65, S7067–75**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 50 yeas to 44 nays (Vote No. 273), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, Senate rejected the motion to close further debate on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill. **Page S7074**

Conference Reports:

National Defense Authorization Act—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the conference report to accompany 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. **Pages S7075–84, S7084–90**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the conference report to accompany the bill, and, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur on Tuesday, October 6, 2015. **Page S7075**

Messages from the President: Senate received the following messages from the President of the United States:

Transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the designation of funding for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism, received during adjournment of the Senate on September 30,

2015; which was referred to the Committee on the Budget. (PM–26) **Page S7098**

Transmitting, pursuant to law, the notification of the President's designation of an emergency requirement in emergency funding for urgent wildland fire suppression activities, received during adjournment of the Senate on September 30, 2015; which was referred to the Committee on the Budget. (PM–27) **Page S7098**

Drozd Nomination—Agreement: A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that at 5 p.m., on Monday, October 5, 2015, Senate begin consideration of the nomination of Dale A. Drozd, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of California; that there be 30 minutes for debate on the nomination, equally divided in the usual form; and that upon the use or yielding back of time, Senate vote, without intervening action or debate, on confirmation of the nomination. **Page S7107**

Messages from the House: **Page S7099**

Enrolled Bills Presented: **Page S7099**

Executive Communications: **Pages S7099–7101**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Pages S7101–02**

Additional Cosponsors: **Page S7103**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S7103–06**

Additional Statements: **Pages S7096–98**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S7106–07**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S7107**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—273) **Page S7074**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 5:54 p.m., until 4 p.m. on Monday, October 5, 2015. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S7107.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

GERALD R. FORD-CLASS AIRCRAFT CARRIER PROGRAM

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the procurement, acquisition, testing, and oversight of the Navy's *Gerald R. Ford*-class aircraft carrier program, after receiving testimony from Sean J. Stackley, Assistant Secretary, Research, Development & Acquisition, Rear Admiral Donald E. Gaddis, USN, Program Executive Officer, Tactical Aircraft, and Rear Admiral Thomas J. Moore, USN, Program Executive Officer, Aircraft Carriers, all of the Department of the Navy, Katrina G. McFarland, Assistant Secretary for Acquisition, Rear Admiral Michael C. Manazir, USN, Director, Air Warfare (OPNAV), and J. Michael Gilmore, Director of Operational Test and Evaluation, all of the Department of Defense; and Paul L. Francis, Managing Director of Acquisition and Sourcing Management, Government Accountability Office.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported an original bill entitled, "American Crude Oil Export Equality Act".

NATURAL RESOURCES LEGISLATION

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining concluded a hearing to examine S. 2031, to reduce temporarily the royalty required to be paid for sodium produced on Federal lands, after receiving testimony from Amanda Leiter, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Land and Minerals Management; Christopher B. Douville, American Natural Soda Ash Corporation, Westport, Connecticut; Rick Finn, Port of Portland, Portland, Oregon; and Fred von Ahrens, Tronox Alkali, Green River, Wyoming.

IMPROPER PAYMENTS IN FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Committee on Finance: Committee concluded a hearing to examine improper payments in Federal programs, after receiving testimony from Gene L. Dodaro, Comptroller General of the United States, Government Accountability Office.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee ordered favorably reported 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, and 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, 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, Susan Coppedge Amato, of Georgia, to be Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking, with the rank of Ambassador at Large, and lists in the Foreign Service, all of the Department of State.

CIVIL NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH SOUTH KOREA

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the civil nuclear agreement with the Republic of South Korea, after receiving testimony from Thomas M. Countryman, Assistant Secretary of State.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing 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, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee concluded a hearing to examine achieving the promise of health information technology, after receiving testimony from Karen B. DeSalvo, National Coordinator, Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, and Patrick Conway, Acting Principal Deputy Administrator, Deputy Administrator for Innovation and Quality, and Chief Medical Officer, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, both of the Department of Health and Human Services.

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest concluded an oversight hearing to examine the Administration's Fiscal Year 2016 refugee resettlement program, including fiscal and security implications, after receiving testimony from Lawrence Bartlett, Director, Office of Refugee Admissions, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Department of State; Barbara L. Strack, Chief, Refugee Affairs Division, Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate, and Matthew D. Emrich, Acting Associate Director, Fraud Detection and National Security Directorate, both of Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security; and Robert Carey, Director, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services.

GOLD KING MINE WASTE WATER SPILL

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the significant costs and related burdens for small businesses resulting from the Gold King Mine waste water spill near Silverton, Colorado, after receiving testimony from Representative Tipton; Bradford P. Blake, La Plata County Commissioner, and Andrew Corra, 4Corners Riversports, both of Durango, Colorado; and DeAnne Gallegos, Chamber of Commerce, Silverton, Colorado.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 21 public bills, H.R. 3660–3680; 10 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 81–84; and H. Res. 454–459, were introduced. **Pages H6787–88**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H6789–90**

Reports Filed:

Reports were filed today as follows:

Supplemental Report on H.R. 702, to adapt to changing crude oil market conditions (H. Rept. 114–267, Part 2);

H.R. 538, to facilitate the development of energy on Indian lands by reducing Federal regulations that impede tribal development of Indian lands, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 114–276);

H.R. 1644, to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to ensure transparency in the development of environmental regulations, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–277); and

H.R. 3192, to provide for a temporary safe harbor from the enforcement of integrated disclosure requirements for mortgage loan transactions under the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 and the Truth in Lending Act, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 114–278). **Pages H6786–87**

Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act: The House passed 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, by a yea-and-nay vote of 251 yeas to 173 nays, Roll No. 533. **Pages H6761–68, H6778–79**

Pursuant to the Rule, the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in H. Rept. 114–273 shall be considered as adopted. **Page H6761**

H. Res. 449, the rule providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3457) and providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1735), was agreed to by a recorded vote of 241 ayes to 181 noes, Roll No. 530, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 237 yeas to 180 nays, Roll No. 529. **Pages H6752–61**

National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016: The House agreed to 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, and to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, by a yea-and-nay vote of 270 yeas to 156 nays, Roll No. 532. **Pages H6768–78**

Rejected the Smith (WA) motion to recommit, with instructions, the conference report to the committee of conference, by a yea-and-nay vote of 186 yeas to 241 nays, Roll No. 531. **Pages H6777–78**

H. Res. 449, the rule providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3457) and providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1735), was agreed to by a recorded vote of 241 ayes to 181 noes, Roll No. 530, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 237 yeas to 180 nays, Roll No. 529. **Pages H6752–61**

Providing for corrections to the enrollment of H.R. 1735: The House agreed by unanimous consent to H. Con. Res. 81, providing for corrections to the enrollment of the bill H.R. 1735. **Page H6779**

Amending the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 to postpone a scheduled increase in the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa: The House agreed to take from the Speaker's table and concur in the Senate amendments to 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. **Pages H6779–80**

Supplemental Report: Agreed that the Committee on Energy and Commerce be authorized to file a supplemental report on H.R. 702, to adapt to changing crude oil market conditions. **Page H6780**

STEM Education Act of 2015: The House agreed to take from the Speaker's table and concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 1020, to define STEM education to include computer science, and to support existing STEM education programs at the National Science Foundation. **Page H6780**

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 1 p.m. tomorrow, October 2nd and further, when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at 12 noon on Tuesday, October 6th for Morning Hour debate. **Page H6781**

Presidential Messages: Read a message from the President wherein he designated funding for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism—''referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 114–62). **Page H6785**

Read a message from the President wherein he designated emergency funding for urgent wildland fire suppression activities—''referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 114–63). **Page H6785**

Senate Messages: Messages received from the Senate today appear on pages H6761, H6784, H6785.

Senate Referral: S. 2078 was held at the desk. **Page H6761**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Four yea-and-nay votes and one recorded vote developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H6759–60, H6760–61, H6777–78, H6778, and H6778–79. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 9 a.m. and adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

Committee Meetings

IMPROVING PUBLIC SHIPYARDS TO MORE EFFECTIVELY MEET NAVY OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Readiness held a hearing entitled ''Improving Public Shipyards to More Effectively Meet Navy Operational Requirements''. Testimony was heard from Rear Admiral Mark R. Whitney, U.S. Navy, Deputy Commander, Logistics, Maintenance and Industrial Operations, Naval Sea Systems Command.

EXAMINING POTENTIAL WAYS TO IMPROVE THE MEDICARE PROGRAM

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing entitled ''Examining Potential Ways to Improve the Medicare Program''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

TRANSPORTING NUCLEAR MATERIALS: DESIGN, LOGISTICS, AND SHIPMENT

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy held a hearing entitled ''Transporting Nuclear Materials: Design, Logistics, and Shipment''. Testimony was heard from Franklin Rusco, Director, Natural Resources and Environment, Government Accountability Office; and public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2015

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Résumé of Congressional Activity

FIRST SESSION OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

The first table gives a comprehensive résumé of all legislative business transacted by the Senate and House. The second table accounts for all nominations submitted to the Senate by the President for Senate confirmation.

DATA ON LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

January 6 through September 30, 2015

	Senate	*House*	*Total*
Days in session	129	119	..
Time in session	823 hrs, 19′	596 hrs, 49′	..
Congressional Record:			
Pages of proceedings	7,053	6,750	..
Extensions of Remarks	..	1,400	..
Public bills enacted into law	11	40	51
Private bills enacted into law	..	..	..
Bills in conference	2	2	..
Measures passed, total	309	389	698
Senate bills	68	21	..
House bills	49	247	..
Senate joint resolutions	1	1	..
House joint resolutions	1	3	..
Senate concurrent resolutions	8	5	..
House concurrent resolutions	17	20	..
Simple resolutions	165	92	..
Measures reported, total	*215	*268	483
Senate bills	167	5	..
House bills	22	208	..
Senate joint resolutions	..	..	..
House joint resolutions	..	1	..
Senate concurrent resolutions	1	..	..
House concurrent resolutions	..	3	..
Simple resolutions	25	51	..
Special reports	17	5	..
Conference reports	1	2	..
Measures pending on calendar	155	53	..
Measures introduced, total	2,418	4,260	6,678
Bills	2,104	3,659	..
Joint resolutions	22	68	..
Concurrent resolutions	20	80	..
Simple resolutions	272	453	..
Quorum calls	6	1	..
Yea-and-nay votes	272	207	..
Recorded votes	..	320	..
Bills vetoed	2	..	..
Vetoes overridden	..	..	..

*These figures include all measures reported, even if there was no accompanying report. A total of 149 written reports have been filed in the Senate, 275 reports have been filed in the House.

DISPOSITION OF EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS

January 6 through September 30, 2015

Civilian nominations, totaling 316, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	94
Unconfirmed	215
Withdrawn	7
Other Civilian nominations, totaling 3,033, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	2,000
Unconfirmed	711
Withdrawn	322
Air Force nominations, totaling 5,332, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	3,628
Unconfirmed	1,703
Withdrawn	1
Army nominations, totaling 3,325, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	3,302
Unconfirmed	23
Navy nominations, totaling 3,873, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	3,867
Unconfirmed	6
Marine Corps nominations, totaling 1,067, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	1,064
Unconfirmed	3

Summary

Total nominations carried over from the First Session	0
Total nominations received this Session	16,946
Total confirmed	13,955
Total unconfirmed	2,661
Total withdrawn	330
Total returned to the White House	0

Next Meeting of the SENATE

4 p.m., Monday, October 5

Senate Chamber

Program for Monday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond one hour), Senate will begin consideration of the nomination of Dale A. Drozd, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of California, with a vote on confirmation thereon, at approximately 5:30 p.m.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

1 p.m., Friday, October 2

House Chamber

Program for Friday: House will meet in Pro Forma session at 1 p.m.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

Barletta, Lou, Pa., E1402
Bilirakis, Gus M., Fla., E1412
Bishop, Sanford D., Jr., Ga., E1411
Blumenauer, Earl, Ore., E1411
Brady, Kevin, Tex., E1407, E1408
Burgess, Michael C., Tex., E1403
Carter, John R., Tex., E1413
Courtney, Joe, Conn., E1407
Deutch, Theodore E., Fla., E1410
Donovan, Daniel M., Jr, N.Y., E1406
Emmer, Tom, Minn., E1409, E1410
Esty, Elizabeth H., Conn., E1410
Fudge, Marcia L., Ohio, E1402
Garrett, Scott, N.J., E1403
Green, Gene, Tex., E1408
Hartzler, Vicky, Mo., E1409
Hastings, Alcee L., Fla., E1401, E1409
Hensarling, Jeb, Tex., E1404
Jackson Lee, Sheila, Tex., E1401
Kildee, Daniel T., Mich., E1406
Kind, Ron, Wisc., E1405
Lance, Leonard, N.J., E1406
Lee, Barbara, Calif., E1411
Long, Billy, Mo., E1405
Loudermilk, Barry, Ga., E1404
Lujan Grisham, Michelle, N.M., E1407
Marchant, Kenny, Tex., E1408
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Meeks, Gregory W., N.Y., E1411
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Norton, Eleanor Holmes, The District of Columbia, E1407, E1412
Pascrell, Bill, Jr., N.J., E1409
Perlmutter, Ed, Colo., E1402, E1403, E1404, E1404, E1405, E1406, E1406, E1407, E1408, E1408
Poe, Ted, Tex., E1410
Rice, Kathleen M., N.Y., E1403
Scott, David, Ga., E1403, E1410
Shimkus, John, Ill., E1404
Waters, Maxine, Calif., E1413
Wilson, Joe, S.C., E1409
Young, David, Iowa, E1411

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