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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC.
October 7, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CHRIS STEWART to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

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

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

CONGRESS SHOULD FOCUS ON FIXING OUR PROBLEMS HERE AT HOME

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, the recent news about Afghanistan is, at best, distressing. Soon Congress will be debating an increase in the debt ceiling so we can borrow more money to pay our bills. The sad part is that some of that money will go to Afghanistan.

Three recent headlines are most discouraging:

One from the Fiscal Times, September 23, ''U.S. Wasted Billions of Dollars Rebuilding Afghanistan.''

The second headline from the New York Times, October 1, ''Afghan Forces on the Run.''

The third headline, ''U.S. Soldiers Told to Ignore Sexual Abuse of Boys by Afghan Military Leaders.''

I am so outraged about the third headline story that I am demanding answers on the Pentagon's policy of permitting Afghan men to rape young boys on U.S. military bases. I have written a letter to the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee and asked him to hold hearings on this issue. We need to get to the bottom of this.

Afghanistan is the graveyard of empires. We are headed to the graveyard. We need to borrow money just to carry on the needless war. We need to borrow money just to pay our bills.

We are over $18 trillion in debt, and President Obama signed us up for 8 more years in Afghanistan, 8 more years of wasted money. No one even listens to John Sopko, the Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction, who has testified before Congress many times. He releases report after report detailing the waste, fraud, and abuse in Afghanistan, and no one in Congress seems to care.

According to Sopko, we have spent more in 14 years trying to shape Afghanistan into a functional country, which is a fool's errand, at best, than we did on the entire Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe after World War II.

In the next fiscal year, we will spend $42.5 billion in Afghanistan, and the Congressional Budget Office estimates that we will spend $30 billion a year for the next 8 years. We are committed to staying in Afghanistan. This is the longest war in the history of America.

History has proven that we will never change this tribal nation and we should stop trying. Instead, let's focus on fixing our problems here in America.

The little girls beside me, Mr. Speaker, Eden and Stephanie Balduf, their daddy was training Afghanistan citizens to be policemen, and they were shot and killed by the man they were training. Poor little girls represent so many families whose loved ones have died in Afghanistan for nothing but a waste.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform, please bless America, and, God, please wake up the Congress before it is too late on Afghanistan.

UMPQUA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SHOOTING

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday another horrific episode of gun violence—the seemingly unrelenting stream of tragedy and horror—only this time it was visited on Oregon, in a modest mill town of Roseburg.

The scene of the carnage was a picturesque, some would say idyllic, community college campus just north of town, where a shooter burst into a classroom at Umpqua Community College and started methodically killing nine people, wounding seven others.

On the 274th day of 2015, this was the 294th such episode. President Obama made an impassioned, forceful, and poignant response—at once fierce and sad, as eloquent as anything I have heard him say throughout his political career.

And who could blame him? Not a single calendar week has passed during his second term without another mass shooting.

The core of his message was the question for all Americans, especially the apologists for gun violence: Why is the United States the only developed country in the world that cannot protect

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our families from gun massacres? No other country comes remotely close to this carnage. Why should we lose 15 times as many as our family members as Germany every year?

When other countries like Canada, Britain, and Australia—that are probably more similar to our country than any others—why were they able to respond not just with outrage or moments of silence, but with action after mass shooting events, to make a difference, to make their families safer, 10 times safer in Australia than in the United States? It is past time that people who claim to be leaders in both parties answer this question.

I am pleased that the response from my party was not one of hopelessness, resignation, or ''stuff happens,'' but instead calls to action with simple, commonsense steps that are widely supported by the American public.

I am pleased that Hillary Clinton was first and foremost with a strong call to action. I am pleased that Senator BERNIE SANDERS appears to be changing his attitude and policies on gun safety.

It is interesting that two Democratic Senators running for re-election last year, Mark Begich and Mark Pryor, who cast what I can only describe as a craven vote against universal background checks, lost anyway. It ought to be a message about our values and our direction. I am hopeful that there will be greater accountability for both parties to supply solutions.

There is no excuse for ours to be the only developed country that cannot protect our children. The American public should demand answers from everyone who pretends we can't protect our children. Ours is the only country, for instance, where leaders prohibit the government from even investigating gun violence, its causes, and solutions.

The President exhorted us to not be numb to gun violence. One is hopeful in the midst of this unprecedented bizarre Presidential nominating process, already in full swing, with more than a year yet to go, that perhaps we have the opportunity to make sure this doesn't leave the national political stage.

With comments like Republican candidate Ben Carson condemning President Obama's decision to visit and console the families in Roseburg in a private meeting, that somehow he would wait for the next one, it is stunning.

I was in Springfield, Oregon, when President Clinton visited those families, consoling them, demonstrating compassion and the concern of the country. It was a sign of respect and was moving to all who witnessed it. I can't imagine a more callous, heartless remark than that of Dr. Carson, who would wait until the next one.

Reasonable people should ask reasonable questions about reasonable solutions and demand from politicians their answer to the question: When stuff happens, why can't we protect our families from this slaughter, and what are they prepared to do to change it?

HONORING ERCELLE S. CARTER'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Ercelle S. Carter of Institute, West Virginia, who is celebrating her 100th birthday on October 25, 2015.

Ercelle was born on October 25, 1915, in Fayetteville, West Virginia. She is one of two children of John Saunders and Harriet Agee Saunders.

Growing up, she attended Levi Elementary, Boyd Junior High School, and graduated from Garnet High School in 1933. She enrolled at West Virginia State College and graduated with degrees in home economics and elementary education in 1937.

On April 27, 1940, she married Ulysses Grant Carter. They were married for 53 years, until his death in 1993.

Ercelle was a homemaker and a stay-at-home mom until 1959, when she began her professional career as a teacher at Shawnee Elementary School and retired from Mound Elementary in 1979.

Ercelle has led an outstanding life, highlighted with her love of family and service to her community. I wish her many more years of health and happiness.

CONGRATULATING EVANS ELEMENTARY OF JACKSON COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Evans Elementary of Jackson County, West Virginia, for the honor of being named a National Blue Ribbon School for 2015.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program was created in 1982 under President Ronald Reagan's Secretary of Education Terrel H. Bell. The program was designed to celebrate achievements of both public and private elementary, middle, and high schools which have excellent performance or have substantially reduced the performance gap for disadvantaged student populations.

This is a tremendous honor given to only two schools in West Virginia and only 335 schools nationwide this year. I am proud of the hardworking teachers, faculty, and students that achieved this honor. Their pursuit of academic excellence is inspiring, and I hope their success can be replicated across our State.

UMPQUA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SHOOTING

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday Americans witnessed yet another tragedy with the fatal shooting of nine people in Roseburg, Oregon, five young kids who had so much more life left to live, three adults who had gone back to school to better themselves and their families, and an assistant professor of English who used his writing talents to teach others, all gone too soon.

Their lives are lost in tragedy, the kind of tragedy that our Nation has suffered with increasing regularity. There have been more mass shootings this year than there have been calendar days, 294 mass shootings in less than 280 days.

In 2015 alone, there have been nearly 40,000 gun violence tragedies, with nearly 10,000 people killed and 20,000 wounded. Yet, sadly, each gun violence tragedy is met with another tragedy here in Congress, the tragedy of inaction.

People are dying. People are dying from gun violence every single day in America, and this Congress does nothing. As President Obama said last week, ''We collectively are answerable to those families who lose their loved ones because of our inaction.''

I have been a Member of the House of Representatives for nearly 7 years. In that time, tens of thousands of lives have been lost, but this body has refused to hold even one hearing addressing the gun violence epidemic that is plaguing our country.

In that time, not even once have we had a vote on the floor on anything, anything related to gun violence, and it is not for lack of ideas. We know from other countries what works. Other countries, not much different from ours, have tackled this issue with remarkable results.

More than 90 gun-related bills offering various ways—large and small—for us to lessen the death toll are just sitting in committee waiting for action; yet, we refuse to even try.

And forget about new gun laws. Congress has made it harder for law enforcement to carry out current laws. It has gotten so bad that Congress refuses to allow Federal agencies to even study this issue because they are afraid of what doctors and scientists will tell them.

□ 1015

In June, during the Labor-HHS-Education markup and just 1 week after the tragedy in Charleston, an amendment to end the 20-year prohibition on Federal funding on research related to gun violence was defeated by a unanimous Republican majority. Congress refuses to act and stands in the way when others try.

Why is this issue different than others? What is it about these lives that matter less than those lost to terrorism or car accidents or cancer? Unless the status quo in Congress changes, we will continue to lose American lives to gun violence.

In June, I urged my colleagues to break the silence, stop the violence, and start the conversation about gun violence in America. We were reeling from the tragedy in Charleston, and I recounted the other lives we had lost

to guns in the Navy Yard, Northern Illinois University, Virginia Tech, Columbine, Aurora, Roanoke, Sandy Hook, Tucson, and Fort Hood.

I asked my colleagues when will enough be enough? When will we realize and acknowledge that this type of mass violence does not happen in other advanced countries? When will we finally be able to have a national discussion about gun violence?

The answer by House leadership has been a resounding silence.

The first tragedy of last week was the loss of nine American lives. The second tragedy is the continuing inaction of Congress to do anything about it.

No legislation will stop every tragedy, but passing commonsense gun laws will at least stop some. It is the least we can do to honor the memory of those we have lost to gun violence and prevent the list of lives lost from growing.

RED LAND LITTLE LEAGUE

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

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I am humbled to extend my sincere congratulations and express my profound pride and admiration to the players and coaches of Red Land Little League in Lewisberry, Pennsylvania, who recently returned home from the Little League World Series as the 2015 United States champions. I am privileged to represent these fine young players and their coaches, families, and supporters.

This team's perseverance and determination on the road to the Little League World Series and subsequent championship makes them, among a myriad of other things, outstanding role models. The team's core values provide the foundation for their success:

''Red Land Little League Baseball is committed to the purpose of implanting firmly in the youth of the Red Land area the ideals of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage and respect for authority, so that our children may be well adjusted, stronger and happier and grow to be decent, healthy and trustworthy adults.''

These values served the team well as they won the 2015 Little League Baseball Mid-Atlantic Region Tournament with a 3–0 record. Throughout the tournament, Red Land outscored their opponents 36–5, and they continued their momentum with an 18–0 victory over Midwest Little League.

As we all know all too well, a great sign of strong character is how you handle adversity. Red Land faced that challenge and persevered in its next two games with a 9–8 victory over the Southeast team and a 3–2 victory over the Southwest team to earn the U.S. Championship. Despite a truly impressive and valiant effort, the team came up short on the world championship with a loss to Japan. However, Red Land's character, resilience, teamwork, and sportsmanship will be remembered long after the final results of that one game.

The team motto, ''#whynotus,'' became the rallying cry for a team that first inspired their community and went on to inspire our Commonwealth, our Nation, and the world.

One of our Fourth District residents summed it up perfectly: ''We were a little-known town that nobody even knew existed. Now, everyone around the world knows where we are.''

I am privileged and honored to recognize these players and coaches of the U.S. Champion Red Land Little League here today:

Adam Cramer
Jake Cubbler
Jaden Henline
Braden Kolmansberger
Chayton Krauss
Kaden Peifer
Ethan Phillips
Dylan Rodenhaber
Zack Sooy
Cole Wagner
Camden Walter
Bailey Wirt
Jarrett Wisman
Manager Peifer

Assistant coaches J.K. Kolmansberger and Bret Wagner.

I know I speak for my colleagues when I express our heartfelt thanks and congratulations to our U.S. champions today. The values they have demonstrated in earning this title are the values that make America the greatest country in the world. We need young people like them, with strong character and leadership, to ensure these values are passed to future generations. I, for one, am excited to see what else these guys will accomplish as they move forward with their lives and future adventures.

Lest we forget, such achievements require the support of countless others behind the scenes. On behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I extend my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the families and friends who devoted countless amounts of time, effort, and support on Red Land's path to the U.S. Championship. This team was away from home for many weeks as they took this journey, and this kind of triumph doesn't happen without exceptional devotion and teamwork from all spokes on the wheel.

Finally, I truly commend the citizens of Lewisberry, Pennsylvania, its surrounding community, and the people across Pennsylvania and the United States who mobilized behind this team to drive and push their momentum.

Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to recognize our 2015 Little League World Series United States Champions, Red Land Little League, joining us in the balcony here this morning.

Today, we join the team's rallying cry, which is, ''We are Red Land.''

GUN VIOLENCE ACROSS MARYLAND

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

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, in 280 days, Maryland has lost 301 lives to gun violence. That is 301 families that have lost mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters to domestic violence, mental health, and just plain old violence with a gun.

It is time for my colleagues to stand up to listen, to take on the National Rifle Association, and to stop the flood of gun violence that is ravaging our communities in Maryland and across the country.

Let's do that in the names of:

Stefon Donnell Powell; Leon Flemming; Karim Bonner; Josphat Kobia; Matthew Thomas; Everett Thomas; John David Walsh; Troy R. Preston; Robert Durham Thomas; Darius White; Jamal Allen; Anthony Richardson; Seydina Oumar Soumagel; Donte Downer; David Hall; Harry Smith; Tyrone Archer, Jr.; Jason Ballard; Donald Gaff.

Ashanti Lynnae Ballard-Velez; Jason Ballard; Davon Johnson; Stephen Forman; James Smith; Stephen Vaise; Victor Underwood Black; Marvin Barrett; Edward Donnell Bright, Sr.; Derrick Dargan; Tavares Swinson; Allan Bartlett Poole; James Maurice Edward, Jr.; Malik Fuller; Jawan Goode; Own Crayton; Christopher Hagerman; Anthony Reese; Dwayne Reid; Markez Jones.

Djuan Tillet; Tiesha Rogers; Terry Garnett, Jr.; Terrell Walston; Dayonte Matthew; Jonathan Lopez; Alton Wallce III; Johnie Green; Mary Green; Mark Green; Antwon Marque Coleman; Richard Anthony Jackson; Sterling Day; Daniel Brooks; Jarrell Hicks; Victor Gwaitney; Andre Robinson; Kemmontay Mitchell; Jeremy Ward; Ricky Shawatza Hill.

Keaway Lafonz Ivy; Jamar Green; Steven Jackson; Eugene W. Tolley; Thomas Peterson; Linda Ota; Tywaun Short; Lawrence Buckner; Gilbert Mendoza; Vedrana Mendoza; Molly Mendoza; Rondal Metzger; Mary J. Glacken; Kevin Hill; Jamal Rosebourgh; Mark Nicholson; Carvell Jones; Mark McKenna; Reanna Lynn Greene; Daquain Tate.

Martin Brooks; Ricky Chambers, Jr.; Andre Hunt; Davon Williams Johnson; James Maurice Johnson; Yogesh Sheth; Bryon Showell; Levi Buck; Khai Hebron; Elliot B. Cheston, Jr.; Cornelia M. Cheston; Robert Scott Slaughter; Keith Watts; Rodney Vandette Johnson; Melissa Anne Bingham; Paul Smith; Armand Parrine; Ivan Anthony McBroom; Matthew Hughes; Odell Stewart.

Lionel Young; Harry Davis; Louis Hicks; Anthony Donnell Minick; Reginald B. Brown III; Shawn Scott; Tiffan Chisholm; Tahil Yasin; Deangelo Green; Rashard Jackson; Wade Mckinley Purvey; Eric Diggs, Jr.; James

Skinner; Shawn Hickman; Kelvin Warfield; Rupert Everton Samuels; Michael Smith; Craig Deshields, Jr.; Jarmar James; Darell Alston, Jr.

Robert Michael Mange; Lamont Scurry; Charles Adams; Tyrin Diggs; James Mckoy; Hassan Fields; Bruce Fleming, Jr.; Umika Smith; Charles Jackson, Jr.; Shaquil Hinton; Charles Dobbins; Keith Leon Booze; Jennifer Jeffrey Browne; Kester ''Tony'' Browne III; Justin Mensuphu-Bey; Eladio Bennett; Pierre Rafael Edwards; Terrell Patterson; Marie Shade Adebayo; Gerald Smith.

Tony Moody; Davontay King; Kevin Jones; Ronnie Walden; Arnesha Bowers; Elery Hudson; Antoine Johnson; Jamon Corprew; Curtis Mitchell; Jerome Grant; Eric Bernard Talbert; Brandon Brown; Michael S. Montgomery; Bruce Wayne; Bernard Dorsey; Allen Durant Gilbert; Henry McArthur; Tommy David Thomas; Spencer Lee McCain; Terrence Demond.

Brian Augins; Ivan J. Cox, Jr.; Lonnie Bernard Paye, Jr.; Nathaniel Wheeler; Edward Burroughs; Craig Ivan Corbin, Jr.; Derwin Jones; Gerald Thompson; Jacqueline Parker; Lamont Randall; John F. Davis; Eric Renard Forrester; Gary Jackson; Steven Justin Lewis; Darrius Johnson.

Tyrell Hardy; James Ricardo Smith; Dante Barnes; Gregory Higgins; Tyrone Johnson; Marvin Coston, Jr.; Frederick Samuel Taylor; Daryl Sylvester King; Ronald Davon Penn; Robert Lee Jackson; Damon Tisdale; Delvin Trusty; Terron Singleton; Julian Roary Sr.; Julian Roary Jr.; Ian Roary.

Adrian Kinard; Hudson Bhagwat; Albert Mullen; Jefferson Bolden; Daquan Mason; Clerow Myers III; Damon L. Ramsey; Cody Lacey; Charles Diggs; Marcus Downer; Jaswinder Singh; Michael Polston; Lorod C. Warner; William Hasenei; Robin Hasenei; Donte Dixon, Jr.; Gregory Tynes; Terrence Boy; Alvin Phillips.

Dommeir D. Deshields; Shakina Marie Perkins-Moody; Christopher Lowel Giles; Joseph Titus Abariko; Sandeep Bhulai; Jerome Smith; Steven Frank Krug; Kelly Lorraine Shortt-Hamilton; Daniel Ray Shortt, Sr.; David Lamont Nolan; Marquis Caldwell; Franklin Morris; Tyrik Adams; Melvin Heckstell; Asshams Pharoah Manley; Tyrone Anthony Creighton; Christopher Allen Garrett; Kevin Carey; Felix Nazas; J.R. Reid Franklin.

Paul Hilroy Passley; Brandon Smith; Angelo Yancy; Jajuan Mcrae; Charles S. Hall; Karlyn Serane Ramirez; Ryan Mims; Michael Thompson; Tryonte Worrell; Keith Gale; Kason Williams; Taurean Beard; Stonie Baker; Joshua W. L. Hodge, Sr.; Romel Simms; Kirk Butler; Michael Nichols; Thomas Meehan; Troy Midder; Darris Darnell Davis.

Darius Edward White; Tonyado Johnson; Pierre Epps-Hamilton; Dante Lamont Barnes; Michael John Compton; Antonio McNeil; Cecil Harris; Kevin Cannady; Rayshawn Jones; Javon Langston; Amir Billings; Keith Harrison McLeod; Tayvon Wilson; Junanito Mosquita; Brian Johnson; Ernest Lott; Garland Johnson; Deyquawn Charvez Cooper; Tylique Proctor; Gordon Williams; James Gaylord; Harry James Smith, Jr.

It is time to end the violence. It is time to end the silence. It is time for this Congress to do something.

AMULYA GARIMELLA—2015 DISCOVERY EDUCATION 3M YOUNG SCIENTIST CHALLENGE

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

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate an outstanding student scientist in Pennsylvania's 12th Congressional District, Amulya Garimella. She is one of 10 finalists from across the Nation in the 2015 Discovery Education 3M Young Scientist Challenge.

The challenge posed to student scientists across the country was to develop an invention that positively impacts the community. Amulya's proposal for a distraction-monitoring system that alerts users to distraction by measuring EEG brainwaves earned her a place as a finalist, and her selection is well deserved.

Amulya worked directly with a 3M scientist during a summer mentorship program to transform her concept into an actual prototype. She will present her invention during the competition's final event, which will take place next week at the 3M Innovation Center in St. Paul, Minnesota.

As an ardent supporter of STEM education in western Pennsylvania, I am very glad that one of our own students is representing us in this exciting competition.

I know Amulya has made her family and teachers proud, and Pennsylvania can be proud of her as well. She stands out as one of tomorrow's brightest leaders in science and technology. Her accomplishments serve as an inspiration for other young people.

It is students like Amulya that will help keep America a leader in scientific and technological innovation in a global economy.

I wish Amulya all the best in the rest of the competition and congratulate her again on everything she has already achieved.

WORLD-RENOWNED ROCK CLIMBER SASHA DIGIULIAN

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

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and congratulate Sasha DiGiulian, a constituent and world-renowned rock climber. She is the first woman in the world and the first American to free-climb one of the most difficult routes up the north wall of the Eiger in the Swiss Alps.

I have known Sasha for a long time. She is a family friend and a schoolmate of my daughter. She began climbing at just 6 years old at Sportrock in Alexandria, Virginia, and has since become the top female climber in the world. She is small, slender, lithe, and incredibly strong. Sasha has the uncanny ability to defy gravity.

□ 1030

Sasha was the overall female world champion in 2011, is the reigning Pan-American champion since 2004, and is a three-time U.S. national champion. She is the only North American woman and the third woman in the world to climb the grade 9a, 5.14d, the hardest sport climbing grade ever achieved by a woman, doing so in Kentucky's Red River Gorge.

In August, at age 22, Sasha climbed the north wall of the Eiger, a massive 1-mile vertical rock face in the Swiss Alps. This is one of the most difficult and deadliest mountains in the world. Sixty-four people have died attempting the Eiger since 1935, earning it the German nickname ''Mordwand'' or ''Murder Wall.''

It took Sasha and her climbing partner, Carlo Traversi, nearly a month to make the climb, facing constant rockfall, rain, ice, and snowstorms throughout their ascent. Sasha became the first woman and the first American to climb the face via the Magic Mushroom route, one of the most difficult paths to the summit.

As if her accomplishments were not impressive enough already, Sasha is also a third-year student at Columbia University, where she is studying nonfiction writing and business. She has been published in National Geographic and several other outdoor publications, and is an athlete representative on the board of the International Federation of Sport Climbing.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Sasha on her outstanding achievements. She is a shining example of how hard work, determination, and dedication can lead anyone to unprecedented heights. I wish Sasha all the best in her future ascents as she continues to make us proud. To paraphrase Maurice Herzog: There are other Eigers in the lives of women and men.

NEW LOCAL VA CLINIC IN PLANO, TEXAS

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, our veterans are our protectors and defenders of our democracy. For their faithful service and sacrifice, I believe that, when our veterans return home, as a grateful Nation, we must provide these men and women with good health care.

Now, the Third District of Texas, which I represent, is a deeply patriotic community, and it is home to many veterans. To help these folks have better access to care, for several years I have been pushing for a local VA clinic to be established in our neck of the woods. Well, exactly one week ago we

got our good news that a location was finally chosen.

Our new community-based outpatient clinic will be at 3804 West 15th Street in Plano, Texas. The new Collin County VA Clinic will make a huge difference for veterans because they will finally be able to receive high-quality care closer to home. It is a huge win for north Texas, and I couldn't be happier for our community and our hometown heroes.

It was the right thing to do, and our hard work is paying off. We are looking forward to the clinic finally opening its doors in the spring. I want to thank all the folks who have helped make the local VA clinic a reality.

I especially want to thank our veterans because they are the reason this is happening. They deserve this clinic. They deserve our support. Rest assured, I will continue to be a champion for our veterans to see that we take good care of them. God bless our veterans. I salute them all.

WE SHOULD STOP TRYING TO RUN THE MIDDLE EAST

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

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, the same people that got us into a very unnecessary war in Iraq are now clamoring for military action in Syria. These same people that have opposed us getting out of Afghanistan, even though our troops have been there more than three times longer than World War II, now demand action in Syria. These same people seem to want us to be at war in almost every country in the Middle East, even though things are worse now than when we started fighting there many years ago.

Surely we have learned a very costly lesson after spending trillions of U.S. taxpayer dollars and losing thousands of American lives, that we cannot run the Middle East. President Eisenhower certainly knew the horrors of war. He brought us home from Korea and kept us out of all the conflicts and little wars during his time in office.

He did not have to prove that he was tough or that he was a great military leader. Too many of our leaders or would-be leaders seem to be falling all over themselves trying to show that they are tougher than anyone else.

With our national debt now totaling more than $18 trillion, we simply cannot afford to intervene in every hotspot or conflict all around the world. This is not isolationism, this is common sense.

We should have trade and tourism with other countries and cultural and educational exchanges, but we should not be eager to go to war or send troops or drones or bombs in mainly to prove that we are great world leaders.

We have too many officials and candidates who want to be seen as new Winston Churchills. They try to turn every two-bit dictator into new Hitlers. President Eisenhower, in his most famous speech near the end of his Presidency, warned us against the military-industrial complex. Now some people say we have a security-industrial complex as well.

Most of the threats against us have been greatly exaggerated by people and companies which make big money from all of our foreign interventions.

If we would stop trying to run the Middle East, we could make our own country stronger from both a financial and security standpoint. While our intentions have been honorable, our foreign policies in the Middle East have created much hatred and resentment for us.

It was not an American bomb that went astray killing 131 people at the wedding in Yemen a few days ago, but all the reports said it was a U.S.-led coalition. So we are getting the blame.

The air attack on the Doctors Without Borders hospital in Afghanistan that killed 22 in what the Pentagon described as inadvertent was another public relations disaster for the U.S.

We need to stop trying to run the whole world. We have enough problems of our own right here at home, yet many of our leaders seem to feel more important if they are concentrating on foreign issues.

It is not the fault of the American people, but it is the fault of our liberal elitist foreign policy establishment that there is so much hatred for America in the Middle East.

This liberal elitist establishment wanted us to go to war in Syria 2 or 3 years ago, but the public outcry from ordinary American citizens was so strong against it that their plans had to be abandoned.

Now these same interventionists have figured out a way to accomplish their goal by resurrecting a Russia that no longer exists. Even the disgraced General Petraeus said at a hearing last week that Putin's foreign reserves are less than $200 billion. With his economy at home in shambles, in part, due to low prices for oil and natural gas, he cannot afford to run Syria for long, even if it were possible to do so.

If Putin wants to pursue this folly, we certainly should not try to do the same, as if it were a competitive advantage to take over a failed state. It would be especially foolish to try to take over a messed-up place like the Syria of today. Businessmen compete to take over very profitable businesses. They generally don't fight over businesses that are going under.

While the neoconservatives hate to admit it, both Assad in Syria and the leadership in Iran are allies in the fight against ISIS. ISIS has strength for two main reasons: One, resentment for our interventions in the Middle East; and, two, billions of dollars' worth of U.S. equipment abandoned by security forces that we spent billions to train who cut and run at the first sign of danger. We should not send more young Americans to fight and die for people who are not willing to fight for themselves.

Dr. Daniel Larison, a contributing editor of the American Conservative magazine, wrote a few days ago that ''the U.S. keeps stumbling ahead with a war in Syria that it doesn't need to be fighting. All of this comes ultimately from our political leaders' inability to recognize that there are many conflicts that the U.S. should avoid all together.'' Eisenhower recognized this. We desperately need a leader like him again.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, columnist Pat Buchanan summed it up best: ''If America's elites continue to assert their right to intervene in the internal affairs of nations . . . then we are headed for endless conflict.''

He said: ''There was a time, not so long ago . . . when Americans accepted a diversity of regimes abroad. Indeed, a belief in nonintervention abroad was once the very cornerstone of American foreign policy.''

HONORING CAPTAIN MATTHEW D. ROLAND

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

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a true American hero: U.S. Air Force Captain Matthew D. Roland from Lexington, Kentucky. Captain Roland gave his life in service to his country when he was killed in Afghanistan on August 26, 2015.

Captain Roland graduated in 2006 from Lexington Catholic High School, where he was a member of the National Honor Society and ran cross country. He was recognized as a born leader, motivated and dedicated to all that he did, demonstrated by his achieving the rank of Eagle Scout in high school. He earned an appointment to the United States Air Force Academy, where he graduated in 2010.

Captain Roland was an officer in the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron. He deployed 3 times in his 5 years of service, serving in many locations around the world. The tragic loss of this brave, young man, a patriot to his country, is felt by all who knew him.

Along with a grateful Nation, I honor his legacy, embrace his family, and to Captain Roland say thank you for your ultimate sacrifice for American freedom.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 40 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

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

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

We give You thanks that You have given to us the goals of justice and the designs of freedom, and that these are our heritage as Americans.

Bless the Members of the people's House with the understanding that it is their work to develop the strategies and the plans for achieving those goals, and the trust to know that Your spirit is with them in their work.

Grace this assembly with the resolve to be faithful in its tasks, responsible in its actions, and fervent in its desire to serve a nation which, so many hope, will live beyond any current difficulties into an ever greater realization of both justice and freedom.

May all that is done today 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania 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.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO OFFER RESOLUTION RAISING A QUESTION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of my intention to raise a question of the privileges of the House.

The form of the resolution is as follows:

Whereas the attacks in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11, 2012, took the lives of U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens, Foreign Service Officer Sean Smith, and former Navy SEALs Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty;

Whereas the events leading up to and in the immediate aftermath of the attacks on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi were rightfully and thoroughly examined to honor the memory of the victims and to improve the safety of the men and women serving our country overseas;

Whereas the independent Accountability Review Board convened by the U.S. State Department investigated the events in Benghazi and found no evidence of deliberate wrongdoing;

Whereas five committees in the U.S. House of Representatives investigated the events in Benghazi and found no evidence of deliberate wrongdoing;

Whereas four committees in the U.S. Senate investigated the events in Benghazi and found no evidence of deliberate wrongdoing;

Whereas in each fiscal year, more than $4 billion is appropriated to run the Congress, with untold amounts of this taxpayer money expended by nine Congressional committees to investigate the events in Benghazi, none of which produced any evidence of deliberate wrongdoing;

Whereas after the exhaustive, thorough, and costly investigations by nine Congressional committees and the independent Accountability Review Board found no evidence of deliberate wrongdoing, Republican leaders in the House insisted on using taxpayer dollars to fund a new, duplicative ''Select Committee on the Events Surrounding the 2012 Terrorist Attack in Benghazi,'' (hereafter the Select Committee) to reexamine the matter;

Whereas this taxpayer-funded committee was given broad powers to pursue its investigations, including an unlimited, taxpayer-funded budget and granting the Chairman the legal authority to subpoena documents and compel testimony without any debate or a vote;

Whereas the ongoing Republican-led investigation into the events in Benghazi is now one of the longest running and least productive investigations in Congressional history;

Whereas a widely-quoted statement made on September 29th, 2015 by Representative KEVIN MCCARTHY, the Republican Leader of the House of Representatives, has called into question the integrity of the proceedings of the Select Committee and the House of Representatives as a whole;

Whereas this statement by Representative MCCARTHY demonstrates that the Select Committee established by Republican leaders in the House of Representatives was created to influence public opinion of a presidential candidate;

Whereas the Select Committee has been in existence for 17 months but has held only three hearings;

Whereas the Select Committee abandoned its plans to obtain public testimony from Defense Department and Intelligence Community leaders;

Whereas the Select Committee excluded Democratic Members from interviews of witnesses who provided exculpatory information related to its investigation;

Whereas information obtained by the Select Committee has been selectively and inaccurately leaked to influence the electoral standing of a candidate for public office;

Whereas such actions represent an abuse of power that demonstrates the partisan nature of the Select Committee;

Whereas the Select Committee has spent more than $4.5 million in taxpayer funds to date to advance its partisan efforts;

Whereas this amount does not include the costs of the independent Accountability Review Board; the hearings and reports by nine Congressional committees; the time, money, and resources consumed by Federal agencies to comply with Select Committee requests; or the opportunity cost of not spending this money elsewhere, such as improving security for our diplomatic officers abroad;

Whereas it is an outrage that more than $4.5 million in taxpayer funds have been used by Republicans in the House of Representatives, not to run the government, but to interfere inappropriately with an election for president of the United States;

Whereas the use of taxpayer dollars by the House of Representatives for campaign purposes is a violation of the Rules of the House and Federal law;

Resolved, That: (1) this misuse of the official resources of the House of Representatives for political purposes undermines the integrity of the proceedings of the House and brings discredit to the House; (2) the integrity of the proceedings of the House can be fully restored only by the dissolution of the Select Committee; and (3) the Select Committee shall be dismantled and is hereby directed to make public within thirty days transcripts of all unclassified interviews and depositions it has conducted.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENHAM). Under rule IX, a resolution offered from the floor by a Member other than the majority leader or the minority leader as a question of the privileges of the House has immediate precedence only at a time designated by the Chair within 2 legislative days after the resolution is properly noticed.

Pending that designation, the form of the resolution noticed by the gentlewoman from New York will appear in the RECORD at this point.

The Chair will not at this point determine whether the resolution constitutes a question of privilege. That determination will be made at the time designated for consideration of the resolution.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

CALIFORNIA'S WATER CRISIS

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, California's water-year starts each year on October 1. The 2016 California water-year started last Thursday, and we come into that year with the six main reservoirs of the Central Valley Project at only 24 percent of their total capacity, or a combined 200,000 acre-feet below where they started the water-year in 2015, just 1 year ago.

That represents enough water supply, 200,000 acre-feet, to supply the city of Sacramento for 2 years. Half of the reservoirs don't even have 20 percent of their capacity. The San Luis Reservoir has less than 10 percent of its Federal water capacity.

El Nino, though welcomed if it happens, will not stop the drought in California because the State has not invested nearly enough in additional water storage for our State and its people. Congress and the California State government need to act now to open new water resources so we don't fallow more farms and thirst more cities, or we will risk doing irreparable harm to California's $1 trillion economy.

Mr. Speaker, we need to take action now.

COUNTING THE COST OF GUNS

(Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, when the American Public Health Association totaled the cost of gun violence in the United States for 1 year, it amounted to $174 billion, about $363 for every American. And if you consider just the loss of life, more Americans have been killed by guns since 1968 than have died in all the wars this country has ever fought.

Now, once more, in the wake of another mass shooting, too many leaders have responded with indifference. Just move on. But when 32 Americans are killed with a gun every single day, we cannot afford to stand still. We cannot just move on.

So far in this Congress, the House has held not one single hearing on gun violence, not one chance to evaluate ways to curb this epidemic of gun violence. Mr. Speaker, we cannot go on like this. Not one more American should die because Congress has failed to act.

HOMEBUYERS ASSISTANCE ACT

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, on October 3, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau implemented a new rule to streamline disclosure requirements during the home buying process.

Helping consumers better understand their mortgage terms is a worthy goal. No one is arguing that. However, this rule makes considerable changes to the forms used by consumers when applying for a loan, and anyone with sense can see that will lead to unforeseen issues. That means American home buyers will have less flexibility to buy and close on a home on their terms in the coming months.

Fortunately, this week the House will consider the Homebuyers Assistance Act, which creates a temporary safe harbor from enforcement of this new rule as long as a good faith effort was made to comply. The legislation will give the CFPB the necessary time to address implementation hurdles with stakeholders. It is the right move for America's housing recovery.

TREAT ACT

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, every day more than 60 Americans die due to an overdose of prescription drugs. The death rate from heroin overdose, an epidemic fueled by addiction to opioid painkillers, quadrupled from 2002 to 2013.

A person suffering from opioid addiction needs access to medication therapy. In many cases, treatment limited to rapid detoxification and abstinence can lead to an overdose during the first month of treatment.

Effective medications to treat opioid addiction exist, but Federal regulations restrict the number of patients a physician can treat. This is a dangerous limitation, considering that 877,000 physicians can prescribe opioids, but only 29,000 can prescribe treatments for opioid addiction.

Tomorrow, the Energy and Commerce Committee will hold a hearing on the TREAT Act, legislation I introduced to increase the number of patients to whom a physician can prescribe treatments for opioid addiction. It would also expand the authority to nurse practitioners and physician assistants.

I thank the committee for considering my bill and will work across the aisle to bring it to the floor.

In the meantime, I urge my colleagues to weigh in with the Department of Health and Human Services to address this problem as well.

PATTI FLOOD—ANGELS IN ADOPTION

(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, I rise today to congratulate Patti Flood, a Centre County resident who is being recognized tonight as an Angel in Adoption. Angels in Adoption is a program of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute and honors those who have made extraordinary contributions on behalf of children in need of families.

Patti is the executive director of Family Intervention Crisis Services, which helps children in Centre County, Pennsylvania, and the surrounding area connect with foster homes and adoption, along with reuniting their biological parents whenever possible.

Mr. Speaker, Patti Flood has impacted the lives of countless children. Through her work, she has pushed for the development of new programs in Centre County dedicated to helping children find permanent homes as quickly as possible. In addition to her professional role, Patti serves as a trainer for the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program, passing on the knowledge gained over her nearly 30-year career.

Helping children in need of adoption is a service which demonstrates real selflessness and a strong dedication to community. I thank Patti Flood for her service to our area's children.

□ 1215

THE PEOPLE'S HOUSE IS IN CHAOS

(Mrs. BEATTY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, the House of Representatives, the people's House, is in chaos. Last week, just hours before a government shutdown, we only managed to pass a 6-week CR to keep the government open. I voted for this bill because I refuse to shut down government and to do it over partisan politics because our Nation deserves better.

It is time for the GOP dysfunction to end. If we work together, Mr. Speaker, today with bipartisan support, we could reauthorize the Ex-Im Bank, restore voting rights lost in the wake of the Shelby v. Holder decision, and fund the highway trust fund in a sustained way.

But none of this seems to be happening because of Republican chaos and the inability to govern effectively. Republicans in Congress need to join Democrats and just get back to the issues that hardworking American families care about: jobs, voting rights, and the economy.

WE SHOULD PASS THE EMAIL PRIVACY ACT

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

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in defense of the Constitution. I rise today to stand for the Fourth Amendment and the right against unreasonable searches and seizures without probable cause.

The Email Privacy Act, the House's most cosponsored bill to not have a vote, this week got its 300th cosponsor. My friend from New York, LEE ZELDIN, became the latest Member of Congress to join this bipartisan legislation.

With a majority of Republicans and a majority of Democrats now supporting this bill, this is a bill whose time has

come. Americans who use digital communication in texts, emails, and social media are being governed by a 1986 law, the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, which was written long before the Internet, as we understand it today, existed.

Americans overwhelmingly agree that our email should have the same Fourth Amendment protections as our paper documents. We should require a warrant to read the content of Americans' emails, and we should pass the Email Privacy Act, H.R. 699.

With 300 cosponsors and growing, it is time to act. It is time to show the American people that Congress will protect them and defend the Constitution.

CONGRESS MUST ACT TO AVOID A DEFAULT

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

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in full support of President Obama's announcement on Friday that he will not negotiate with the Republican Congress over raising the debt limit.

This is the right decision because there is nothing to negotiate. There is only one simple path forward: to pass a clean debt limit extension that protects our Nation's full faith and credit.

Unfortunately, last week the majority leader and the presumptive next Speaker of the House went on national television and committed to fight to the end to defund the ACA and the President's immigration executive actions while trying to stop the debt limit increase. I fear—as we all should—what this might mean.

Are he and the House Republicans going to threaten to shut down the government to pursue this extreme agenda? Are they going to hold our Nation's full faith and credit hostage?

Mr. Speaker, for 5 years now, House Republicans have hurtled the Congress and the country from one manufactured crisis to another. This must stop and must stop now. With only 30 days left before we hit the debt limit, the Republican Congress should act immediately to take the prospect of a catastrophic default off the table.

OUR MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM IS BROKEN

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to raise awareness for the more than 11 million Americans who suffer from severe mental health illness.

As we recognize Mental Illness Awareness Week, we have the opportunity to discuss this complex issue and the impact it has on both families and society. We must continue to identify ways we can help those who are suffering.

Our mental health system is broken. Many are going without treatment, and families often struggle to find appropriate care for their loved ones. As vice chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I know this is an issue especially important to our veterans, our true heroes.

My COVER Act, which was approved by the House earlier this year, helps provide alternative therapies for our veterans dealing with mental health issues.

The Committee on Energy and Commerce's Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, actually sponsored by Representative MURPHY from Pennsylvania, further works to address the shortage of treatment options, lack of access to mental health services, and the lack of communication within the system.

We must continue our efforts to improve mental health care and remove the stigma associated with mental illness.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD HELPS THE MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, early detection of breast cancer can be the difference between a life saved and a life lost, but too often women are forced to forgo critical screenings because of lack of access to affordable preventative care. By opening their doors to so many medically underserved communities, Planned Parenthood is working to address those gaps.

As this is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we should be applauding the doctors and nurses who work tirelessly to detect breast cancer at its earliest stages. We should be thanking them for providing 500,000 breast exams every single year, helping to identify cancer and other serious illness in nearly 90,000 women.

We should be replicating their efforts to educate women on the warning signs and symptoms of breast cancer. But, instead, my Republican colleagues are focused on creating a politically motivated select committee with the ultimate goal of defunding the organization.

It is time to move past these partisan attacks and focus on working together to expand the access to preventative care that will help treat breast cancer.

OCTOBER IS AMERICAN PHARMACISTS MONTH

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize October as American Pharmacists Month. This month it is important to recognize those who wake up every morning to ensure that Americans have access to important and possible lifesaving medications.

I know the passion and dedication of a pharmacist because I am one. Pharmacists work every day to ensure that patients' prescription drugs are accurate, safe, and effective. We provide education to customers on possible treatments, and we are trusted and knowledgeable healthcare providers in our communities. In fact, pharmacists are in the top three most trusted professions by Americans, and I am proud to be one.

As pharmacists, we all have the common goal to assist in providing quality and affordable health care. We ensure that pain is managed, headaches are relieved, and hearts stay healthy.

This month I would like to acknowledge all pharmacists who continue to provide their service in support to Americans across the country. Thank you for your hard work and dedication.

SUPPORT THE WIND ENERGY INDUSTRY

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

Mr. LOEBSACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for the wind energy industry, the workers that it employs, and the clean energy it produces.

My home State of Iowa leads the Nation in the amount of electricity consumers get from wind, with around 30 percent of our electric power coming from wind. It also supports some 80,000 jobs across the country and over 6,000 in Iowa alone.

My district is a manufacturing powerhouse, with several major manufacturing facilities, including Siemens, TPI Composites and Trinity Structural Towers. I was happy today to be able to meet with representatives from these companies to discuss the need for Federal policy stability, specifically an extension of the production tax credit.

It is my hope that this body will take up a tax extenders bill soon which includes an extension of the renewable energy production tax credit. Please join me in supporting these American manufacturing companies and all the hard-working Americans that they employ.

NATIONAL BULLYING PREVENTION MONTH

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, this October marks the 10th annual National Bullying Prevention Month, and with it comes an opportunity to bring visibility to an issue that negatively impacts thousands of students in our schools and communities every day.

Instead of being a safe haven for learning and growth, some classrooms can become places of torment, of despair, of exclusion, for those suffering

the emotional and physical repercussions of bullying. With the advances of the Internet and social media, bullies have found a medium to further perpetuate their abusive ways.

As a member of the Congressional Anti-Bullying Caucus, I am reaching across the aisle and working with my colleagues to shed light on the realities of bullying and the dire consequences that it can have both online and offline.

While October may be designated as National Bullying Prevention Month, our work, Mr. Speaker, must not stop when the calendar turns. Together we can establish bullying-free schools so that our children can grow to be successful and thriving members of our society.

RECOGNIZING HISPANIC LEADERS FROM OMAHA

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

Mr. ASHFORD. Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month, I rise today to recognize two true Hispanic leaders in my home district of Omaha, Nebraska.

Two remarkable women, Linda Garcia Perez and Magdalena Garcia, have been instrumental in the preservation and advancement of the Latino arts and culture in our area.

Linda Garcia Perez has spent 40 years creating, teaching, and exhibiting Mexican/Latino traditions and customs. She incorporates Mexican folk art with basic art instruction to teach English and Spanish-speaking children and adults.

She has broadened my community's knowledge and understanding of the Hispanic heritage, as has Magdalena Garcia, the founder and executive director of Omaha's El Museo Latino. The museum is a resource center for Latino studies throughout the Midwest.

Of special note, however, are the museum's educational programs, which enlighten students from kindergarten through college as well as adults.

The contributions of Linda Garcia Perez and Magdalena Garcia have established a robust environment for the Latino arts and culture in Omaha. It is with great honor that I recognize these two outstanding women.

THE TIME FOR SILENCE IS OVER

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

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Members of this House gathered once again for a moment of silence. This time it was for the nine Americans killed last week in the mass shooting in Roseburg, Oregon.

Yet, our brief moment of silence pales in comparison to the never-ending silence that the families who lost loved ones are to endure today and every day from now on. What they wouldn't give to hear the voices of their loved ones again. What they wouldn't give to hear their laughter once more.

My friends, a moment of silence that lasts 30 seconds is, quite literally, the least that we can do. It is not enough. I know I can't speak for the House, but I can speak for myself. I will do everything I can—everything I can—to prevent more of our loved ones from being silenced by gun violence.

If we want to prevent more gun violence moments of silence on this House floor, then we must speak out. We must call out the gun industry and the groups that represent it on Capitol Hill for blocking every meaningful attempt to stop this gun violence. The time for silence, Mr. Speaker, is over.

HONORING HARVEY B. GANTT

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

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Harvey B. Gantt. Mr. Gantt has dedicated his life to being an advocate and fearless voice for the voiceless. When he was a teenager during the civil rights movement, he participated in sit-ins.

Even in the face of adversity, Mr. Gantt persevered. In 1961, he sued to enter then racially segregated Clemson University. He won, and he went on to become Clemson University's first African American student graduating with honors.

In later years, he took on leadership roles, serving for 9 years on the Charlotte City Council. In 1983, Harvey Gantt made history as the first African American mayor of Charlotte, serving two terms. During his terms, he focused on preserving and sustaining Charlotte's neighborhoods and the City Center.

Throughout his life, he has used his background as an architect to evoke positive change in urban communities.

In the coming days, Mr. Gantt will be honored with the North Carolina Humanities Council's highest award, the John Tyler Caldwell award, for his outstanding lifelong achievements.

Mr. Gantt never ran away from challenges. He always put his community and its people first. For that, I thank him. I congratulate him on receiving this award.

□ 1230

HONORING THE LIFE OF DR. SYBIL MOBLEY

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

Ms. GRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the life of Dr. Sybil Mobley, the founding dean of Florida A&M University's School of Business and Industry. Dr. Mobley first worked at Florida A&M as a secretary in 1945. She then went on to study at the Wharton School of Finance and earned her doctorate from the University of Illinois.

After graduating, Dr. Mobley returned to Florida A&M, and in 1974, she became the founding dean of the university's School of Business and Industry. She held that position for 29 years, during which time she worked tirelessly to build the business school into a nationally recognized institution. Her rise from working as a secretary to sitting on the boards of Fortune 500 companies and leading a business school serves as an inspiration to all of us.

Today, we mourn Dr. Mobley's passing and celebrate her life. She was a treasure to FAMU, Tallahassee, to the State of Florida, and our Nation.

CYBERSECURITY THREATS

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, American companies are facing a growing threat from cybersecurity attacks that aim to disrupt business, access personal information, and steal intellectual property. With October being National Cyber Security Awareness Month, we need to focus on ensuring our systems are safe, both in the private and public sectors.

At a congressional hearing not long ago, the head of the FBI said there are two types of companies: those that have been hacked and those that do not know they have been hacked. We have seen numerous companies in the past few years that have been the victims of massive cyber attacks. The Federal Government cyber breach recently at the Office of Personnel Management has also put the personal information of millions of Americans at risk.

The House has taken action by passing the National Cybersecurity Protection Advancement Act that protects critical information from hackers and ensures more cooperation between the businesses and the government to thwart cyber attacks.

Mr. Speaker, we know the vulnerability of our information systems. We need a cybersecurity framework that ensures Americans' information is protected.

AIRPORT SECURITY ACT

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favor of commonsense legislation. Common sense means the use of good judgment in making decisions. Common sense is passing legislation that will keep our airports safe.

It is frightening that in 2015 it is legal in America to openly carry a

fully loaded semiautomatic weapon with a high-capacity magazine strapped to your chest and parade through your local TSA-protected airport. This is precisely what happened at Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson Airport, the world's busiest airport.

In June, I introduced the Airport Security Act of 2015, which would make it illegal to carry loaded guns onto airport property—openly or concealed—unless properly packed for shipment, and with an exception provided to law enforcement.

The Homeland Security Committee has been proactive in passing legislation that preserves transportation safety in this session. I urge that committee to review my legislation to keep our airports safe, and vote to move this legislation to the floor. It is just common sense.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FARENTHOLD) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 7, 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, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on October 7, 2015 at 11:05 a.m.:

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 34.

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 3116.

That the Senate agreed to S. Con Res. 22.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3192, HOMEBUYERS ASSISTANCE ACT

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 462 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 462

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (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. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any 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 Financial Services; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. On any legislative day during the period from October 12, 2015, through October 19, 2015—

(a) the Journal of the proceedings of the previous day shall be considered as approved; and

(b) the Chair may at any time declare the House adjourned to meet at a date and time, within the limits of clause 4, section 5, article I of the Constitution, to be announced by the Chair in declaring the adjournment.

SEC. 3. The Speaker may appoint Members to perform the duties of the Chair for the duration of the period addressed by section 2 of this resolution as though under clause 8(a) of rule I.

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

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, the Rules Committee met and reported a rule for H.R. 3192, the Homebuyers Assistance Act. H. Res. 462 provides a closed rule for consideration of H.R. 3192. The resolution provides 1 hour of debate equally divided between the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services. The resolution also provides a motion to recommit for the bill. In addition, the rule provides the normal recess authorities to allow the chair to manage pro forma sessions during next week's district work period.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the resolution and the underlying legislation.

For more than 30 years, Federal law has required lenders to provide two different disclosure forms to consumers applying for a mortgage. The law also has generally required two different forms at or shortly before the closing on the loan. Two different Federal agencies developed these forms separately under two different statutes: the Truth in Lending Act, or TILA, and the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974, or RESPA.

The Truth in Lending Act provides meaningful disclosure of credit terms to enable consumers to compare credit terms available in the marketplace more readily and avoid the uninformed use of credit.

The Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 exists to ensure that consumers are provided with greater and more timely information on the nature and costs of their residential real estate settlement process and are protected from unnecessarily high settlement charges caused by certain abusive practices that Congress found and made sure that we got rid of.

On November 20, 2013, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau finalized the TILA-RESPA Integrated Disclosure rule, or TRID, which combined these two forms that had been separated for 30 years so that consumers can receive uniform information on one form on both their TILA and RESPA information. The new disclosures are generally referred to as the ''combined'' or ''integrated'' disclosures.

The Integrated Disclosure rule requires loan originators who receive an application to provide consumers a loan estimate form that combines the initial TILA disclosure and the Good Faith Estimate.

While intended to streamline the current duplicative disclosure regime under TILA and RESPA, the Integrated Disclosure rule poses significant implementation and compliance challenges. It makes significant changes to the origination, processing, and closing of mortgage loans; requires business decisions at all stages of the transaction; and includes difficult to understand timing and delivery requirements and other practical implementation issues that go beyond the form and content requirements.

Mr. Speaker, the rule we are discussing today is very substantial. In fact, it is in front of me. It has 1,888 pages of new requirements. This is a massive regulatory change, and there needs to be time to adjust to its implementation. I think we all agree on that. I heard yesterday, in the Rules Committee, the ranking member of the Financial Services Committee agree that there does need to be time to adjust to the implementation.

In fact, just this last week, I was in Chillicothe, Ohio, visiting the offices of a real estate company that had a title agency next door, a closing agency, and they were very concerned about the potential harm to home buyers that might see their closings delayed or, in fact, the whole process just seized up if we don't figure out how to implement this regulation in a thoughtful way and allow time for transition.

As I said, everyone agrees that less paperwork and more streamlined processes are positive steps for Congress and the regulators to encourage. However, given the complexity of the Integrated Disclosure rule, I believe Congress must also give those affected by this rule time to implement the changes in a thoughtful way.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I, along with the gentleman from Massachusetts and over 250 of our colleagues in the House, signed a letter in May asking the Director of the CFPB, Richard Cordray, to implement a ''hold harmless'' period for parties affected by the rule as they attempt to comply with the new regulations. I will submit a copy of that letter for the RECORD.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, May 20, 2015.

Hon. RICHARD CORDRAY,
Director,
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

DEAR DIRECTOR CORDRAY: The undersigned Members of Congress acknowledge that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB or Bureau) has done significant work on the TILA-RESPA Integrated Disclosure (TR–ID) regulation. Nevertheless, this complicated and extensive rule is likely to cause challenges during implementation, which is currently scheduled for August 1, 2015, that could negatively impact consumers. As you know, the housing market is highly seasonal, with August, September, and October consistently being some of the busiest months of the year for home sales and settlements. By contrast, January and February are consistently the slowest months of the year for real estate activity. We therefore encourage the Bureau to announce and implement a ''grace period'' for those seeking to comply in good faith from August 1st through the end of 2015.

Even with significant advance notice, understanding how to implement and comply with this regulation will only become clear when the industry gains experience using these new forms and processes in real-life situations. As the TRID regulation does not provide lenders an opportunity to start using the new disclosure form prior to the August 1st implementation date, market participants will not be able to test their systems and procedures ahead of time, which increases the risk of unanticipated disruptions on August 1st. That is why we believe that a grace period for those seeking to comply in good faith from August 1st through the end of 2015 would be particularly useful in these circumstances. During this time, industry can provide data to the CFPB on issues that arise so that the Bureau and industry can work together to remove impediments to the effectiveness of the rule.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If we may be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Ralph Abraham; Alma Adams; Robert Aderholt; Pete Aguilar; Rick Allen; Mark Amodei; Lou Barletta; Andy Barr; Joe Barton; Joyce Beatty; Dan Benishek; Donald S. Beyer; Gus Bilirakis; Sanford Bishop; Mike Bishop; Marsha Blackburn; Madeleine Bordallo; Charles Boustany; Brendan Boyle; Kevin Brady.

Dave Brat; Jim Bridenstine; Mo Brooks; Susan Brooks; Julia Brownley; G.K. Butterfield; Bradley Byrne; Lois Capps; Michael Capuano; Tony Cardenas; John Carney; Earl L. ''Buddy'' Carter; Kathy Castor; Steve Chabot; David Cicilline; Katherine Clark; Emanuel Cleaver; Mike Coffman; Tom Cole; Chris Collins.

Doug Collins; Barbara Comstock; Gerald E. Connolly; John Conyers; Paul Cook; Jim Costa; Ryan Costello; Joe Courtney; Kevin Cramer; Henry Cuellar; John Culberson; Diana DeGette; John Delaney; Mark DeSaulnier; Scott DesJarlais; Ted Deutch; Debbie Dingell; Bob Dold; Sean Duffy; Jeff Duncan.

Keith Ellison; Renee Ellmers; Tom Emmer; Eliot Engel; Anna Eshoo; Elizabeth H. Esty; Stephen Fincher; Michael Fitzpatrick; Chuck Fleischmann; John Fleming, M.D.; Randy Forbes; Jeff Fortenberry; Bill Foster; Virginia Foxx; Trent Franks; Rodney Frelinghuysen; John Garamendi; Scott Garrett; Bob Gibbs; Chris Gibson.

Bob Goodlatte; Trey Gowdy; Gwen Graham; Kay Granger; Garret Graves; Tom Graves; Al Green; Morgan Griffith; Glenn Grothman; Frank Guinta; Brett Guthrie; Richard Hanna; Gregg Harper; Alcee Hastings; Denny Heck; Jaime Herrera Beutler; Jody Hice; Brian Higgins; French Hill; Jim Nimes.

Ruben Hinojosa; George Holding; Mike Honda; Richard Hudson; Tim Huelskamp; Jared Huffman; Bill Huizenga; Randy Hultgren; Robert Hurt; Steve Israel; Evan Jenkins; Lynn Jenkins; Eddie Bernice Johnson; Bill Johnson; David Jolly; Walter Jones; John Katko; William R. Keating; Mike Kelly; Joe Kennedy.

Dan Kildee; Derek Kilmer; Ron Kind; Peter King; Steve King; Adam Kinzinger; John Kline; Ann McLane Kuster; Raul Labrador; Doug LaMalfa; Leonard Lance; Rick Larsen; John B. Larson; Robert Latta; John Lewis; Ted Lieu; Dan Lipinski; Frank A. LoBiondo; Dave Loebsack; Zoe Lofgren.

Mia Love; Frank Lucas; Ben Ray Lujan; Michelle Lujan Grisham; Cynthia Lummis; Stephen Lynch; Sean Patrick Maloney; Carolyn Maloney; Kenny Marchant; Tom Marino; Thomas Massie; Betty McCollum; James P. McGovern; Patrick McHenry; David McKinley; Mark Meadows; Patrick Meehan; Luke Messer; John Mica; Jeff Miller.

Gwen Moore; Mick Mulvaney; Patrick Murphy; Grace Napolitano; Dan Newhouse; Kristi Noem; Richard Nolan; Rich Nugent; Pete Olson; Bill Pascrell; Erik Paulsen; Donald M. Payne, Jr.; Steve Pearce; Ed Perlmutter; Chellie Pingree; Robert Pittenger; Mark Pocan; Ted Poe; Bruce Poliquin; Mike Pompeo.

Bill Posey; David Price; Tom Price, M.D.; Charles Rangel; Tom Reed; Dave Reichert; Jim Renacci; Reid Ribble; Kathleen Rice; Tom Rice; Cedric Richmond; Scott Rigell; Martha Roby; Mike Rogers; Harold Rogers; Todd Rokita; Peter Roskam; Dennis Ross; Keith Rothfus; David Rouzer.

Ed Royce; Bobby Rush; Steve Russell; Tim Ryan; Matt Salmon; David Schweikert; David Scott; Bobby Scott; Jim Sensenbrenner; Pete Sessions; Terri Sewell; Brad Sherman; Bill Shuster; Mike Simpson; Kyrsten Sinema; Albio Sires; Louise Slaughter; Jason Smith; Adrian Smith; Chris Smith.

Jackie Speier; Steve Stivers; Marlin Stutzman; Mark Takano; Mike Thompson; Glenn 'GT' Thompson; Pat Tiberi; Dina Titus; Paul Tonko; David Trott; Michael Turner; Fred Upton; Chris Van Hollen; Juan Vargas; Filemon Vela; Ann Wagner; Tim Walberg; Mark Walker.

Jackie Walorski; Maxine Waters; Randy Weber; Daniel Webster; Peter Welch; Brad Wenstrup; Bruce Westerman; Lynn Westmoreland; Ed Whitfield; Roger Williams; Joe Wilson; Robert J. Wittman; Rob Woodall; John Yarmuth; David Young; Todd Young.

Mr. STIVERS. Yet here we are today, just a couple of months later, and some of my friends on the other side of the aisle are going to argue that we shouldn't institute that very same hold harmless period by passing this bill. As I said, I think they agree with it. There may be other things in the bill that we can talk about that they have a problem with, but we all need to pass this bill, because we have to have a hold harmless period to make sure that people that want to close and buy a house and people that want to provide them that service can do so as we implement this new regulation.

Almost half the Democrats on the Financial Services panel agree that this hold harmless provision should be in place. The vote on the Financial Services Committee was 45–13.

Mr. Speaker, just last week, the Financial Services Committee held a hearing entitled, ''The Semi-Annual Report of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection,'' at which Director Cordray testified and fielded several questions about these new rules. When asked by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR) whether he would implement a grace period that would allow folks to find their way through this—Realtors and title agents—so they could count on not being the focus of enforcement, Director Cordray responded:

''Look, I don't think it is appropriate for me to say I won't enforce the law when my job is to enforce the law, but I think what I have said says to them that we are going to be diagnostic and corrective, not punitive, in that early period. I think if they read between the lines, they will understand that we are trying to allow them the latitude that they have asked for. And I think people should be able to take 'yes' for an answer.''

The problem is that is not ''yes'' for an answer, it is unclear, and that is why this bill is so important—because it is clear. This will make sure that we provide an implementation period that allows a hold harmless period for industry participants.

Just 2 days later, in fact, in a letter sent by some industry groups asking for this same request of a hold harmless period, Director Cordray refused to say he would institute a hold harmless period. So even though what he said to the committee sounded like he is going to try to do it, he said to them that he would not be able to institute a hold harmless period.

I think there are clearly some inconsistencies there that mean that we need to pass this bill. This bill will ensure we hold harmless almost everybody who does this instead of doing it with a wink and a nod.

□ 1245

Sixty percent of the House, I believe, is supportive, and we will see. Obviously, we have a vote to take on this. But we signed a letter that asked for this. So I believe that you will see a pretty good bipartisan vote today.

This massive regulatory undertaking needs to be implemented in a thoughtful way. That is all this two-page bill does, is create a safe harbor for enforcement until February 1 of 2016.

It also includes a good faith exception to ensure that, if somebody acts in good faith, they also will not be subject to legal action, just like they won't be subject to enforcement action.

And let me be clear. That only applies to somebody that acts in good faith. The courts have dealt with good faith exceptions on many other issues. It is clear that the courts understand what good faith is, and that will be litigated case by case, whether somebody was acting in good faith.

If they were acting in good faith, there won't be any legal action. If they weren't acting in good faith, there will still be the right of private action.

You will hear that from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, that this somehow relieves the right of private action. It does not. It just ensures that there is a good faith exception.

If somebody was just trying to do everything right, but missed a comma or a period or accidentally did something in trying to comply, then they will have that defense in court and be able to ask the case to be withdrawn.

This hold harmless provision ensures that borrowers and lenders and realty agents and others won't be forced to delay closings as they figure out how to deal with almost a 1,900-page rule.

I look forward to debating this bill with my colleagues on the other side.

I urge support of the rule and the underlying legislation.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STIVERS) for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in very, very strong opposition to this closed rule which provides for the consideration of H.R. 3192, the so-called Homebuyers Assistance Act.

Today's rule marks the 42nd closed rule we have considered during the 114th Congress, the 42nd. More than half of all the rules we have reported out of the Rules Committee have been closed, completely closed, and a majority of the bills the Rules Committee has sent to the floor have drawn a veto threat. This bill is no exception.

I will insert into the RECORD the Statement of Administration Policy saying: ''If the President were presented with H.R. 3192, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto this bill.''

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET,

Washington, DC, October 6, 2015.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 3192—HOMEBUYERS ASSISTANCE ACT

(Rep. Hill, R–AR, and one cosponsor)

Americans deserve clear and easy to understand disclosures of the cost of buying and financing a home, which is why the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act directed the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to streamline conflicting disclosures that were required under the Truth in Lending Act and the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act. The Know Before You Owe regulation issued by the CFPB almost two years ago fulfills this mandate by requiring mortgage lenders and settlement agents to provide homebuyers with simpler forms that explain the true cost of buying their home at least three days before closing. This summer, the CFPB extended the effective date for these requirements by two months, to last Saturday, October 3, 2015, to provide for a smooth transition and avoid unnecessary disruptions to busy families seeking to close on a new home at the beginning of the school year.

H.R. 3192 would revise the effective date for the Know Before You Owe rule to February 1, 2016, and would shield lenders from liability for violations for loans originated before February 1 so long as lenders made a good faith effort to comply.

The CFPB has already clearly stated that initial examinations will evaluate good faith efforts by lenders. The Administration strongly opposes H.R. 3192, as it would unnecessarily delay implementation of important consumer protections designed to eradicate opaque lending practices that contribute to risky mortgages, hurt homeowners by removing the private right of action for violations, and undercut the Nation's financial stability.

If the President were presented with H.R. 3192, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto the bill.

Mr. MCGOVERN. When the Republicans took the majority in 2011, Speaker BOEHNER and the entire Republican leadership promised the Democrats a right to ''a robust debate in open process.'' He promised us the opportunity to ''make our case, offer alternatives, and be heard.''

Instead, the Speaker has presided over the most closed Congress in the history of the United States of America, and Democratic alternatives are often prevented from coming to the floor.

By the way, not only are Democratic alternatives prevented from coming to the floor, Republicans can't even bring amendments to this bill because it is totally closed.

Now, I know my friends on the other side of the aisle are meeting as a conference tomorrow to choose a nominee to become the next Speaker and have other leadership battles ahead.

I hope that they are able to have an honest discussion about the ability to work through regular order and an open process that allows the House of Representatives to work its will and for both parties to be heard.

Now, maybe my friend from Ohio can help me understand why an amendment offered by the ranking member of the committee of jurisdiction, Ms. WATERS, an amendment that would protect consumers, was not made in order.

I mean, we would have preferred an open rule. We would have preferred that many amendments would be made in order. But the ranking member of the committee of jurisdiction had an amendment that is germane to this bill, and it wasn't made in order.

I don't quite understand it. One amendment, just one. Maybe it was an oversight.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that we amend this rule and that the Waters amendment be allowed so that we can debate it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from Ohio yield for the unanimous consent request?

Mr. STIVERS. I do not.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman does not yield. Therefore, the unanimous consent request cannot be entertained.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Just one amendment. That is it. Just one. I am not asking for two. I am just asking for one.

Mr. STIVERS. Will the gentleman yield me time to respond to his question?

Mr. MCGOVERN. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. STIVERS. I thank the gentleman.

I happen to serve on the Financial Services Committee with the ranking member, and that idea was not offered in the committee. So it was a new idea.

I will tell you that it sort of conflicts with the good faith exception because what her amendment said was that nothing would get in the way of somebody's private right of action.

The whole point of the good faith exception in the bill is to ensure that judicial proceedings happen the same way as administrative proceedings.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Reclaiming my time, so the excuse is that this was not made in order because the ranking member did not offer this in committee.

Who cares? We have a debate on the House floor. This is supposed to be a deliberative body. We are supposed to be able to debate these things.

The gentleman did not say it was not germane. The gentleman did not say it needed special waivers to be made in order.

He just said: Hey, she didn't bring it up in the full committee. So we decided in the Rules Committee to say no, you don't have the right to be able to offer this and debate it.

Please. I mean, come on. This place is becoming a place where serious issues are not even allowed to have a debate. I am not even asking you to vote for it. I am just saying to allow there to be some debate.

When I travel to my district, Mr. Speaker, I hear from constituents who are fed up with this Congress. They are fed up with the process. They always want to know: Why can't you at least debate important issues that are relevant to our lives?

It is hard to explain that the Republicans just want to shut everything out, and this bill is no exception.

I talk to people who think this place is no longer a serious legislative body, and they have a point because we don't really debate serious things anymore.

We have things like this Benghazi commission that has cost the taxpayers millions of dollars, that the Republican majority leader admitted, on a very conservative TV station, that it was nothing but a political ploy to try to get Hillary Clinton's poll numbers down.

I guess it didn't come as any surprise to me. It came as a surprise that he was so candid in his admission of what this was all about.

There is time to debate a special select committee to yet do another investigation of Planned Parenthood. We don't even know how much that is going to cost because, when it was brought before the Rules Committee

last night, there was no amount of money that was provided or told they would need.

So that will be millions and millions of more dollars that the taxpayers will have to come up with in order to fund another political witch hunt.

There is time for these political maneuvers, but there is no time for serious debate on serious issues? It is just wrong.

We are not focusing on priorities that matter to people. My constituents want to know what we are doing to make college more affordable. Are we doing anything to help create jobs, to create economic opportunity?

But we are not working on these priorities. We have become kind of an arm of the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee, where everything is politically charged, everything has to be a wedge issue.

Here we are today bringing to the floor legislation that is going nowhere, bills that will likely not be taken up by the Senate and, as I mentioned, will be vetoed by the President of the United States. So this is business as usual.

The Dodd-Frank financial reform law required the CFPB to combine the disclosure forms required under the Truth in Lending Act and the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act into a single unified form.

On October 3 of this year, the final TILA-RESPA rule took effect, giving consumers a clearer understanding of the costs of buying and financing a home.

The underlying bill establishes a hold harmless period through February 1, 2016, where lenders would not be liable for violations of the rule requirements so long as they made a good faith effort to comply.

But the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council, comprised of the prudential regulators, has already agreed to restrained supervisory authority during the initial implementation of the rule, and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has implemented a restrained enforcement period.

So what are we doing here, Mr. Speaker?

Throughout this process, CFPB has demonstrated its desire to get this rule right. They have worked with us. They have responded to the letters that we have signed. They have listened. They do what we want them to do.

The Bureau has engaged with industry to ensure smooth implementation of the rule and has been responsive to the concerns addressed by stakeholders and all of us.

In fact, last May, as the gentleman pointed out, 250 Members of Congress joined together on a bipartisan basis to urge the CFPB to announce and implement a grace period for those seeking to comply in good faith from August 1 to the end of 2015.

If the regulators have promised to carefully consider an entity's good faith efforts to comply with the new rule while monitoring for compliance, why do we need a legislative fix? Why do we need to micromanage the CFPB?

But, to be honest with you, this bill—and this is where the problem is—it goes beyond more than redundancy. If my colleagues have nothing better to do but pass things that are basically redundant, I can go along with that. But this goes beyond redundancy.

Unfortunately, this bill goes beyond simply providing good faith actors a grace period. This bill also strips borrowers of the opportunity to seek legal recourse under the Truth in Lending Act during this period. It would shift to the consumer the burden of proving a lender acted in bad faith and prevent consumers from even having the opportunity to have their day in court.

So let me be clear, Mr. Speaker. We support a grace period for lenders acting in good faith. And if that is what this was all about, you could have brought this up under suspension and it would have just sailed through.

Director Cordray of the CFPB also supports a grace period and has agreed to one. The regulators have responded to requests from industry and have outlined their policy for examination and supervision during this transition period.

But I am very concerned with the road that we are traveling down. Home buyers should have access to the courts if a lender acts in bad faith. I can't understand why my friends on the other side of the aisle are so intent on taking this critical consumer protection away.

Now, as I mentioned earlier, my friend, the ranking member of the committee of jurisdiction, MAXINE WATERS, offered an amendment last night in the Rules Committee to improve this bill, to restore the private right of action under the Truth in Lending Act that is suspended by H.R. 3192.

Now, if my colleagues on the other side of the aisle don't think that her amendment has merit, they could debate that and they could vote against it. Instead, what they have done is brought a rule to the floor that prohibits Ranking Member WATERS from even offering that amendment.

It is germane. It is relevant. It is a serious concern for those of us who care about consumers. But we don't have that opportunity. We don't have that opportunity. Totally closed rules. Totally closed process.

So the Republicans have prevented that important amendment from reaching the floor, and we are not going to have an opportunity to debate that today.

So I would urge my colleagues to join me in voting ''no'' on this rule and ''no'' on the underlying legislation.

I would especially make an appeal to some of my Republican friends on the basis of process. I know a lot of my Republican friends are getting sick and tired of this kind of heavy-handed approach to important bills when the Rules Committee just shuts everybody out. If you want that to stop, then we need more votes with us opposing these closed rules.

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

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

To the gentleman from Massachusetts' remarks, Mr. Speaker, I agree with him that we should have more time to debate serious issues. In fact, this bill should have been on the suspension calendar, but the ranking member of the Financial Services Committee refused to sign off on putting it on the suspension calendar. If it would have been on the suspension calendar, we would have had more time to discuss and debate other issues.

I would like to read from the bill, since we deemed the bill read, and I will start in the middle of line 9.

''Regulations issued under such sections may not be enforced against any person until February 1, 2016, and no suit may be filed against any person for a violation of such requirements occurring before such a date, so long''—this is the key part—''so long as such person has made a good faith effort to comply with the requirements.''

So the arguments that the gentleman from Massachusetts just made about somebody deeming in bad faith, they would not be covered by that part of the bill. It is black and white. It is really clear.

And I am curious if the gentleman from Massachusetts would enter into a colloquy with me.

□ 1300

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the gentleman from Massachusetts to enter into a colloquy with me because I have a question.

If the CFPB did indeed institute a grace period for individuals, yet those same individuals chose to file suit without the language on a grace period for lawsuits with good faith compliance, would there indeed be a grace period at all?

Mr. MCGOVERN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. STIVERS. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Yes.

Mr. STIVERS. Reclaiming my time, no, there would not, because if they can file lawsuits that the law—we haven't changed the law. In fact, all we have added is a good faith exception that allows somebody to defend themselves and get a lawsuit dropped. So there is nothing in this bill that would protect anybody that acts in bad faith.

Mr. MCGOVERN. This bill shifts to the consumer the burden of proving a creditor acted in bad faith, and that puts more of the burden on the consumer. If that is what the gentleman wants to do, fine. We have a disagreement. We want the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS) to be able to have her amendment so we can debate that issue.

Mr. STIVERS. I would disagree with you. It does not shift the burden. The

individual has to have the burden of proof that they acted in good faith. It does not say anything about the consumer showing somebody acting in bad faith. The individuals defending themselves have to prove to the court that they acted in good faith. There is no shift of the burden here.

Mr. MCGOVERN. The burden is on the consumer here.

If we have a disagreement here, let's have an amendment; let's have that debate, and let's vote on it. That is all I am asking.

We disagree. I think I am right, and I think you are wrong, but let's have that debate.

Mr. STIVERS. The problem with the amendment was it would have conflicted with that good faith language.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Then vote against it.

Mr. STIVERS. And somebody could have pointed to that section and said: See, nothing can take away my right to sue. This good faith exception takes away my right to sue. Even though they acted in good faith, that denies me a right. So it was conflicting language.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I disagree with your analysis, but we should have a debate on the amendment.

What is wrong with bringing this amendment up and debating it? That was the question.

Mr. STIVERS. I hear your point there, but I can tell you that if we would have debated the amendment, I believe that it would have been defeated.

Frankly, the problem with it was, if it would have been narrowly crafted to keep the good faith exception, I would have been okay with it.

I do believe that we should be debating serious issues. I do believe that the private right of action is kept in tact.

There is only a good faith exception. And the burden is on the individual who the lawsuit will be brought against to prove that they acted in good faith. That is how it works.

Nobody is going to have to prove that they acted in bad faith. They are going to have to prove they acted in good faith. Nobody is going to give them a wink and a nod and the benefit of the doubt. The individuals who are being sued will have to prove that they acted in good faith.

And you made the regulatory accommodations for a grace period but not the accommodations in the legal system; there is no grace period at all. It just takes away the entire grace period, because anybody that wants to sue just goes ahead and sues. It doesn't matter that there is a grace period administratively; there is a grace period in the law. That is why the good faith exception is so important.

I wanted to address those issues.

I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair reminds Members to be more orderly in the process of yielding and reclaiming time.

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

Again, we have some serious disagreements with the gentleman over how this bill, in our opinion, adversely impacts consumers. This good faith exception is not in the current law as it stands. This is new ground that this bill is moving us toward, and there are some real serious concerns for consumers.

All we are saying is, again, our priority is the consumers. If that is not the priority of my Republican friends, fine; you can defend the language that you put into this bill. But there is controversy over this, and we ought to be able to debate it. To simply say, you know, ''Oh, if we made it in order, it would fail anyway,'' is that going to be the new kind of standard for making amendments in order, that we are only going to allow amendments to come to the floor that we absolutely know will pass? Boy, that is a whole new standard that the Rules Committee and the Republican majority are now going to try to enforce.

Again, one amendment, one by the ranking member of the committee of jurisdiction—one. That is it, one. Give her 10 minutes.

I mean, I don't get why this had to be completely closed. But in any event, you are in charge. You can do whatever you want. And this place is being run under the strictest, most closed process, as I mentioned before, in the history of the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS), the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Financial Services, whose amendment was germane and was deliberately not made in order by the Republicans on the Rules Committee last night.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), a member of the Rules Committee, for the defense that he is putting up relative to my amendment.

Yes, I went to the Rules Committee, and, yes, I attempted to have an amendment that would protect our consumers. So it is clear that the opposite side of the aisle did not want the public to know about this amendment.

Why didn't they want this amendment debated? It is because they know that our consumers need to have the kind of protection that would allow them to go into court and raise questions about whether or not they are being defrauded, they are being misled, they are not being told the truth when they close on these mortgage deals.

Because the Rules Committee decided that we could not have a debate on my amendment, we have to take every opportunity to try to unveil why they are keeping this amendment down, why they don't want to debate it. As a matter of fact, I am so surprised that my colleague on the opposite side of the aisle tried to make this sound as if the Democrats didn't want a grace period, that we didn't want a hold harmless period. That is absolutely not true.

We agreed with Mr. Cordray, who heads the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, that there should be a grace period. We understood when the industry talked about the fact that they had a lot of work to do to make sure that they got the right forms, that they trained their people, that they came in compliance with the new rules that were created under Dodd-Frank. So we agreed.

Okay, Mr. Cordray said, I will not implement enforcement. I understand what you are saying. And Democrats agreed. We will set a grace period. It is okay.

You keep trying to debate this bill about the grace period. That is not an issue. That is not an issue at all. We agree to the grace period. Go, do your work; get your papers all worked out; get your staff all trained. But that is not what this issue is about.

This issue is about, where do you stand with consumers? Are you willing to say to consumers that if, in fact, you believe that you have been harmed in this closing, that all of a sudden the estimated costs are highly different, they are so different from what the final costs are—if you want to say to the consumer you don't have a right to go into court and raise that question, then you are against the consumers. The consumers should have a right to have their day in court despite the grace period.

The grace period should not be a period where you simply are getting your papers in order and you are training your staff. It should be a period where you still have a guarantee that you are not going to be tricked at closing time, that you are not going to be misled, that you are not going to be undermined in any way.

If you want this to be a grace period where folks can say, ''Ah, I have an opportunity now,'' the lender can say, ''I have an opportunity to get a little more money out of this deal,'' and then you would say if they misled the consumer that the consumer does not have a right at all to raise a question about it, I don't think so. So we on this side of the aisle, we stand with consumers.

When consumers decide to purchase a home, it is the biggest purchase of most people's lives, and they should be afforded the broadest recourse available under the law.

Many errors can occur in this complicated process, some made in good faith, some that are not. For example, a lender might fail to properly disclose key loan terms, such as annual interest rates, finance charges, and other critical information associated with purchasing a home. If a borrower feels that they have been harmed, they should have an opportunity to have their day in court without limitation.

I fully support the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's announcement that it would engage in restrained enforcement actions against

lenders under their new mortgage disclosure rules. The Bureau made similar assurances in response to the mortgage underwriting and servicing rules that went into effect last year. And I fully expect the Bureau to do the same with these new disclosure rules that they have always done, to be responsive to Congress, industry, and other relevant stakeholders, and to make thoughtful decisions on the best way to proceed in protecting consumers. I have no reason to believe that they will not be as thoughtful in their approach to the new mortgage disclosures as they were with the mortgage underwriting and servicing rules.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 2 minutes.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. While I also support the provisions of H.R. 3192 that are consistent with the CFPB's action to date, my support ends when the vital consumer protections, like the private right of action afforded to consumers under the Truth in Lending Act, are weakened or, worse, completely eliminated.

Under current law, consumers that feel that a lender provided an inaccurate or misleading mortgage disclosure can file suit under the Truth in Lending Act, and lenders are forced to prove that the disclosures they provided were consistent with the act. The burden of proof is properly placed with the lenders, as they have the resources to prove their good faith intent, and consumers often have limited information at the time they file suit. H.R. 3192, however, would shield the lenders from liability if an error was committed in good faith even if a consumer relied on this information to their detriment.

The act or the effect of the good faith provision is that it requires that consumers prove from the onset of an action filed against a lender that an error was not made in good faith, a burden of proof that a borrower simply lacks the means to make. As a result, the good faith requirement in H.R. 3192 operates as yet another hurdle for consumers and is a harmful departure from current law.

So I offered the amendment. And the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) is correct. Why couldn't we have a debate on it? It is a very simple amendment.

This would help provide clarity to the marketplace while also protecting consumers. The amendment would simply restore a consumer's existing rights under TILA to bring an action during the temporary safe harbor period established by H.R. 3192 even if the action was filed in response to an error made by a lender in good faith.

Let me just say, whose side are you on? Are you on the side of consumers who expect you to protect them?

We have gone through a crisis in this country. We had a subprime meltdown. We discovered that consumers had been tricked. People buying homes had been misled. We discovered that they had loans that, well, they didn't even understand. We don't want to go back there. We want to protect consumers, and we have a right to do that. This amendment would have helped clarify that. You did not afford us that.

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

Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of things I want to make clear.

Earlier in my remarks, I acknowledged that the other side of the aisle agrees with us on an administrative grace period. The problem is, if they don't agree to both an administrative grace period and a grace period with regard to lawsuits for people acting in good faith—the key words here are ''good faith''—then there is no grace period because people will just choose to go sue during the grace period, and there will be no grace period.

It was good to hear the gentlewoman from California acknowledge that this is only a temporary good faith exception. It only lasts until February 1, 2016. It is just like the administrative grace period, and it only protects people in good faith.

Mr. Speaker, I will just ask the gentlewoman from California whether she believes somebody can act in good faith and also deceive and mislead at the same time, because her remarks imply that you can act in good faith while misleading and deceiving people.

□ 1315

I am not an attorney, but I would argue that good faith is really clear, and you are not acting in good faith when you deceive and mislead. Again, this bill should have been on the suspension calendar.

We shouldn't even have to be wasting time—valuable time—that we should be dealing with really important issues, as the gentleman from Massachusetts acknowledged earlier. But I did want to correct the RECORD on a few of those things.

Mr. Speaker, I think the key difference we have here is about whether good faith means anything. I would argue that the courts have found good faith means something. Every American knows what good faith is. This does not shift the burden. Those people being sued have to prove they acted in good faith.

So I think this is a really clear bill that provides a grace period for a limited amount of time, through February 1, 2016. But you have to provide both an administrative grace period and a grace period in the courts or there is no grace period at all.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR), a distinguished member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I applaud and thank my colleague from Ohio and my colleague from Arkansas for their leadership on this issue.

On May 22, I sent a bipartisan letter with my colleague, Congresswoman MALONEY, to CFPB Director Richard Cordray requesting a grace period for compliance with the TILA-RESPA Integrated Disclosure rule, or TRID. The letter was signed by 254 Members of Congress. Of those, 92 were Democrats.

TRID is a complex rule and compliance term requiring new, untested software to harmonize data from realtors, mortgage brokers, lenders, land title agents, and others involved in the closing process. All that our letter requested was a grace period for those making good faith efforts to comply with the rule. No delay in the rule, no reproposal, just a grace period.

We have listened to our constituents, and what they tell us is that innocent mistakes are inevitable as the disclosure software is tested in the real world for the first time. In fact, CFPB cited a mistake as the reason to delay implementation of the rule from August 1 until this past Saturday, October 3.

However, that delay and promises of sensitive enforcement do nothing to provide certainty that honest mistakes during the early days of TRID, when these untested systems are used in real transactions, will not be punished with fines and lawsuits. If the Bureau is allowed to make mistakes, then our constituents should also be allowed to make innocent mistakes without penalty for a brief period of time to establish the systems necessary to reliably comply.

The Bureau, however, has proven unwilling to act. So today we consider a bill that implements the grace period requested in that letter. The Homebuyers Assistance Act simply provides a grace period until February 1, 2016, to ensure that home buyers and sellers can be assured their transaction will not be delayed and industry participants won't need to fear enforcement actions or frivolous lawsuits over data issues or typos.

It is what 92 of our Democratic colleagues requested just 5 months ago. But today, faced with a legislative solution to the problem, our colleagues are balking. The President has issued a veto threat. Leader PELOSI is whipping her members against the bill.

This is quite baffling. It seems to me that the interests of trial lawyers are trumping those of consumers trying to buy or sell their homes. Make no mistake. Allowing immediate legal liability under TRID only benefits litigious attorneys and overzealous bureaucrats.

So, Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule and the underlying bill and hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will do the same.

In closing, let me just address the response that we should be on the side of consumers. That is absolutely correct. We should be on the side of consumers. What my constituents tell me back home is that, unfortunately, this new regulation doesn't make home buying simpler.

In fact, the number of pages are the same. Look at the regulation. Is this

pro-consumer? This is the regulation from Washington. This is complex. This is not simplification for consumers. This makes the home buying process more difficult.

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

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 2 minutes.

Mr. BARR. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, this makes the home buying process more difficult for consumers. But at the end of the day, even if we are going to go forward with this new, complicated regulation, 1,800 pages or so, at least—at least—give the participants—the closing attorneys, the title insurance agents, the Realtors, the advocates for the home buyers, and the advocates for the consumers—let them have a brief period of time where they can get up to speed with the complexity of this rule so that innocent mistakes are not punished and that home buyers are not punished.

Let's set the politics aside on this. This is not about Democrat or Republican here. We have got a big bipartisan letter. This is something that protects our constituents. This is what our constituents are telling us they need to come into compliance with this new, complex law.

Isn't buying and selling a home, isn't moving from home to home, complex enough? Let's not let the bureaucrats make it even more difficult.

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

Mr. Speaker, let me just say to my friend, the gentleman from Kentucky, I signed his letter. I agree with him. There should be a grace period. If that is what we were talking about right now, I don't think there would be much of a debate. We got what we wanted.

But ''yes'' is not a good enough answer for some of my friends on the other side of the aisle. So you bring something that might be a redundant bill. But I would be less exercised over voting for a redundant bill if that is all it was. But you expanded it. You added something that wasn't in the letter. Basically, you added something that we strongly believe jeopardizes consumers.

Now, what makes us even more exercised over here is that the Rules Committee reported out a rule that denied the right of the ranking member of the Financial Services Committee, Ms. WATERS of California, to bring an amendment to remedy that to the floor—a totally closed rule.

The one real controversy about what we are doing here today is this provision that we think hurts consumers, and we can't have a vote on it.

Mr. Speaker, the amendment was germane. She is the ranking member. We are only asking for 1 minute. We are not doing anything else here of any consequence. We are not trying to figure out our long-term budget problems. So you could give us another 10 minutes to debate an amendment, and you have chosen to not do that.

I will just say one other thing. Everybody holds up that prop, the 1,800 pages of regulations. But let's just help break it down because we are into a lot of props in this place. We ought to also understand what the facts are.

First, the 1,800 pages are contained in the double-spaced document. The text in the Federal Register is actually not 1,800 pages, but 634 pages, roughly one-third of that. The rule itself, the regulatory text, is only 26 pages—only 26 pages.

Mr. Speaker, 171 pages are sample and model forms which my friends on the other side of the aisle say we want the agency to help provide industry with concrete guidance. So there are 171 pages of sample and model forms in there. We have further breakdown here if my friends are interested.

Let's be clear. None of us here object. In fact, we all support the grace period. That is not what is contentious about this debate.

It is this anti-consumer provision that has been inserted in this bill by my Republican friends that have us concerned. At a minimum, the Rules Committee ought to have allowed for there to be a debate where that could be voted up or down. If my friends don't like it, they can vote ''no.''

Instead, we hear excuses, Oh, no, it wasn't offered in the full committee, as if that somehow is a reason to deny a Member the right to offer an amendment to the floor; Oh, we can't make it in order because, oh, it won't pass anyway, a new standard now by the Rules Committee in terms of what will be made in order.

Just give us the amendment. Let's have a real debate. Let's actually be deliberative for a change here.

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

Mr. STIVERS. Will the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) yield for the purpose of a colloquy?

Mr. MCGOVERN. I am happy to yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. STIVERS. I am curious if you are arguing—because it sounds to me like the gentleman from Massachusetts is arguing that we only want to give people protections from administrative actions; we don't want to give them equal protection in the courts that they are getting from administrative regulations when they are acting in good faith.

Is that what you are arguing?

Mr. MCGOVERN. What I am arguing——

Mr. STIVERS. If they are acting in good faith, they should still be allowed to be sued and they should still have all the penalties for a wrong comma——

Mr. MCGOVERN. What I am arguing——

Mr. STIVERS.—even if they are acting in good faith? I will yield the gentleman some time in a second.

But is that what you are arguing? If there is a comma misplaced or they accidentally tried to comply, but in good faith made an accident, you think they should suffer all the slings and arrows in court, even though they wouldn't suffer any slings and arrows from regulators?

I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) to answer that question.

Mr. MCGOVERN. What I have argued is that the burden shouldn't be on the consumer. Your legislation adds a whole new dimension to this debate that, quite frankly, has us concerned. At a minimum, it deserves a debate on this floor.

This is the rule. We are debating how we are going to debate the underlying legislation. I have not yet heard one reason why we can't have an amendment to try to correct what we think is an injustice and a potential harmful impact on our consumers.

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear an answer there. But the point is people deserve equal protection during a grace period in the courts if they acted in good faith. The key here is good faith. It is written right into the bill.

They deserve the same protections in court if they act in good faith that they deserve from administrative action from the regulators. They deserve the same help and remediation to get their deficits corrected as opposed to punitive action.

The problem is, without that provision—and let me add this is a temporary provision until February 1, 2016. The good faith protections don't even last past February 1. It is the same protection for the same time period in the courts as from administrative action.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR).

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, just briefly in response to my colleague from Massachusetts and the analysis that this 1,800-page regulation is just a prop and he blames about 171 pages on explanations and guidance and suggests that, well, that is a good thing, we want explanations and guidance from the bureaucrats to explain how this works, let me tell you what my constituents back in Kentucky are telling me what happens in the real world.

In the real world, how closing attorneys—this is a closing attorney in Kentucky who says this interprets this stack of paper, and he says, ''I am going to have to do two closings, a TRID-compliant closing and then another closing that actually informs my client what is going on in the transaction.''

Now, is that simplifying things for consumers? Does that make things easier for a home buyer and a home seller to have two closings, one that is TRID-compliant, compliant with the bureaucracy, and one that actually helps the home buyer with a HUD settlement statement? I don't think so.

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

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, the point here is that we should be making things easier. If it is so doggone complicated that you have to have two closings, at least give us 6 months to figure this thing out, 6 months of a grace period for good faith efforts to come into compliance where innocent mistakes happen.

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I would request how much time each side has remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Ohio has 6 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Massachusetts has 6½ minutes remaining.

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time, and I would inform my colleague I am prepared to close.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, let me again say we have no objection to a grace period. In fact, we support it. I signed the gentleman from Kentucky's letter. That is not the controversy here. It is what we think is language that could do potential harm to consumers.

Let me just say to the gentleman, in the real world, we have seen consumers get a raw deal time and time again, in large part because of the lack of oversight and the lack of defense they get in this Chamber.

So, yes, we are standing up for consumers because we don't want to see them continue to get a raw deal. That is what we are concerned about.

If you want to disagree with me on that, fine. But that is no reason to not allow there to be a debate on an amendment that is germane to this bill that would correct what we think is a flaw in this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS.)

Ms. MAXINE WATERS from California. Mr. Speaker and Members, we have to keep saying over and over again that this is not about the grace period. They keep arguing that somehow they favor a grace period, and we do not.

We have made it clear that is not what the debate is about. We support a grace period. Not only that, Mr. Cordray at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau supports a grace period. That is not the argument here.

The argument is what you don't want to talk about, my amendment that I attempted. You came to this floor with a closed rule to keep us from talking about an amendment that would protect the consumers. My amendment would allow that consumers have a right to have their day in court.

When you talk about good faith and the way that this bill is written, of course. In my opinion, when a consumer in this grace period takes a look at the documents and if it is simply a comma, as one has indicated, well, that could be a mistake in good faith, and the lender will be okay.

□ 1330

But when the interest rates change, when there are more fees than were anticipated, when the cost of that mortgage goes up and the consumer says, ''Hey, this is not what I really intended. This is not what I agreed to,'' and the lender says, ''Sorry, that is it. That is what you signed up for,'' then the consumer has a right to go to court. And even though you would place the responsibility on the consumer to have to prove that the lender did not act in good faith, different from what the law is now, that consumer should have the right to go to court and make his or her case.

That is what this amendment is all about, and you know it. It is not about bringing your props in trying to say this is the bill. That is not the bill. You have all of the comments and everything else that is associated with the bill. So let's get some truth out here and have people understand what the amendment is and not just props showing that you have thousands of pages of a bill.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts has 3½ minutes remaining.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remainder of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I insert into the RECORD a letter signed by a number of civil rights organizations, all opposed to this bill because of the provision that Ms. WATERS and I have been talking about now for close to an hour.

OCTOBER 5, 2015.

DEAR MEMBER OF CONGRESS: We are writing to urge you to oppose H.R. 3192, which insulates lenders from accountability when they make misleading disclosures to homeowners. The bill, which suspends liability to individuals and government for the first four months after the new mortgage disclosure rules take effect, undermines compliance with the new rules by letting lenders off the hook even where homeowners have been harmed. Homeowners who would receive false or misleading mortgage cost disclosures during such a period would have no remedy. Moreover, it sets a dangerous precedent by suspending liability where legal rules apply.

The mortgage industry, after having had approximately two years to implement the new disclosure requirements, was given an additional reprieve when the effective date was extended to October 3, 2015. Moreover, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has repeatedly demonstrated its responsiveness to concerns about implementation of this rule and to mortgage rules generally. Director Cordray announced in June that the Bureau would be sensitive to good faith efforts to implement the new rule, and recently the Bureau and the prudential regulators offered greater detail on how initial examinations for compliance with the rule will take into account systems adopted to promote compliance. The Bureau successfully used a similar approach for implementation of the ability to repay rule and also demonstrated its responsiveness to lenders by adjusting the small creditor definition for that rule.

The time has now come to let the combined TILA/RESPA disclosures take effect. The disclosure form will give consumers expanded information before making the biggest purchase of their lives. A carve-out will provide an opportunity for some to evade the rules and will generally inhibit incentives to comply promptly. A rule without enforcement is no rule at all.

H.R. 3192 seeks to establish a ''good faith'' standard for exemption from the rule. However, the CFPB already has the authority to take into account good-faith efforts to comply with regulations. In contrast, a homeowner who receives false or misleading disclosures would face significant hurdles in overcoming a good-faith requirement. Even if a lender acted in good faith, the homeowner would still have agreed to the loan based on incorrect information and would have no recourse.

It would be dangerous to set a new precedent of suspending private enforcement for violations of a law that is in effect. The ability of consumers to protect themselves is essential to the efficacy of legal requirements. An individual homeowner, however, is not in a position to prove whether the lender operated in good faith. While few homeowners ever bring a legal case, those who do generally have faced substantial harm and have a right to redress.

Lenders are not subject to any liability at all under the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (RESPA) for violations of the disclosure requirements because the law does not allow for private rights of action for such cases. In addition, the Truth in Lending Act (TILA) already includes provisions protecting creditors from errors made in good faith (such as timing of disclosures). For TILA errors involving numerical disclosures, Congress already has allowed creditors to overstate the actual amount without penalty, and the CFPB's rule for the new disclosures permits third party fees to exceed the earlier estimates by up to ten percent. As a result, homeowners who seek redress have received markedly inaccurate disclosures.

Litigation is a last resort and rarely undertaken. Few consumers seek out attorneys even when they are injured. Moreover, TILA provides for payment of attorney fees only if the lawsuit is successful, so attorneys are reluctant to take on cases unless violations are clear.

The incidence of private litigation under the Truth in Lending Act is fairly rare, especially in comparison to the volume of mortgage loans and credit generally outstanding in the United States. Even during a financial crisis that rivaled the Great Depression, only a tiny fraction of mortgage loans became the focus of TILA litigation.

We urge you to oppose H.R. 3192, which would remove key incentives for lenders to comply with the new mortgage disclosures and leave homeowners who have been misled with no recourse.

Sincerely,

Americans for Financial Reform
California Reinvestment Coalition
Connecticut Fair Housing Center
Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED)
Empire Justice Center
Homeownership Preservation Foundation
Housing and Economic Rights Advocates
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
NAACP
National Association of Consumer Advocates
National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low-income clients)
National Fair Housing Alliance

North Carolina Justice Center
U.S. PIRG
Woodstock Institute.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, it is clear we have a disagreement here, and it ought to be resolved in an open and fair fashion with a debate and a vote on an amendment. We are not going to have that.

So I am just going to close by saying to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle I have got a radical idea for what I think is the greatest democratic institution in the world, the United States Congress. That radical idea is that we ought to allow a little democracy to happen here. We ought to not be afraid of debate. We ought to not be afraid of allowing at least one amendment—that is all, one amendment—to come to the floor so that the concerns that we have voiced on our side of the aisle, a worry that consumers will once again become victims and get a raw deal, could be avoided. We ought to have that debate, and we ought to vote up or down on it.

This grace period is, as I said, supported by everybody. It is supported by the CFPB. We are all on board on that. That is not the controversy. The controversy is this added stuff. And the way the majority has decided to handle this—to shut the whole process down—that is, I think, beneath what this institution should be about.

So I would urge my colleagues in the strongest possible terms to please vote against this rule. Send a message to the leadership here that we need to do this better. We need a better process. This process is lousy, and we all should be fed up with it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to address the thing that the gentleman has continued to talk about: good faith.

Good faith is known in all 50 States. It has been enacted in the Uniform Commercial Code. It is kind of interpreted two ways.

And, by the way, the defendants are the ones who have to prove they acted in good faith, not the litigants, not the people who bring the lawsuit, but the defendants have to meet one of two standards to prove they acted in good faith.

Number one is a reasonableness standard. In general, they relied on something. They were reasonable in their dealings. The plaintiff does not have to prove anything, just the defendant.

The second also uses reasonableness, but it is about intent. If they intended to comply with the standard, that is the other thing that the defendant brings forward.

I want to be clear here. Nothing changes the standard for a plaintiff in this. So this whole argument about whether somebody can act in good faith and yet deceive people, any court in the land would say that can't happen. You can't deceive somebody and say you acted in good faith. That is not good faith.

So we stand with consumers who want to close on their homes for the American Dream in a timely way. We also stand by those who are trying in good faith to comply with 1,886 pages of regulation. It is important to note that this is a temporary standard through February 1, 2016, to give people a grace period from both administrative actions and legal actions. You have to give them a grace period in both categories.

If you only give an administrative grace period, as the other side of the aisle has argued, everyone will simply run to the courts and there is no grace period there for good faith efforts. Good faith is important. It means something. We stand with consumers. We do not stand with trial lawyers.

This bill allows a transition period to occur and ensure that buyers and sellers can have closings during that period, and those that are acting in good faith will be protected from both regulation and litigation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the rule and the underlying bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YODER). 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. MCGOVERN. 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.

RAISING A QUESTION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to a question of the privileges of the House and offer the resolution previously noticed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the resolution.

The Clerk read as follows:

Whereas the attacks in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11, 2012, took the lives of U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens, Foreign Service Officer Sean Smith, and former Navy SEALs Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty;

Whereas the events leading up to and in the immediate aftermath of the attacks on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi were rightfully and thoroughly examined to honor the memory of the victims and to improve the safety of the men and women serving our country overseas;

Whereas the independent Accountability Review Board convened by the U.S. State Department investigated the events in Benghazi and found no evidence of deliberate wrongdoing;

Whereas five committees in the U.S. House of Representatives investigated the events in Benghazi and found no evidence of deliberate wrongdoing;

Whereas four committees in the U.S. Senate investigated the events in Benghazi and found no evidence of deliberate wrongdoing;

Whereas in each fiscal year, more than $4 billion is appropriated to run the Congress, with untold amounts of this taxpayer money expended by nine Congressional committees to investigate the events in Benghazi, none of which produced any evidence of deliberate wrongdoing;

Whereas after the exhaustive, thorough, and costly investigations by nine Congressional committees and the independent Accountability Review Board found no evidence of deliberate wrongdoing, Republican leaders in the House insisted on using taxpayer dollars to fund a new, duplicative ''Select Committee on the Events Surrounding the 2012 Terrorist Attack in Benghazi,'' (hereafter the Select Committee) to re-examine the matter;

Whereas this taxpayer-funded committee was given broad powers to pursue its investigations, including an unlimited, taxpayer-funded budget and granting the Chairman the legal authority to subpoena documents and compel testimony without any debate or a vote;

Whereas the ongoing Republican-led investigation into the events in Benghazi is now one of the longest running and least productive investigations in Congressional history;

Whereas a widely-quoted statement made on September 29th, 2015 by Representative Kevin McCarthy, the Republican Leader of the House of Representatives, has called into question the integrity of the proceedings of the Select Committee and the House of Representatives as a whole;

Whereas this statement by Representative McCarthy demonstrates that the Select Committee established by Republican leaders in the House of Representatives was created to influence public opinion of a presidential candidate;

Whereas the Select Committee has been in existence for 17 months but has held only three hearings;

Whereas the Select Committee abandoned its plans to obtain public testimony from Defense Department and Intelligence Community leaders;

Whereas the Select Committee excluded Democratic Members from interviews of witnesses who provided exculpatory information related to its investigation;

Whereas information obtained by the Select Committee has been selectively and inaccurately leaked to influence the electoral standing of a candidate for public office;

Whereas such actions represent an abuse of power that demonstrates the partisan nature of the Select Committee;

Whereas the Select Committee has spent more than $4.5 million in taxpayer funds to date to advance its partisan efforts;

Whereas this amount does not include the costs of the independent Accountability Review Board; the hearings and reports by nine Congressional committees; the time, money, and resources consumed by Federal agencies to comply with Select Committee requests; or the opportunity cost of not spending this money elsewhere, such as improving security for our diplomatic officers abroad;

Whereas it is an outrage that more than $4.5 million in taxpayer funds have been used by Republicans in the House of Representatives, not to run the government, but to interfere inappropriately with an election for president of the United States;

Whereas the use of taxpayer dollars by the House of Representatives for campaign purposes is a violation of the Rules of the House and Federal law;

Resolved, That:

1) this misuse of the official resources of the House of Representatives for political purposes undermines the integrity of the proceedings of the House and brings discredit to the House;

2) the integrity of the proceedings of the House can be fully restored only by the dissolution of the Select Committee; and

3) the Select Committee shall be dismantled and is hereby directed to make public within thirty days transcripts of all unclassified interviews and depositions it has conducted.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would entertain argument on whether the resolution qualifies as a question of the privileges of the House.

Does any Member seek recognition?

If not, the Chair will rule.

The gentlewoman from New York seeks to offer a resolution as a question of the privileges of the House under rule IX. The resolution alleges that a select committee established by order of the House has misused House resources for a political purpose and proposes to dismantle the select committee.

In evaluating the resolution under rule IX, the Chair must determine whether the resolution affects ''the rights of the House collectively, its safety, dignity, and the integrity of its proceedings.'' In addition, Cannon's Precedents, volume 6, section 395 cites the precedent of September 24, 1917, for the proposition that ''the presence of unprivileged matter destroys the privilege of a resolution otherwise privileged.'' That ruling is the foundation for the principle that either the entire resolution is privileged, or none of it is.

Section 706 of the House Rules and Manual documents several precedents holding that a resolution alleging a question of the privileges of the House may not collaterally challenge a rule of the House.

One such precedent occurred on January 23, 1984. On that date, Speaker O'Neill ruled that a resolution directing a change in political ratios of committee membership did not qualify as a question of privilege because that issue could be otherwise presented to the House in a privileged manner. The Speaker noted that the resolution itself did not constitute a change in the rules of the House, but nevertheless held that the resolution did not qualify because it presented a collateral challenge to an adopted rule of the House.

The Chair would also note the events of January 31, 1996, when a resolution directing the Speaker to withdraw an invitation for a foreign head of state to address a joint meeting of Congress was held not to present a question of privilege because it proposed a collateral change in a previous order of the House.

In each of these cases, the crucial question was whether the resolution presented a collateral challenge to an existing rule or order of the House.

The resolution offered by the gentlewoman from New York proposes to dismantle the Select Committee on the Events Surrounding the 2012 Terrorist Attack in Benghazi, which was established in the 114th Congress by section 4(a) of House Resolution 5, adopted by the House on January 6, 2015. The resolution presents a collateral challenge to that order of the House. As such, the resolution does not constitute a question of the privileges of the House.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I appeal the ruling of the Chair.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is, Shall the decision of the Chair stand as the judgment of the House?

MOTION TO TABLE

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to lay the appeal on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to table.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on the motion to table will be followed by a 5-minute vote on adoption of House Resolution 462.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 240, nays 183, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 536]

YEAS—240

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
Culberson
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
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
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
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
Reichert
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)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—183

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
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
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
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Pelosi
Perlmutter
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, 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
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—11

Dingell
Granger
Hinojosa
Hudson
Lummis
Payne
Scott (VA)
Sinema
Smith (TX)
Walorski
Williams

□ 1413

So the motion to table was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3192, HOMEBUYERS ASSISTANCE ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 12, 2015, THROUGH OCTOBER 19, 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on adoption of the resolution (H. Res. 462) providing for consideration of the bill (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, and providing for proceedings during the period from October 12, 2015, through October 19, 2015, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 238, nays 181, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 537]

YEAS—238

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
Culberson
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
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
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
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
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
Reichert
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)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walden
Walker
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—181

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
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
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
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Pelosi
Perlmutter
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, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—15

Dingell
Forbes
Granger
Hinojosa
Hudson
Lummis
Payne
Scott (VA)
Sinema
Smith (TX)
Speier
Velázquez
Walberg
Walorski
Williams

□ 1421

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.

PERMISSION TO POSTPONE ADOPTION OF MOTION TO RECOMMIT ON H.R. 3192, HOMEBUYERS ASSISTANCE ACT

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the question of adopting a motion to recommit on H.R. 3192 may be subject to postponement as though under clause 8 of rule XX.

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

There was no objection.

HOMEBUYERS ASSISTANCE ACT

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 462, I call up the bill (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, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 462, the bill is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3192

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 ''Homebuyers Assistance Act''.

SEC. 2. ENFORCEMENT SAFE HARBOR.

The integrated disclosure requirements for mortgage loan transactions under section 4(a) of the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 (12 U.S.C. 2603(a)), section 105(b) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1604(b)), and regulations issued under such sections may not be enforced against any person until February 1, 2016, and no suit may be filed against any person for a violation of such requirements occurring before such date, so long as such person has made a good faith effort to comply with such requirements.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill shall be debatable for 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

submit extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3192, the Homebuyers Assistance Act. It is a very modest act, and it also happens to be a very bipartisan act, that would bring some temporary relief to mortgage market participants who are attempting to secure financing and close on their homes. It will help allow there to be a transition period for a very complicated rule that has been promulgated by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau that went into effect Saturday.

Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that hardworking Americans do not lose out on the opportunity for their portion of the American Dream, including home ownership, as this new rule is brought to bear.

Now, let me be the first to say that as a Member of this body who finds very little good to be found in the Dodd-Frank Act, directing the CFPB to try to make disclosures more simple and more easily and readily understandable is a good thing. But the problem, Mr. Speaker, is in trying to integrate something called TILA, the Truth in Lending Act, disclosures with something called RESPA, the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act, two different acts.

To try to reconcile those two, the CFPB promulgated a 1,888-page rule, complete with guidance. So now those who are involved in the marketplace trying to help finance homes are left with this behemoth to try to put into their computer systems, their IT systems, into training. Being able to streamline disclosures is a very, very important thing to do, but it is fairly difficult to do when there are almost 2,000 pages of complex, compound, complicated language.

We know that when these new systems are put into place, Mr. Speaker, there can be glitches. There can be temporary setbacks. Sometimes the software doesn't quite work as intended. Just ask those in charge of the ObamaCare rollout. ObamaCare was on the books as law for many, many years before the rollout came, and it was a disastrous rollout. I have no doubt people were operating in good faith, but they rolled it out and it failed.

So all over America, title agencies and mortgage lenders are having to change their software, having to change their process and procedures. We don't want low- and moderate-income people who finally put enough money away for a down payment to be set back in their attempt to get their mortgage.

I want to thank the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL), who is the author of the bill. It is, again, a very, very bipartisan bill. I want to thank him for his leadership. And before that, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) had been very, very engaged in this issue. I want to thank them for their leadership, because without it, again, what we are looking at here is people losing out on the opportunity to close on their homes.

And so the bill is a simple bill. It says: You know what? For 4 months let's create a temporary, trial period and safe harbor for those who act in good faith in trying to implement this new 1,888-page behemoth rule. Let's allow a little bit of a transition period to hold these people harmless if they act in good faith.

Again, Mr. Speaker, if they are acting in good faith.

Yes, I assume the CFPB, which promulgated the rule, acted in good faith. But guess what, Mr. Speaker, they violated the law in rolling out this rule, and yet they were held harmless in their so-called trial period. Can't we do the same for those who are trying to make the American Dream of home ownership come true?

If we do not pass this bill, I am afraid what we will hear is what I have heard from different people back in my home State of Texas. What I heard from one Texas land title man is:

> No question, more conservative lending in sales volumes will result. This will impact both buyers and sellers. And the new rules could have a cost impact. Lenders may decide to raise fees to cover potential exposure.

□ 1430

Another real estate individual in Texas went on to say large lenders have already announced they are not going to do one-time closings anymore due to the uncertainty.

We are hearing all kinds of language, and that is one of the reasons that 255 Members of this body, Mr. Speaker, including 91 Democrats, wrote to the head of the CFPB asking him to do exactly what this bill would do.

It is not just limited to the House side. Forty-one Senators signed almost an identical letter asking the CFPB director for this very short period of time for people who operate in good faith to be held harmless and not to be sued, not to be fined, not to be persecuted, so that the American people can enjoy their right of home ownership.

It is a modest bill. It is a bipartisan bill. It is for the homeowner. I urge its adoption.

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

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes for an opening statement.

I rise today in opposition to H.R. 3192, a proposal that I believe erodes consumers' ability to have their day in court and that undermines efforts to comply with the CFPB's new TILA-RESPA Integrated Disclosure act.

When I say TILA and RESPA, I am talking about the Truth in Lending Act and the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act.

Mr. Speaker, I stand in full support of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's decision to engage in restrained enforcement of the new disclosure rules until 2016, and I support the FFIEC's recent announcement that prudential regulators' supervision of financial institutions' compliance with the new rules will recognize the scope and scale of the changes necessary for financial institutions and other affected entities to effectively comply.

Simply speaking, when the business community and Democrats and Republicans all basically said, ''We believe that these integrated rules are complicated. It is going to take industry time to get up to speed,'' they have got to change their paper. They have got to train their employees, et cetera, et cetera. We all agree that there should be a grace period.

So, with that, my support for a temporary period of restrained administrative enforcement and supervision reflects the recognition of the massive undertaking that lenders and other settlement providers have undergone in preparation for the new disclosure rules.

Now, given the administrative liability that lenders would face under both the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act and the Truth in Lending Act, I fully understand the real concerns that affected entities have, given the scale and scope of the changes called for under the new disclosure rules.

Mr. Speaker, industry requests to date that the Bureau and other Federal regulators take a more thoughtful approach with respect to their enforcement and supervision is reasonable.

My support for the actions taken to date by regulators to consider good faith compliance efforts by lenders and other entities affected by the new disclosure rules does not, however, extend to suspending, even temporarily, one of the more important consumer protections available to the Truth in Lending Act, which is a consumer's right to bring an action protecting themselves in the event that a lender makes an inaccurate, untimely, misleading disclosure.

Basically, what we are talking about now is who is going to protect the consumer in all of this. We are saying that there is a need to protect consumers. Those who oppose the amendment that I tried to bring to the floor to do just that are saying they are not on the side of the consumer.

While the good faith provision in H.R. 3192 does allow consumers to bring actions in response to egregious violations of the Truth in Lending Act, consumers can still rely on inaccurate or misleading disclosure errors that are made in good faith.

Under current law, borrowers can bring an action where a disclosure is inaccurate or misleading, even if the error is made in good faith, and the burden under current law is on the

lender to prove that their disclosure is consistent with the Truth in Lending Act.

Now we have a change. In contrast, under H.R. 3192, this legislation, the burden is placed on the consumer to demonstrate from the onset of an action that the error was not made in good faith, a bar that is virtually impossible for most consumers to overcome. That is a drastic departure from current law.

The private right of action under the Truth in Lending Act serves two important purposes:

First, it allows consumers to protect themselves from inaccurate, untimely, or misleading mortgage disclosures.

Second, through the act's provision of statutory and class-action damages, as well as attorneys' fees and court costs, TILA also provides clear incentives for lenders to ensure that the disclosures they provide are timely and accurate.

I just want to take a look at what the TILA-RESPA Integrated Disclosure would require. Let us take a look at what we are talking about.

In this document, they identify the amounts for the loan, the interest rates, the monthly principal and interest, whether or not there are prepayment penalties, whether or not there is a balloon payment, on and on and on. It gets down to exactly what is being disclosed to the consumer.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds just to say that, if the ranking member is supportive of a safe harbor, she has a funny way of showing it.

I would remind her that there is no private right of action under RESPA. There is one under TILA. But under TILA, there is an exception, a safe harbor for unintentional violations and bona fide errors, which will be found in section 1640 of title 15.

There is another safe harbor for good faith compliance with rule regulation and interpretation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL), the sponsor of the bill.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me some time on this important measure.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3192, the Homebuyers Assistance Act, this commonsense, bipartisan bill which will provide certainty for the short transition period for the real estate industry, preventing costly market disruptions and delays for American homebuyers.

I thank Mr. SHERMAN for his help in design and leadership. I also thank my friends, Mr. VARGAS and Mr. PEARCE, who worked on this bill as well.

This straightforward measure will provide a temporary hold harmless period from enforcement action and litigation during the initial implementation of this new TILA-RESPA Integrated Disclosure form. This rule, by the way, became effective this past Saturday.

Companies out in the real world are trying to get this closing regime right and have spent billions of dollars in updating their systems and hundreds of man-hours training employees to comply with this 1,800-page rule.

Again, I remind my colleagues that, at the height of the Depression, in rewriting all of America's banking laws, the Banking Act of 1933 consumed only 37 pages.

There is no opportunity to test. This is a bright-line rule that just turns on. You have to have new forms and new, substantive changes, and these compliance challenges are many.

This temporary grace period will allow the industry to work with the CFPB to ensure a smooth transition. As previously noted, 300 bipartisan Members have urged this grace period, including the ranking member.

We are here today by the inadequate response of the CFPB to a lot of concerns across our Nation, from Realtors, mortgage lenders, title companies, people in the appraisal business.

Mr. Cordray could have provided this certainty, just like HUD did for the revised RESPA disclosures back in 2010. But statements from Mr. Cordray like the industry can ''read between the lines'' doesn't constitute certainty in the real world.

It might here in the Beltway. But as a Member of Congress who until the end of 2014 was CEO of a community bank, I can assure you that kind of ''read between the lines'' certainty doesn't work in the real world.

A recent survey by the American Bankers Association indicated over 40 percent of institutions have not yet received compliance software needed to implement TRID. It is very frustrating to Members on both sides of the aisle, particularly after the number of years that we have talked about a new TRID form. But, nonetheless, it is a fact. Ninety percent of institutions were still testing the incorporation into their lending platforms.

I can tell you this is more complicated than it looks to someone who is a bureaucrat in Washington. You have got a loan operating system and a loan doc prep system typically from two different vendors. Both require software changes.

Three-quarters of those surveyed in the mortgage banking industry said they needed an additional 3 weeks to 4 months for additional debugging and testing. So this commonsense bill will allow them to perform that task, not disrupt closings, and allow people to have a safe harbor from potential litigation or enforcement penalties.

One bank in Arkansas called me Monday, 2 days after TRID went live, to say they are still not expected to get the final fix from their software providers until Thanksgiving.

In addition to these kinds of operating implementation issues, many are still out there waiting for clarification from the CFPB on certain issues.

The chairman mentioned one-time close. One of the most popular products in banking today, particularly among community banks, is a construction-to-permanent mortgage closing, where one can build their home and go to a permanent loan closing all with one application and one set of forms and a single closing.

But because of confusion over how to properly disclose information under the new TRID form, I think this is a problem. Several banks, as noted, are going to cease one-time construction-to-permanent loan making, again, one of the most popular products in community banking.

I want to emphasize that this temporary protection only applies to those making a good faith effort to comply to this very complex rule. It in no way alters the underlying rule.

While I disagree with much of Dodd-Frank, I support the general purpose of this rule, which is to attempt to streamline and simplify mortgage disclosures for consumers, albeit, comparing the forms side by side, I don't know if that was accomplished or not. But it is absolutely a worthy objective.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. HILL. Our title companies, bankers, and others in the industry who are earnestly trying to comply with these new TRID rules need to have the confidence and certainty that they can go into this closing regime giving excellent customer service, and not be looking over their shoulder for an inadvertent penalty or civil litigation.

Mr. Speaker, we are pro-consumer. 400,000 consumers buy a home every month in this country, and over 230,000 consumers refinance a mortgage. All will be positively impacted by this temporary measure. I urge its consideration.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY).

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and for her leadership as ranking member on the Financial Services Committee.

I rise in opposition to H.R. 3192. The Democrats have worked very hard to protect consumers and, in fact, in Dodd-Frank, created the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which has already returned $11 billion to 25 million consumers in just the first 4 years of its existence. Their goal is to protect consumers, and that is what they have done in the new rule that they came out with.

Democrats believe that consumers deserve easy-to-understand disclosures of the cost of buying and financing a home. So, in response to the mortgage crisis, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has proposed to streamline and combine the disclosures that consumers get when they are buying a

home so it is easier for them to understand.

□ 1445

They used to get multiple disclosure forms, some under the Truth in Lending Act and some under the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act, or RESPA. Now the CFPB has streamlined them into a new Integrated Disclosure, which is important because it will make it far easier for Americans to understand the loan terms and the fees that they are paying when they buy a home.

But implementing a brand-new Integrated Disclosure form will also be complicated, and it will take the industry some time to adjust to the new rules. And industry raised those concerns to us.

This bill would give lenders a safe harbor from the CFPB's Integrated Disclosure rule until February 21, 2016.

While I think that this bill addresses an important issue because implementing the new Integrated Disclosure forms will be complex, the truth is that the CFPB has already given the industry significant relief on the rule. They have already done it.

Along with my colleague and very good friend from Kentucky, Mr. BARR, we led a bipartisan letter which was signed by 254 Members of this body, including Ranking Member WATERS, requesting a grace period on the Integrated Disclosure requirement.

I include for the RECORD the letter that the gentleman from Kentucky and I circulated with all 254 signatures, as well as the letter we received in response.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, May 20, 2015.

Hon. RICHARD CORDRAY,
Director, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

DEAR DIRECTOR CORDRAY: The undersigned Members of Congress acknowledge that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB or Bureau) has done significant work on the TILA–RESPA Integrated Disclosure (TRID) regulation. Nevertheless, this complicated and extensive rule is likely to cause challenges during implementation, which is currently scheduled for August 1, 2015, that could negatively impact consumers. As you know, the housing market is highly seasonal, with August, September, and October consistently being some of the busiest months of the year for home sales and settlements. By contrast, January and February are consistently the slowest months of the year for real estate activity. We therefore encourage the Bureau to announce and implement a ''grace period'' for those seeking to comply in good faith from August 1st through the end of 2015.

Even with significant advance notice, understanding how to implement and comply with this regulation will only become clear when the industry gains experience using these new forms and processes in real-life situations. As the TRID regulation does not provide lenders an opportunity to start using the new disclosure form prior to the August 1st implementation date, market participants will not be able to test their systems and procedures ahead of time, which increases the risk of unanticipated disruptions on August 1st. That is why we believe that a grace period for those seeking to comply in good faith from August 1st through the end of 2015 would be particularly useful in these circumstances. During this time, industry can provide data to the CFPB on issues that arise so that the Bureau and industry can work together to remove impediments to the effectiveness of the rule.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If we may be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

SIGNED: 254 MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.

CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU,
Washington, DC, June 3, 2015.

Hon. ANDY BARR,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. CAROLYN B. MALONEY,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES BARR AND MALONEY: Thank you for your letter about implementation of the TILA–RESPA Integrated Disclosure Rule, which we finalized nineteen months ago to carry out the law enacted by Congress. We share your desire for a smooth and successful implementation of the Rule, and we continue to work closely with all stakeholders to support that goal. Like you, we recognize that successful implementation poses challenges to industry and benefits both industry and consumers, but in any event requires close collaboration between industry and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

As you may know, the Bureau has taken many steps to support industry implementation and to help creditors, vendors, and others affected by the Rule to better understand, operationalize, and prepare to comply with the Rule's new streamlined disclosures. Since the Rule was first published in November 2013, we have made it a point to engage directly and intensively with financial institutions and vendors through a formal regulatory implementation project. The Bureau's regulatory implementation project for the Rule includes the following:

Inter-agency coordination. In-depth exam procedures were approved by the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council in February 2015 and published by CFPB on April 1, 2015. The Bureau's own examination procedures incorporating the FFIEC exam procedures were published on May 4, 2015.

Publish ''readiness guide,'' plain-language guides, and other resources. The ''readiness guide'' includes a broad check-list of things for industry to do prior to the Rule's effective date. The Bureau has also published a compliance guide, a guide to the new integrated disclosure forms, and an illustrative timeline.

Publish amendments and updates to the Rule in response to industry requests. In January 2015, after extensive outreach to stakeholders, the Bureau adopted two minor modifications and technical amendments to the Rule to smooth compliance for industry.

Provide unofficial staff guidance. Bureau staff attorneys have provided oral guidance in response to over 750 regulatory interpretation inquiries, received from trade associations and through the CFPB_RegInquiries@cfpb.gov email address since the Rule was issued.

Engage with stakeholders. Bureau staff have provided remarks and addressed questions about the Rule and related implementation matters at over 40 formal events and over 50 informal stakeholder meetings since the Rule was issued.

Cmiduct webinars. The Bureau has conducted a series of five free, publicly available webinars, available for viewing through the Bureau's website, that provide guidance on how to interpret and apply specific provisions.

Clarify misunderstandings. Today we are releasing a fact sheet explaining the limited circumstances when the Rule requires that the consumer be provided an additional three-day review period. Only three specific changes require an additional three-day review period: (1) an increase in the APR of greater than 1/8 of a percentage point for a fixed-rate loan or 1/4 of a percentage point for an adjustable-rate loan (decreases in the APR based on a decrease in the interest rate or fees charged do not trigger a delay); (2) the addition of a prepayment penalty; and (3) changes in the loan product, from a fixed-rate to an adjustable-rate loan, for example. Importantly, no other changes require a delay for re-disclosure.

Your letter raises a further important matter. As you have suggested, the Bureau's work to support the implementation of the Rule does not end on the effective date of August 1, as we continue to work with industry, consumers, and other stakeholders to answer questions, provide guidance, and support a smooth transition for the mortgage market. As we do so, and in response to considerable input we have received from you and your constituents, I have spoken with our fellow regulators to clarify that our oversight of the implementation of the Rule will be sensitive to the progress made by those entities that have squarely focused on making good-faith efforts to come into compliance with the Rule on time. My statement here of this approach is intended to ease some of the concerns we have heard about this transition to new processes in the coming months and is consistent with the approach we took to implementation of the Title XIV mortgage rules in the early months after the effective dates in January 2014, which has worked out well.

As always, thank you for your strong interest in the Bureau's work, and I personally appreciate your oversight efforts. I hope you can see, here again, that we listen closely and consider carefully how we can best address the issues that you raise as we all pursue this important advance in consumer protection and disclosure authorized by Congress. Please contact me if you have any additional questions or Bureau staff can meet with your staff, should that be helpful to you.

Sincerely,

RICHARD CORDRAY,
Director.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Within 2 weeks, we received a letter back from the CFPB, promising that they would do a grace period.

I thank Director Cordray for responding so quickly to the gentleman from Kentucky's concerns and my concerns.

The grace period that the Bureau did for the qualified mortgage rule, which they gave earlier, was very successful, and I have no doubt that the grace period for the Integrated Disclosure rule will be just as successful.

In fact, the Integrated Disclosure rule took effect last Saturday, which means that the grace period that Director Cordray promised—which this bill would codify—is already in effect. The grace period is happening right now, and that is why this bill is just absolutely not necessary.

It is also important to note that the bill would prohibit consumers from suing for improper disclosure during the grace period. Now, that is of deep concern to me because that takes a right away from consumers.

I certainly did not come to Congress to vote in any way to limit or roll back consumer protections. So this was something that I am incredibly uncomfortable with because I don't think it is a good idea to suspend both public enforcement and private enforcement through lawsuits at the same time. I don't think that is good policy because it takes away all the guardrails for consumers during this grace period.

This is also something that the White House strongly opposes. In fact, they have issued a veto threat on this bill because they feel so strongly about maintaining consumers' private right to sue.

And I will place into the RECORD a statement from President Obama's White House, stating that he is opposed to rolling back any rights of consumers.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET,

Washington, DC, October 6, 2015.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 3192—HOMEBUYERS ASSISTANCE ACT

(Rep. Hill, R–AR, and one cosponsor)

Americans deserve clear and easy to understand disclosures of the cost of buying and financing a home, which is why the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act directed the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to streamline conflicting disclosures that were required under the Truth in Lending Act and the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act. The Know Before You Owe regulation issued by the CFPB almost two years ago fulfills this mandate by requiring mortgage lenders and settlement agents to provide homebuyers with simpler forms that explain the true cost of buying their home at least three days before closing. This summer, the CFPB extended the effective date for these requirements by two months, to last Saturday, October 3, 2015, to provide for a smooth transition and avoid unnecessary disruptions to busy families seeking to close on a new home at the beginning of the school year.

H.R. 3192 would revise the effective date for the Know Before You Owe rule to February 1, 2016, and would shield lenders from liability for violations for loans originated before February 1 so long as lenders made a good faith effort to comply.

The CFPB has already clearly stated that initial examinations will evaluate good faith efforts by lenders. The Administration strongly opposes H.R. 3192, as it would unnecessarily delay implementation of important consumer protections designed to eradicate opaque lending practices that contribute to risky mortgages, hurt homeowners by removing the private right of action for violations, and undercut the Nation's financial stability.

If the President were presented with H.R. 3192, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto the bill.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. So while I am very sympathetic to the concerns that motivated this bill, I have to oppose the bill because I believe it is unnecessary.

They say the purpose is to codify it. Mr. Cordray responded to Congress' request. They responded to industry's request, and they granted the grace period. We have it. So this bill does nothing but roll back consumer protections.

I would urge my colleagues to vote against this bill. I applaud my colleagues that signed the letter that led to the relief we have today.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 10 seconds to say we certainly don't see a grace period from Mr. Cordray. We see ''I am going to be sensitive and read between the lines.''

So the worst charge here is this bill is redundant. This bill does nothing to constrain consumer rights, but what it does do is constrain trial lawyers who are going to take away home ownership opportunities.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT), the chairman of the Capital Markets and Government Sponsored Enterprises Subcommittee.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I guess we have a new definition. We just heard that the CFPB has streamlined things for local banks. I guess this is Washington's version of streamlining regulations: 1,888 pages. My gosh.

So I come to the floor today to commend the chairman of the committee and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) for moving this legislation before us, H.R. 3192, and for Members on both side of the aisle who have supported this type of legislation as well.

Let us understand what this legislation does not do. It does not remove any authority from the CFPB to take enforcement actions against bad actors under the new Integrated Disclosure rules. Secondly, it does not remove any kind of incentives for lenders to comply with the new rule.

So I think it is important that we recognize what it does not do, despite some of the claims that we are hearing from the other side of the aisle.

So what does the bill do? It simply provides a grace period, if you will, for lenders, your local bankers, if you will, who act in good faith to comply with this 1,888-page simplification of the new rules that the CFPB has put out there.

I think it is ironic that the CFPB took over 1,800 pages of rulemaking authority and analysis and all the time, yet the agency is unwilling to provide the lenders—your local banks, if you will—a brief period in order to comply with all the rigamarole, the red tape, the technology, the compliance for them to get up to speed on this.

Clearly, the length of the rulemaking suggests it was a complicated project for the CFPB. It took them a long time to complete it. So why are they not willing to in writing basically say: Here, you folks, you local bankers, you also will have the same leniency as well?

This is a very straightforward and simple bill. It is intended to provide a brief, 4-month grace period for your banks, lenders that act in good faith to comply, nothing more, nothing less.

At the end of the day, who are we really helping here? No. It is not the bankers. It is not the lenders. Really, who we are really helping is all the American people who are trying to get a loan, who are trying to go and get financing. Those are the people that this legislation would help.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ), the ranking member of the Small Business Committee.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 3192 to protect Americans' investment in their homes.

The new TILA-RESPA disclosure rules are critical consumer protections that will provide consumers with expanded information before buying a home.

What we are doing today with this legislation is to use dilatory tactics to prevent CFPB from doing their job in protecting consumers.

This legislation, however, is a solution in search of a problem. Just last week, before a Financial Services Committee hearing, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Cordray indicated that the agency will implement a hold harmless period so that the industry could implement rules without risk of enforcement.

H.R. 3192, which will further extend the grace period, is, therefore, unnecessary. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has already indicated a willingness to work hand in hand with the industry. But I guess that is not enough.

If this bill is enacted, the private right of action will be blocked, denying consumers their basic right to a day in court. That is not right, and this body should not stand for it. This will undermine the intent of the Integrated Disclosure, which is to provide clear, straightforward information to consumers regarding their mortgage.

How could you call this piece of legislation ''Protect Americans' Investment in Their Homes'' and, yet, use all these dilatory tactics to prevent consumers from having their right in court and from having the information that they need in order to make a wise decision?

We are trying to make the process better for consumers, and there is already a path before us that strikes a balance between the needs of industry and millions of homebuyers.

I am confident that CFPB Director Cordray will not deviate from this course. If he does, then we can hold the agency accountable. For these reasons, I urge the Members of this House to oppose this bill.

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

I would be happy to yield to any of my Democratic colleagues who would show me where Director Cordray has ever used the words ''hold harmless,'' where he has ever used the words ''grace period.''

I continue to hear these words bandied about. But he has appeared before the House Financial Services Committee, the Senate Banking Committee. He has written letters, conducted interviews. He has never said this, never said this.

So, at worst, again, Mr. Speaker, the bill is redundant. If so, if my colleagues will yield back their time, I will be happy to yield back my time. We will have the vote, and we will get on with the other business of the House if the worst they can say is this bill is redundant.

Mr. SHERMAN. Will the gentleman yield?

You said you would yield to a Democrat who could quote Mr. Cordray.

Mr. HENSARLING. I said I would yield to a Democrat who can give me the Cordray quote where he says he will ''hold harmless'' or uses the term ''grace period.''

So if the gentleman has the quote, I would be glad to yield to him.

Mr. SHERMAN. I am so close to that, you should yield to me.

Mr. HENSARLING. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. SHERMAN. He has responded to my question and said of this grace period, so it will ''be diagnostic and corrective, not punitive, and there will be time for them to work to get it right.''

Mr. HENSARLING. Reclaiming my time, so I continue to hear ''diagnostic'' and read between the lines. So, again, at worst, the bill is redundant.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER), the chairman of the Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit Subcommittee.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I thank the distinguished chairman for his work on this important piece of legislation as well as my good friend from Arkansas (Mr. HILL).

Mr. Speaker, for a good portion of my life before Congress I was in the housing business and had the opportunity to help a lot of American families buy their first home and sometimes their second home. I had the opportunity to buy my first home.

I was thinking earlier today that, when you look at the history of the closings over the years since I have been in the housing business, the first house I bought was in 1973.

I came away with six pieces of paper: a copy of the note that I signed that said I would promise to pay monthly payments of x; the deed of trust, which gave the bank security for the loan that I was taking out; a copy of the closing statement, which was on one page.

And over the years, I watched that grow and grow and grow until today—and I wish I had had an opportunity to do that—that, in many cases, the families walked out of closings with hundreds of pages of closing documents because we have gotten more and more new regulations and nuances into the buying a home process.

But let me talk about what I hear a lot of my colleagues on the other side say that this bill does.

Let me tell you what it doesn't do. It doesn't do one thing that inhibits the protections that are in TILA and RESPA for home buyers in this country. It does nothing.

What it also does not do is it does not give anybody safe harbor if they are not acting in good faith. Basically, what this bill says is: Look, we have got a new process.

And I think it was a good idea. I have supported it. In fact, I worked on working together to see if we could come up with one disclosure statement because two are sometimes confusing to the home buyer. So one made a lot of sense.

What didn't make sense was to take 1,888 pages to describe what we ought to do on one form, a combined form.

But what this does do is it says: We have got a very sophisticated process now because we have added all of these documents to closings and all of these disclosures. What it says is: Now, effective Saturday, we are going to implement a new system, and that new system is complicated. It has a lot of moving parts.

And buying a home can have a lot of different parts because each borrower, each buyer of a home, has different circumstances and different verifications that are needed and different transactional pieces of that. And trying to bring those all together in a new environment with new software is very difficult.

So what we said is: Look, if you are trying to act in good faith and you are trying to implement this and you are working on all the glitches in your processes and in your computer system possibly and you are doing that and if, for some reason, you missed one of the guidelines in this combined statement, we are not going to give you a penalty.

□ 1500

I think that makes sense. The American people are tired of an oppressive government. They are tired of the government being the enemy. What we need for the CFPB to be doing in this circumstance is working with the financial industry to make sure that this process is smooth. If there are nuances or glitches in the system, hey, it makes the system better when we share those.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 3192 and encourage my colleagues to vote for it.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker and Members, my friends on the opposite side of the aisle keep making the argument about the grace period. That should not even be discussed here because we have agreed, Mr. Cordray from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has agreed and everybody has agreed, that there should have been a grace period. That is not what my amendment was about that they would not allow me to take up on the floor.

Mr. Speaker, my amendment is about consumer protection. They know it, and they are trying to keep people misled by coming in here with their props and saying that this bill is 1,800 pages when, in fact, it is not. So I want everybody to be clear that this is not about the grace period, and this is not about not giving the industry an opportunity to get its act together. Really, the debate should be about whether or not they protect consumers, and they don't.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, back in the old days, this bill would have just passed on suspension. It is bipartisan, it is small, and it is temporary. Both sides have praised the CFPB's efforts in coming out with this rule. Both sides believe in a grace period, and the question before us is whether we should codify that grace period and apply it to trial lawyer enforcement, or whether we should have it be more vague than the chairman would want, and whether this grace period should apply to private enforcement or only government enforcement.

Mr. Speaker, 91 Democrats called for this grace period. Half the Democrats on the committee voted for the bill. The bill applies only until the end of January. It is small, it is temporary, and it applies only to lenders who operate in good faith. I said until the end of January. Some would say it applies until February 1. Either way, it is a temporary bill.

I know the pressure the Democrats are under. Anybody who shows up at Democratic club meetings, they are thinking that any bill, no matter how small, temporary, or practical, that is favored by the financial services industry must be a complete sellout to banks. Well, as one of the leaders against the $700 billion TARP bill, I can go to any Democratic club holding my head up high even if I vote for bills that are practical and yet may clash with some ideology.

The CFPB recognized the importance of this grace period, saying in the letter of October 1:

> We recognize that the industry needs to make significant systems and operational changes.

They document all those changes and review them. That is why they provide for a grace period which they have indicated may last longer than 4 months. So why are smaller participants in the industry, small escrow companies and small lenders, backing away, abandoning consumers to only the biggest who know how to comply with this complicated 1,888-page regulation without worrying about a period of a shakedown cruise to get organized? Why? Because although they have got the restrained administrative enforcement that has been praised, they don't have the restrained trial lawyer enforcement.

This bill effectuates what the CFPB is trying to do: let people go, do a shakedown cruise, make sure that things operate correctly, and do so knowing that if they act in good faith, they won't face retribution. But the CFPB can do that only with regard to governmental enforcement. It is up to

this Congress to make sure that it applies to private enforcement. That is the purpose of this bill.

Let us achieve the purpose that the CFPB had when they issued their letter of October 1. Let us make sure that those who act in good faith will not face retribution. Let us make sure that the smaller mortgage lenders and smaller escrow companies can continue to operate if they try to do so in good faith. Let us not hand a huge competitive advantage to those players in the industry that have the most lawyers and the most sophisticated computer programmers.

If we are going to have a grace period, it needs to apply to both private enforcement through lawsuits as well as public enforcement through the CFPB. That is why I hope that Members will vote for this bill.

Madam Speaker, I enter into the RECORD this letter of October 1.

CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU,
Washington, DC, October 1, 2015.

Re Your inquiry regarding supervisory practices.

FRANK KEATING,
President and CEO, American Bankers Association, Washington, DC 20036

DEAR MR. KEATING: Thank you for your letters of August 12th and, with the trade associations copied below, September 8th regarding the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Know Before You Owe TILA-RESPA Integrated Disclosure Rule (the Rule). The letters request that the FFIEC articulate its policy for its member agencies' examination and supervision of financial institutions for the initial months after the Rule becomes effective on October 3, 2015.

The member agencies of the FFIEC recognize that the mortgage industry has needed to make significant systems and operational changes to adjust to the requirements of the Rule, and that implementation requires extensive coordination with third parties. We recognize that the mortgage industry has dedicated substantial resources to understand the requirements, adapt systems, and train affected personnel, and that additional technical and other questions are likely to be identified once the new forms are used in practice after the effective date.

During initial examinations for compliance with the Rule, the agencies' examiners will evaluate an institution's compliance management system and overall efforts to come into compliance, recognizing the scope and scale of changes necessary for each supervised institution to achieve effective compliance. Examiners will expect supervised entities to make good faith efforts to comply with the Rule's requirements in a timely manner. Specifically, examiners will consider: the institution's implementation plan, including actions taken to update policies, procedures, and processes; its training of appropriate staff; and, its handling of early technical problems or other implementation challenges.

As you may recall, this is similar to the approach the member agencies took in initial examinations for compliance with the mortgage rules that became effective at the beginning of January, 2014. Our experience at that time was that our institutions did make good faith efforts to comply and were typically successful in doing so.

Again, thank you for your letter.

Sincerely,

RICHARD CORDRAY,
Director, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

cc: American Land Title Association; American Escrow Association; The Appraisal Firm Coalition; Appraisal Institute; Collateral Risk Network; Consumer Bankers Association; Community Home Lenders Association; Consumer Mortgage Coalition; Community Mortgage Lenders; Credit Union National Association; Housing Policy Council; Independent Community Bankers of America; Mortgage Bankers Association; National Association of Home Builders; National Association of Mortgage Brokers; National Association of REALTORS; Real Estate Services Providers Council, Inc.

Mr. SHERMAN. I do want to quote out of it. The CFPB recognizes that ''the mortgage industry has needed to make significant systems and operational changes to adjust to the requirements of the Rule.''

It goes on to set forward why we need this grace period; and we need to make sure the grace period applies to both private and public enforcement.

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA), the chairman of the Monetary Policy and Trade Subcommittee.

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3192.

Madam Speaker, just to reinforce what my colleague from California was just talking about, this is a period here where we are going to be moving forward to make sure what the CFPB is doing with its 1,888-page—sorry, that is me straining trying to pick all that up—rule is moving forward.

I would ask what is more pro-consumer: moving forward with a clarified rule that grants certainty to those businesses and those individuals like Realtors—I am a former Realtor, and mortgage folks like myself, I used to be in the business—or not doing the deal and not doing the closing. Because that is what is going to happen. That is what is going to happen is you are going to see these companies say: Wait a minute. We are not sure what our legal exposure is here.

Mr. Cordray, the head of the CFPB, has said that he will give a certain grace and understanding and, I believe the word was ''sensitivity'' to this moving forward. That is not a grace period. That is not clarity. Anybody who has a lawyer advising them or a CPA or anybody else who has a fiduciary responsibility to make sure that their client understands what is happening in the intent would not say that that is going to stand up in court.

I also know as a former Realtor that the home-buying process, buying or selling, can be one of the most challenging, confusing, and stressful times, especially for a first-time home buyer. The three most stressful points in life are marriage, death, and changing where you live. That is a very difficult time.

As we are moving forward on this, there often has to be this domino effect of homes closing to then get that closing settled, to then move beyond to the next deal, and you will have two, three, four, five, sometimes five or six homes all lined up, five or six families waiting for this one closing to happen. What that is going to do is just cause more confusion.

Madam Speaker, I support the intent and the spirit of the rule because I have sat at that closing table having to go through form after form after form. Everybody gets writer's cramp signing their name on all of these different forms. This was a good thing about Dodd-Frank, and combining these various forms and these various legal documents that have to be signed makes total sense.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN). The time of the gentleman has expired.

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

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Madam Speaker, as I was saying, the intent and the spirit of the rule makes a lot of sense. Having something that is going to negatively impact those home buyers, especially those first-time home buyers, is not pro-consumer. It is not pro-growth. What we are trying to do with this particular bill—and I applaud my new colleague for this—is to allow the stakeholders, which is the buyer, the seller, and the companies that have the legal responsibility to do this closing properly to move forward and make sure that this is done in the proper way for those consumers.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), our distinguished leader.

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding and salute her for her relentless championing of the rights of consumers in our country as our ranking member on the Financial Services Committee.

I come to the floor on this legislation because it is something that runs deep in terms of our commitment and our responsibility to the consumers in our country.

It is very curious to me that this is called the Homeowners Assistance Act because it is exactly the opposite of that. I say that with regret because I think that there could have been some good features of this bill—and there had been that we all agreed on, that if there is legislation, as there has been, Dodd-Frank, and the regulations that spring from it, as there must be, that we have adequate time for the regulations to be implemented, to listen to the private sector, to say: What are the ramifications of these regulations, and do you need more time? We all subscribe that a certain amount of time, not an amount of time that is going to deter ever implementing the regulations, but a good faith attempt to come to terms.

What is unfortunate about this legislation, though, Madam Speaker, is that in taking that goodwill and turning it into a bill, what the Republicans have decided to do is to take away the right of private action for a homeowner, for a consumer. They are trying to destroy homeowners' rights to be heard in court when they think they have been tricked or misled in any kind of a transaction.

This is so really important. It was in September of 2008 when we had a meeting in my office then at the time, Democrats and Republicans, House and Senate, to talk about what was happening to the financial institutions in our country. There was a meltdown of such seriousness as was described by the Secretary of the Treasury that when I asked the chairman of the Fed, who was in the room, Mr. Bernanke, did he agree with that characterization of the situation we were in, he said: If we do not act immediately, we may not have an economy by Monday.

This was Thursday night.

So we went forward, largely with Democratic votes, to support a Republican President, President Bush, whose administration put forth legislation, and we worked together to make it something that we could pass on the floor, overwhelmingly Democratic votes supporting a Republican President in order to protect our economy.

What we couldn't do in that legislation or since was include the ability for a homeowner to declare bankruptcy—not that we wanted them to, and not that we hoped they ever needed to, but they had the leverage, they had the leverage in a negotiation with their lender to do so. Many of them were seriously abused by bundling and all kinds of other things that had happened that it was no longer my home loan from my neighborhood banker or my community banker or something like that. These notes, these mortgages, were sold and sold and sold, so nobody even knew who their lender was. But we, the Congress, refused to give them the right of bankruptcy.

Here we are again, Madam Speaker, these years later since September of 2008 to October of 2015, 7 years later. We have passed that bill that pulled back the financial institutions from their serious meltdown, helping Main Street as well as our financial institutions necessary for our economy. We passed the TARP bill, and we passed Dodd-Frank to make sure that the abuses that occurred that caused that meltdown in 2008 would not happen again because of what it did to our economy, to our working families, and to our financial institutions in our country.

So with Dodd-Frank, we had something that was really a breakthrough to protect the consumers, that Financial Consumer Protection Agency, and there is something really important, to protect average people, consumers. So when the regulations are released and the private sector said they needed more time, take more time. The administrator of the agency said: Okay, take more time. Then our Republican friends said: Oh, no, let's bring it to the floor and turn it into a bill to take more time. But then, to put this, like a Trojan horse, this bill comes in here with this underbelly of taking away the right of private action for a consumer.

□ 1515

How many people have we heard from, one reason or another engaged in a contract, a financial transaction, where not the devil was in the details, hell was in the details. Terrible for them, and they had no right of private action. This just isn't right.

So we may have our differences of opinion as to the amount of regulation or the timing of regulation. That is a legitimate debate for us to have, and to listen to the private sector in our public-private discussions to make sure that the intent of Congress and the intent of protecting the American people is intact. I don't paint everyone in the private sector with the same brush as I come out against those who say let's take away that right for consumers to have their day in court.

So I ask my colleagues, think about the consumer, what it means to the consumer to have his or her day in court. We are not supposed to be constricting leverage for the consumer in our country; we are supposed to be expanding opportunity for them so that when they engage in a transaction, they are respected because they have leverage at the table. Don't diminish their leverage by passing this legislation.

I am so pleased that the President's staff has said that they would recommend a veto should this bill come to the President's desk. Remove all doubt in the consumers' mind. We are not here to deter them, but to empower them.

I thank the gentlewoman again for her leadership and the members of the committee who have been so protective of America's consumers, because do you know what? The consumers are the lifeblood of our economy. We are a consumer economy. And until consumers have the consumer confidence to invest, to spend, to buy a home, to inject demand into the economy, our economy will never turn around.

We are a middle class economy. We are a consumer economy. Let's strengthen that by voting ''no'' on this bill and saying ''yes'' to consumers. We want them to be as strong at the negotiating table as they can be.

With that, I commend the gentlewoman from California, Ranking Member WATERS.

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining on each side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 9¼ minutes remaining. The gentlewoman from California has 11½ minutes remaining.

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 10 seconds just to say, I know it is the custom of my friends on the other side of the aisle to want to vote on a bill before they read a bill, but I would suggest if they actually read H.R. 3192, they will discover the private right of action is preserved. There is merely a hold harmless section for those who act in good faith. I would commend to the distinguished minority leader and all Democrats they actually read the bill and they might discover that.

I now yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. DUFFY), the chairman of our Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

Mr. DUFFY. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the sponsor of this bill, Mr. HILL, for his good work and our chairman for driving this legislation. It is bipartisan.

Listening to the remarks that just took place from the minority leader, I know there is a comment, Madam Speaker, about consumers, but I think this is more of a play for the trial bar. Because if this 4-month hold harmless doesn't move forward, it is the consumers who are going to get hurt. It is the divorcee who needs the proceeds from the sale of her home from her husband to actually work on putting her life back together that now won't have that sale go through.

In communities like mine in rural America where you don't have really large lenders and large title companies and large Realtors, we have small institutions. It is those communities that are going to be hurt the worst if we don't have this 4-month hold harmless. You have given up your lease. You expect to close on a house, and that closing is not going to happen. Or you are getting a new job and you are moving to rural America and you didn't secure a lease because you are buying a house, but you can't buy a house because you have the whole sector of this base that is not willing to take the risk.

We are beating a horse here of 1,800-plus pages. It is a significant rule. It is very complex, and it baffles me that we wouldn't make sure that, as the system is implemented, we have a hold harmless provision, as long as those folks who are imposing new systems are making a good faith effort to comply.

I think you were listening to the debate. We are all saying the same thing. We want to make sure we protect consumers. We want to make sure the private sector can actually implement the rule effectively.

Mr. Cordray has come forward and indicated he is in support of a hold harmless, but I think the gentleman from California made a good point. It is not just the exposure that you have on the governmental side. It is also the exposure that you have the private side from private litigation.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. DUFFY. And so I am concerned that we will have consumers who are set to buy a home who won't have that sale go through, and it is those families who are hurt the worst.

There is a lot of stuff that we have to fight about that we disagree on, but it seems like we are so close on this one. Let's just go forward and do what is right for the consumers and right for the private sector and make sure that we have a 4-month hold harmless provision.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, I thank the ranking member of the committee for her hard work on this.

I urge Members to vote ''no,'' and the reason why is that we have been considering and considering and trying to implement Dodd-Frank for such a long time. Every step of the way we have seen delay. Every step of the way we have seen things that just couldn't happen now for all these good reasons. But the fact of the matter is that what brought us to Dodd-Frank were serious abuses in the financial industry, and this bill and all the rules associated need to be implemented.

Now, the Know Before You Owe rule is a huge victory for home buyers. It is a good thing for home buyers to know exactly what is going on before they execute on a home loan. Anyone who has bought a home remembers the anxiety of wondering if they are going to have enough cash to close, to cover all the expenses. They also remember feeling bewildered by all of the various fees of $100 or $200, all these surprises. Home buyers need access to clear disclosures in plenty of time to comparison shop and challenge junk fees.

The bill we consider today would remove the legal right of homeowners to seek legal redress if they do not receive accurate disclosures until February 2016. The consumer protections are already in place now. We shouldn't postpone them.

If we really want to ''assist'' home buyers—and this bill is ironically called the Homebuyer Assistance Act—don't postpone what is already in the law today. Home buyers should get a clear home estimate when they apply for the loan. Home buyers should get their actual closing costs 3 days prior to settlement. And if a home buyer is mistreated in the closing process, the home buyer should retain the right to go to court and seek a remedy.

I remain concerned that home buyers are overcharged at closing. Not all; I am not one of those who paints with a broad brush. I believe many of our folks in the industry are excellent, but there are enough exceptions to that to concern all of us.

I strongly oppose a lot of lenders, mortgage brokers, builders who receive a financial benefit for a referral. Affiliated business arrangements and reverse competition are not good for home buyers. Consumers need information to protect themselves from overcharges and kickback schemes.

Please stand up for home buyers and vote ''no'' on H.R. 3192.

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, I now yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. GUINTA).

Mr. GUINTA. Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman HENSARLING.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) for introducing this very important and significant piece of legislation.

H.R. 3192 acknowledges the learning curve that accompanies implementation of any new Federal regulation.

The TILA-RESPA Integrated Disclosure rule has been in effect now for 4 days. At this early stage, agencies are unable to protect the industry from liability risk that will follow during the early days of compliance, and Director Cordray has acknowledged that compliance would be difficult during these days of implementation. The loss should take into account Director Cordray's statement and protect home buyers, sellers, and the industry from regulatory and civil liability as they make good faith efforts to comply with the latest CFPB requirements.

I met with New Hampshire bankers, credit unions, and Realtors in September. They shared their concerns about what could happen if, misinterpreting the new rules, they made an unfortunate or unintentional error.

Compliance costs from other CFPB rules currently in effect have hobbled New Hampshire's financial institutions. The risks of this new rule could even lead some to quit the residential lending business, and that has already happened in one circumstance in my district. That means less consumer choice and fewer options for home buyers in a shrinking real estate market, inevitably raising the price for the very consumer we try to protect.

Madam Speaker, I want to remind everyone that the private right of action is preserved in this piece of legislation and that this bill passed the House Financial Services Committee on a strong bipartisan vote of 45–13.

I want to thank Mr. HILL and Mr. SHERMAN for this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of it to prevent frustrating and costly delays for the American consumer.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I think it is important for us all to really understand what is taking place here today.

First of all, I want to warn against misleading information. When we keep hearing that those stack of papers represent the bill—that the bill is 1,800 pages long—that is not the case. As a matter of fact, the chairman of the committee knows that 171 pages are simply sample model forms to say to the banks: These are the kind of forms that you need, and you can take these samples and use them: 63 pages are description of the rationale behind the rule, why do we have this rule; 15 pages are summarizing the rulemaking process; 308 pages with section-by-section analysis.

So that is not the bill, those pages that you see, the props that are being used.

If we go to the beginning of this, you have to understand that it was Dodd-Frank that decided they wanted to make this process more easily understood by the consumers. Out of the Dodd-Frank legislation, they are the ones that combined both TILA and RESPA into this integrated disclosure form to make it simpler.

So despite the fact that the banks and the industry have—particularly the big banks—thousands of employees, millions of dollars, doing big trades, et cetera, et cetera, they said: We really can't get our act together in the length of time that is given us with this rule.

So for some of us who thought, well, you know, they are very well-staffed, they have a lot of money, they could really do this, but we will take them at their word. And not only that, some of us on the Democratic side said we would take them at their word, Mr. Cordray led the effort in saying, all right, there should be a grace period.

I don't care what my chairman said. If Mr. Cordray did not say it in the exact words the way that he wanted him to say it, that is just too bad; but the fact of the matter is he did say it, that he would support a grace period, and that is what we have all done.

So given that he has said that, given that we have support for it on the Democratic side and the Republican side, really, there is no need for the bill. This is just taking up precious time and energy for something that is not needed.

I think I know why there is such a fight for this legislation. Because it includes in it something that would protect the lenders even when they make a big mistake.

□ 1530

We talk about good faith, but I want to tell you what is included in this Integrated Disclosure. People are talking about real issues here.

Will the loan amount be the same that the consumer has agreed upon? Will the interest rate be the same? Or will somehow there be a little mistake; instead of 3.8 in interest rates, it is going to end up 4.2 or 4.3? If that happens, what can the consumer do if you don't give them the right to go into court? Basically, they can do nothing, and the lender can say ''too bad about that.''

We cannot treat consumers that way. We have to give them the right to have their day in court. And even with the burden being on the consumer to have to prove that the lender acted in good faith, the consumer needs to have the right to go and make the case.

And so my amendment that was not allowed in the Rules Committee and we

did not get a chance to come to the floor and debate it because they closed down the rule simply means that my friends on the opposite side of the aisle said: We don't care what you are saying about protecting the consumers. We know that there could be some mistakes. However, we say, if those mistakes are made, it was in good faith. They didn't really mean to do it and, no, the consumer doesn't have a right to go into the court and make the case.

That is not right. It should not happen.

As our leader has said, we have gone through a period of time where this country almost had a depression. We certainly did have a recession because the big banks and too many of the banks and financial institutions in this country came up with all of these exotic products. People were misled. They signed on the dotted line for mortgages that many of them could not afford. These mortgages reset, and people ended up paying higher interest rates 6 months or a year after they signed on the dotted line. They didn't know. They didn't understand.

So you can say that the banks who treated the consumers this way were acting in good faith and they didn't intend to do it, but we know enough now that we cannot depend on representations of ''I didn't mean it.'' If you didn't mean it, you shouldn't have done it. And if you did it, you need to be able to be dealt with in a court of law.

So here we are with this legislation. And if you had not put that part in the legislation, there would not even have to be a discussion. You are absolutely right; it could have been on suspension or there could not have been a bill at all.

But, no, the concern about the consumer is not what appears to be foremost in the minds of those who would dismiss their opportunity to go to court. We should not treat our consumers that way. We should have learned our lesson. We should have learned our lesson.

Folks who are buying a home maybe for the first time and this is the biggest decision and this is the biggest credit action that they are going to make in their lifetime, they need to have some assurances that they are being treated right.

Why do you think we have all of these disclosure laws? Before these disclosure laws were developed, people were misled. They ended up with balloon payments, prepayment penalties, on and on and on.

We are saying, yes, let's have a grace period; let's allow the banks to use this time to get their house in order. They can train their staff. They can get their papers together. We agree to all of that. That is not an issue, and we say it over and over again because we don't want anybody to be misled that somehow we are standing in the way of the great spirit. We are not doing that. We agree to that. What we are standing in the way of is abuse of our consumers.

We created this Consumer Financial Protection Bureau because our consumers did not have the protection that they needed. Our regulators didn't pay attention to consumers. They were supposed to be there, not only to deal with the possible risks in the system, et cetera, and the consumers, but nobody was looking out for the consumers.

So this is the centerpiece of Dodd-Frank reforms, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. The centerpiece of Dodd-Frank is to protect consumers and not allow them to be tricked, not allow them to be misled, not allow them to be prevented from going to court. You can describe it any way that you want to describe it, but the fact of the matter is you are either with the consumers or you are not.

We on this side of the aisle, for the most part, are telling you over and over again that we are with the great spirit. We are not with your actions and that part of the bill that will not allow our consumers to be protected.

And you can protest all you want. You cannot tell me if Ms. Jones, in signing on the dotted line, ends up with a higher interest rate than she thought she was getting and if she does not have the right to go into court, what happens. Who is going to protect her if she does not have the right to go into court and make the case and show that this is not simply an error of a comma or a period? This is an action that does not show good faith. This is an action that will cause me to pay hundreds of more dollars for my loan that I had not anticipated.

Consumers should not be treated that way. Consumers should be protected in every possible way that we can because, in the final analysis, that is why they send us to Congress, to be able to be their voice, to speak for them. We on this side of the aisle will continue to do that in spite of the tricks of the trade that are being employed by others.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 4½ minutes remaining.

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

H.R. 3192, the Homebuyers Assistance Act, is bipartisan. Half of the Democrats on the House Financial Services Committee supported it. Over 200 Members of this body wrote to the head of the CFPB asking for a hold harmless period.

So what we have is a modest, bipartisan bill that says, you know what? For 120 days—actually, fewer than 120 days now, Madam Speaker—for those who in good faith are trying to implement the most dramatic changes in our disclosure laws in a decade, if they act in good faith, you know what, for 120 days we are going to let you get your systems in. We are going to hold you harmless as long as you are acting in good faith.

If you purposely violate the law, if you intentionally violate the law, that is something different. But if you are acting in good faith, you know, during this transition period, during this rollout, we are going to hold you harmless because we want to help people close their homes.

We want people to be able to partake in that portion of the American Dream, which is home ownership. And whether you call it rule, guidance, forms, there are 1,888 pages of text from the CFPB that must be digested by all kinds of very expensive attorneys that have to be integrated into the information technology systems. There are 1,888 pages, courtesy of the CFPB, in order to simplify forms.

Madam Speaker, it is a good idea to simplify forms. I am not sure the CFPB got it right. The bottom line is the CFPB prevented people in the industry from even having a trial of their systems. They were not allowed to go live before October 3. So this is the first time they have had to do it.

If anything, the Federal Government ought to know something about failed rollouts. Look at ObamaCare. Yet, somehow, those people were held harmless for the mistakes they made on rolling out something that was very complex.

What is going to happen here if we don't pass this bill? Again, I have talked to people in Texas involved in the industry. What I heard at a workshop dealing with this Integrated Disclosure rule, a gentleman from El Paso indicated their institution was going to stop residential mortgage lending for a time ''until they could get a good feeling for how the regulations were going to be officially interpreted.''

I know my friends on the other side of the aisle keep talking about this grace period from Mr. Cordray. I don't see it. He appeared before our committee just days ago and said, ''I don't think it is appropriate for me to say I won't enforce the law when my job is to enforce the law.'' I didn't find the words ''grace period'' anywhere there, Madam Speaker, so it doesn't exist. And if it did, the worst they can say about this bill is it is redundant.

People who have been wronged by those who act purposely have a right to private litigation, but that doesn't appear in RESPA; it only appears in TILA. And you can't tell me, in these new forms, which is which. You can't tell me, and so it is completely confusing.

So it comes down to this, Madam Speaker: Whose side are you on? Are you on the side of the wealthy, litigious trial lawyers who are looking for their next big class-action payday? Are you looking to help low-and moderate-income people who have worked hard to put together a nest egg to finally save for their piece of the American Dream? Who are you for?

Well, I am happy that at least half of the Democrats on this committee that serve with the ranking member have said: You know what? We want to be with the homeowner. We don't necessarily want to be with the litigious trial attorneys. So that is really the choice we are making here. It is, again, Madam Speaker, such a modest bipartisan bill.

I have heard the ranking member say it is a waste of time. Well, then, why didn't she yield back her time?

This should be on what we call the suspension calendar. Something that is bipartisan and modest should have been on the suspension calendar and should have already been taken care of. But somebody wishes to protect the wealthy trial attorneys.

So you have got to make a choice, Madam Speaker, and I hope that the House today comes down thoroughly on the side of the American home buyer and enacts H.R. 3192 from the gentleman from Arkansas.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Madam Speaker, there is no doubt reform of TILA and RESPA is needed. Change has been advocated by all parties, and by Members on both sides of the aisle.

Like many of you, I continue to hear from lenders, real estate professionals, and title insurance companies in my district that third parties were not frilly prepared for the October 3rd implementation of TRID. This is particularly true for small businesses with fewer resources.

Beyond preparedness issues, there remain questions over TRID processes and associated liability. Countless concerns have also been raised over the lack of a formalized restrained enforcement period. A hold harmless period would allow a better understanding of the changes associated with TRID, and help to ensure consumer confidence and stability in the housing market.

In addition to a wide array of financial services industries, a bipartisan group of lawmakers has expressed the need for a hold harmless period like the one included in H.R. 3192. In fact, more than 250 Members of Congress, 92 of whom were Democrats, expressed strong support for the idea in a letter led by Mr. BARR of Kentucky and Mrs. MALONEY of New York.

CFPB Director Richard Cordray indicated in an April 22nd letter that the Bureau "expects to continue working with industry . . . to answer questions, provide guidance, and evaluate any issues . . .", but that he would not use his authority to institute a grace period.

This summer, a bipartisan group of Financial Services Committee members met with Director Cordray to make an appeal for a commonsense approach to implementation of this rule. The request was reiterated at a Committee hearing just last week. In both instances, Director Cordray indicated that he would institute a hold harmless period; and in both instances, despite assurances, he failed to do so.

The changes to the home-buying process in TRID will affect millions of Americans. We owe it to consumers to ensure that the rule put in place serves its purpose without causing unintended consequences.

The practice of buying or selling a home is confusing. Buyers and sellers put pen to paper on pages they've not read and don't understand. Make no mistake, we all believe the procedure needs to change; but, on something this important, CFPB needs to move slowly and deliberately, taking into account concerns from consumer groups and industry alike.

It's my sincere hope that implementation of this rule moves forward without complication; however, the unfortunate reality is that a change of this magnitude will create issues for consumers, lenders, and the CFPB alike.

I want to thank the gentleman from Arkansas, Mr. HILL, and the gentleman from California, Mr. SHERMAN, for their work on this legislation, as well as the many other Members, including Mr. PEARCE of New Mexico, for their leadership on this front.

This is not a partisan issue; it's a consumer issue, a small business issue. I ask my colleagues for their support of H.R. 3192.

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

Pursuant to House Resolution 462, the previous question is ordered on the bill.

The question is on 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.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. MOULTON. Madam Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. MOULTON. Madam Speaker, I am opposed in its current form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Moulton moves to recommit the bill H.R. 3192 to the Committee on Financial Services with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith, with the following amendment:

Add at the end of the bill the following new section:

SEC. 3. PROTECTING SERVICEMEMBERS AND OTHERS.

The safe harbor provided by section 2 shall not apply to private suits filed by servicemembers, veterans, seniors, students, and family members of servicemembers, veterans, seniors, and students.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 5 minutes in support of his motion.

Mr. MOULTON. Madam Speaker, this is the final amendment to the bill. It will not kill the bill or send it back to committee. If adopted, the bill will proceed immediately to final passage as amended.

We all agree that the men and women who serve in our Nation's military should be afforded every opportunity to live the American Dream that they risked their lives to defend. Unfortunately, too often our servicemembers, veterans, and their families fall victim to unfair and abusive financial practices.

In 2014 alone, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau received more than 17,000 complaints from servicemembers, veterans, and their families on a variety of issues, from deceptive subprime auto lending to troublesome credit card fees and predatory mortgage loans. That same year, the CFPB was able to return more than $1.6 million to these families. The CFPB is a vital watchdog for American consumers.

□ 1545

The bill before us today would delay the enforcement of the CFPB's rule regarding disclosures that mortgage lenders must provide to home buyers. Additionally, the bill would permanently eliminate a borrower's ability to enforce his or her legal rights if a lender fails to disclose or obscures important information for all loans originated over the next 5 months so long as the error is made "in good faith," a term that the bill does not define and that substantially narrows existing protections for consumers afforded under the Truth in Lending Act.

The mortgage industry has had nearly 2 years to implement these new disclosure requirements and was given an additional grace period this year. Despite assurances from the CFPB Director that the agency would implement a restrained enforcement process that takes into account the industry's good faith effort to comply, this legislation could leave millions of American home buyers without the legal protections to which all citizens are entitled.

The amendment I am offering today would allow our servicemembers, veterans, seniors, and students—some of our Nation's most vulnerable populations—with the opportunity to seek their day in court if a mortgage lender acts in bad faith.

As we learned following the 2008 financial crisis, far too often the people with the fewest resources pay the heaviest price when they are deceived by bad actors in the financial marketplace.

While reasonable people can disagree on the merits of the underlying bill, I hope we can all agree that our servicemembers, veterans, students, and seniors deserve the consumer financial protections the CFPB offers.

That is what this amendment would help to achieve, and I urge your support.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, again, this underlying bill, H.R. 3192, modest, bipartisan. Grace period for those who act in good faith in trying to implement the most dramatic changes in our real estate disclosure laws in a decade, 1,888 pages worth.

We know, Madam Speaker, if we do not enact this bill, people are going to be denied homeownership opportunities. We have already heard within our

committee. We have heard from our constituents already. For example:

> Large lenders have already announced they are not going to do one-time closings anymore due to the uncertainty.

That comes from an individual in Tyler, Texas.

I quoted earlier one from El Paso, who stated:

> Presented in El Paso, an institution is going to stop residential mortgage lending for a time until they can get a good feeling on how the regulation is going to be officially interpreted.

Americans are being denied homeownership opportunities, and all the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL), the author of H.R. 3192, says is: Let's have, for those who operate in good faith, a temporary grace period in trying to roll this out.

So what the motion to recommit does—and I know this is not the gentleman's purpose, but what his motion to recommit does, if adopted by the House, is actually discriminate against the very people that he says he wishes to help because now, all of a sudden, it is going to be our servicemembers, our veterans, our seniors, our students, and family members of servicemembers, veterans, seniors, and students who are going to be denied their homeownership opportunities.

Now, maybe in the gentleman's district they prefer the lawsuit. In my district, in the Fifth District of Texas, they prefer the homeownership opportunity. Any bad actors can still be sued under TILA in a private right-of-action, but when we are trying to ensure that people are not denied their homeownership opportunities, why would we want to discriminate against our servicemembers and veterans? Because all of a sudden, then, there is extra liability.

So everybody will know now that if you are going to lend on a home mortgage to a veteran, you are going to have extra liability. Are you going to make that loan? Are you going to charge them more? This House should reject any discrimination against our servicemembers, veterans, seniors, students, and family members of servicemembers, veterans, seniors, and students, and reject this motion to recommit.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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. MOULTON. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Byrd, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agrees 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) ''An Act 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.''.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF ESTABLISHING A SELECT INVESTIGATIVE PANEL OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 461 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 461

Resolved, That there is hereby established a Select Investigative Panel of the Committee on Energy and Commerce (hereinafter ''select panel'').

SEC. 2. (a) The select panel shall be composed of not more than 13 Members, Delegates, or the Resident Commissioner appointed by the Speaker, of whom not more than five shall be appointed on the recommendation of the minority leader. Any vacancy in the select panel shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(b) Each member appointed to the select panel shall be treated as though a member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce for purposes of the select panel.

(c) No member may serve on the select panel in an ex officio capacity.

(d) The Speaker shall designate as chair of the select panel a member elected to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

SEC. 3. (a) The select panel is authorized and directed to conduct a full and complete investigation and study and issue a final report of its findings (and such interim reports as it may deem necessary) regarding—

(1) medical procedures and business practices used by entities involved in fetal tissue procurement;

(2) any other relevant matters with respect to fetal tissue procurement;

(3) Federal funding and support for abortion providers;

(4) the practices of providers of second and third trimester abortions, including partial birth abortion and procedures that may lead to a child born alive as a result of an attempted abortion;

(5) medical procedures for the care of a child born alive as a result of an attempted abortion; and

(6) any changes in law or regulation necessary as a result of any findings made under this subsection.

(b) The chair of the Committee on Energy and Commerce shall cause any such report to be printed and made publicly available in electronic form.

SEC. 4. Rule XI and the rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce shall apply to the select panel in the same manner as a subcommittee except as follows:

(1) The chair of the select panel may authorize and issue subpoenas pursuant to clause 2(m) of rule XI in the investigation and study conducted pursuant to section 3, including for the purpose of taking depositions.

(2) The chair of the select panel, upon consultation with the ranking minority member, may order the taking of depositions, under oath and pursuant to notice or subpoena, by a member of the select panel or a counsel of the select panel. Such depositions shall be governed by the regulations issued by the chair of the Committee on Rules pursuant to section 3(b)(2) of House Resolution 5, One Hundred Fourteenth Congress, and printed in the Congressional Record. The select panel shall be deemed to be a committee for purposes of such regulations.

(3) The chair of the select panel may, after consultation with the ranking minority member, recognize—

(A) members of the select panel to question a witness for periods longer than five minutes as though pursuant to clause 2(j)(2)(B) of rule XI; and

(B) staff of the select panel to question a witness as though pursuant to clause 2(j)(2)(C) of rule XI.

SEC. 5. Service on the select panel shall not count against the limitations in clause 5(b)(2)(A) of rule X.

SEC. 6. The select panel shall cease to exist 30 days after filing the final report required under section 3.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from North Carolina is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. FOXX. Madam 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 gentlewoman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, H. Res. 461 provides for the creation of a select investigative panel of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. The resolution ensures the House exercises one of its most fundamental constitutional responsibilities: oversight of the use of Federal funds and compliance with Federal law.

Undercover investigations have revealed that an organization that receives hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars annually, Planned Parenthood, has also been taking the remains of unborn children and selling them to tissue collection firms.

Its staff has reportedly even altered their medical procedures to more effectively dismember unborn children, with one abortionist saying: ''We have been very good at getting heart, lung, liver...because we know that, so I'm not gonna crush that part, I'm gonna basically crush below, I'm gonna crush above, and I'm gonna see if I can get it all intact.''

There are also allegations that children may have been born alive and left to die in order to harvest their tissue.

How can we in Congress ignore these charges? It is clear that a full investigation is not only warranted, but imperative, into these issues. Even if these abortion providers somehow managed to comply with all Federal laws while dismembering children, it is clear we need to learn more about their barbaric tactics so we can amend those laws and ensure practices like these never happen again, particularly by organizations receiving millions from U.S. taxpayers.

Madam Speaker, in order to effectively continue the oversight that the House has begun into these issues, H. Res. 461 would establish a select investigative panel at the Committee on Energy and Commerce to provide a full investigation and study into these allegations. This panel would be made up of 13 members appointed by the Speaker, 5 of which will be by the recommendation of the minority leader and chaired by a member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. Its operations will not require any additional appropriations of funds.

The investigation will be focused on medical procedures and business practices of entities involved in fetal tissue procurement; Federal funding and support for abortion providers; practices of providers of second- and third-trimester abortions, including partial birth abortions; medical care provided to children born alive as a result of an attempted abortion; and necessary changes in law or regulation identified by this investigation.

□ 1600

This type of investigation or special panel is far from unprecedented. When in the majority, my colleagues across the aisle formed the Select Intelligence Oversight Panel under the Appropriations Committee as well as a Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming.

The creation of a select investigative panel on the issues surrounding the sale of unborn children's tissue is clearly within precedent, and I hope Members on both sides of the aisle will agree that we must get to the bottom of this.

We have seen video evidence of children being dismembered to facilitate the sale of their hearts and other organs. Few issues can make us come together like our children. It is my hope that our partisan battles will cease for a brief moment to enable us to have a full investigation into the fate of children at the most vulnerable time of their lives.

Even for those who support abortion on demand, it should be simple to unite behind the principle that organizations receiving hundreds of millions in taxpayer funds are subject to congressional oversight, particularly when their divisive practices may violate Federal law and are, frankly, barbaric.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution and the resulting investigation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, creating a select committee to investigate Planned Parenthood is a journey with no end, a solution in search of a problem.

Congressman CHAFFETZ, who is chair of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, held a hearing 2 weeks ago that lasted over 5 hours and relentlessly badgered the president of Planned Parenthood, the only witness. Cecile Richards comported herself so well. But despite that, we are going to do this again.

Mr. CHAFFETZ was asked by CNN's Wolf Blitzer after the hearing, ''Is there any evidence, in your opinion, that Planned Parenthood has broken any law?'' Mr. CHAFFETZ responded, ''No, I'm not suggesting they broke the law.''

So if they haven't broken the law, what are we doing here? Why do we investigate over and over? There are three committees in the House right now investigating Planned Parenthood.

We have spent the day trying to get our colleagues to stop putting on these select committees, which do not comply with the way things have always been to be fair to both sides of the committee and let Democrats have the same kind of benefit of information as they have.

This one, though, I think is even worse because it gives subpoena power to the head of what is basically a subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee that is unilateral. We have never seen that before.

So why do we spend time and funds and resources investigating an organization that we know has done nothing wrong? Because we are dealing with a majority obsessed with taking constitutionally protected health care away from women, many of whom, I may add, are poor.

If you add that to the 54, 55 votes to do away with a healthcare bill called ObamaCare, apparently, the major obsession of the majority is to take health care away from people. That is a little hard to comprehend, since we all represent about 750,000 constituents who I don't think would be happy about that.

So every time we attack Planned Parenthood, remember that you are attacking one in five American women who have used Planned Parenthood.

Whether it is a select committee or intentionally misleading data, this majority will use any tactic necessary. In fact, the tactics Mr. CHAFFETZ used a week ago were resoundingly discredited. His hearing materials—one chart in particular—was so misleading that the press called it words that I am not allowed to say on the floor of the House.

Is that what we expect from this select committee? Let me say, for one, it is certainly what I expect. A flippant disregard for truth goes against what we have come here to Congress to do. We came to govern, uphold the Constitution of the United States, and to do our best domestically.

We are not doing our best domestically. We have no budget. As a friend of mine said today, this is a majority that can't build bridges, roads, or highways, but can sure build select committees.

This House majority decides to spend the time, money, and resources of the taxpayers attempting to cut funding for the same idea that has not happened for 39 years. Remember, this has not happened for 39 years.

Since the appearance of the Hyde amendment, not a single Federal dollar has been spent on abortion, except in very, very rare cases to save the life of the mother. That is right.

Contrary to what the majority would have the American public believe, Planned Parenthood spends zero Federal dollars on abortions today. That is what the majority select committee will investigate. For 39 years, that law has never been broken.

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. MIMI WALTERS).

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 461. This resolution would create a select panel to investigate a number of claims related to Planned Parenthood's activities involving abortion and fetal tissue procurement.

Like many Americans, I was horrified by the recent videos which depicted Planned Parenthood employees callously discussing the trafficking and sale of aborted babies' tissues and organs.

As a mother of four, I know that nothing is more sacred than the gift of human life, and any organization that puts a price on unborn children must be held accountable.

As a member of the House Judiciary Committee, I am actively involved in the House investigation examining the atrocities committed by Planned Parenthood. While we are continuing to gather information and determine the exact nature of the organization's actions, one thing is certain. These practices represent a blatant disregard for innocent life, and they must be stopped.

By establishing a select panel, we can ensure that we have the proper tools and time needed to uncover the truth, bring accountability to the organization, and justice to the most innocent among us.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Ms. FOXX. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 15 seconds.

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. I urge my colleagues to support this measure and to stand with me in the fight to defend innocent human life.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS),

the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform as well as the Select Benghazi Committee.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

As the ranking member of the Select Committee on Benghazi and the House Oversight Committee, I rise in strong opposition to this proposal by House Republicans to establish yet another new select panel to ramp up their baseless and politically motivated attacks against Planned Parenthood.

Last week two senior Republicans, both of whom are now competing to become the next Speaker of the House, made stunning admissions on national television within 24 hours of each other.

First, Majority Leader KEVIN MCCARTHY admitted that House Republicans established the Benghazi Select Committee to use millions of dollars in taxpayer funds to damage Hillary Clinton's bid for President.

The next day the chairman of the Oversight Committee, Chairman CHAFFETZ, admitted on national television that there is no evidence that Planned Parenthood has violated any laws, despite months of investigations.

Let me repeat that. The chairman of the chief investigative committee that has been investigating Planned Parenthood for months admitted on national television that there is no evidence that Planned Parenthood violated any laws. His admission is consistent with the findings of multiple State investigations in Georgia, Indiana, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Missouri, and South Dakota, all of which have cleared Planned Parenthood of wrongdoing.

I ask my colleagues, if the top investigator in the House of Representatives says there is no evidence against Planned Parenthood, why in the world are we considering a proposal to set up a new select panel? I think the answer is the same here as it was with Benghazi. It is simply politics.

These stark Republican admissions obviously argue against continuing with these taxpayer-funded political attacks. Yet, House Republicans are proposing exactly the opposite.

They have already squandered more than $4.5 million on the Benghazi Select Committee in one of the longest, least productive, and most partisan congressional investigations in history.

Now they want to use the same terrible model to attack the rights of millions of women across the country who rely on Planned Parenthood for cancer screenings, breast exams, and other critical healthcare services every year.

Planned Parenthood has cooperated with every aspect of the congressional investigations to date. They have produced tens of thousands of pages of documents. Planned Parenthood president Cecile Richards testified voluntarily for nearly 5 hours before the Oversight Committee. Even Chairman CHAFFETZ conceded that she has been ''very cooperative with the investigation.''

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. CUMMINGS. So, again, why do we need this new panel? Based on Planned Parenthood's exemplary record of cooperation, the tens of thousands of pages of documents the organization has produced in response to congressional requests, and the lack of any evidence that the group has violated any laws, there is simply no legitimate basis to adopt this proposal.

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

Mr. Speaker, it is those Members across the aisle who raise the issue of Benghazi that are playing politics by trying to distract Americans from the actual issue we are debating today.

The purpose of this resolution is to establish a select panel consistent with past precedent under Democrat majorities to ensure that this House conducts a thorough investigation into the practices surrounding fetal tissue procurement and federally funded organizations that participate in these practices.

Taxpayers deserve to know what their hard-earned dollars fund. It is incumbent upon us, as Representatives, to ensure that Federal funds are directed only to organizations that operate fully within the law.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. ELLMERS).

Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina for allowing me to speak on the floor today during this rule debate.

As a sitting member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, I am proud to see my committee taking the lead on the investigation of Planned Parenthood. As a woman, a nurse, and a mother, I have fully supported the decision to defund Planned Parenthood. But as a representative of the people, our responsibilities are more than that. We have a responsibility to ask questions that will produce answers.

Our constituents deserve to know how this organization is using Federal funds, and they deserve to know which medical services they are actually providing to women. In forming this panel, we will begin finding the facts and hold Planned Parenthood accountable.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH), the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution.

As a member of the Benghazi panel, I think what we have learned from the Benghazi panel is that this House majority is not to be trusted when it comes to forming special investigatory panels. Basically, they form them for purely partisan reasons, as Representative McCarthy admitted just last week.

The second point here is one that has been made repeatedly. There is no evidence whatsoever that Planned Parenthood has violated the law.

So what exactly is it exactly that we are investigating? Even the chairman of the House Committee on Oversight has admitted there is no evidence that Planned Parenthood has violated the law.

Third, there is a House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. In fact, just about every committee in Congress has an oversight function.

So why don't we use that instead of wasting taxpayer dollars on something like the Benghazi Committee, which is admittedly breaking all kind of records in terms of wasting taxpayer dollars? But we don't need to pile on with another wasteful committee.

□ 1615

If you want to investigate this, do it through the Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Do it through the existing committees.

Lastly, it is incredibly important to point out that Planned Parenthood performs enormously important services to women in this country. They provide much-needed health care to poor women and much-needed family planning to poor women.

You should have a family when you want a family. If you are not prepared to take care of children, then family planning makes an enormous amount of sense. In fact, what it does is it prevents abortions. It stops women from getting pregnant when they are not ready to have children. It goes after precisely the issue that the majority is most concerned about, to prevent abortions.

Planned Parenthood deserves our support, not another wasteful, taxpayer-funded, partisan investigation.

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

Mr. Speaker, the House committees who have investigated this issue thus far have done good work, but it is clear that much remains to be done. At Energy and Commerce in particular, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations has the task of conducting meaningful and necessary oversight of several other matters within the jurisdiction of the committee.

Given the large number of expected documents to be reviewed and interviews to be conducted, the select investigative panel will permit this necessary investigation to continue without impairing the other important work of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee at the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN).

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina for her leadership on this issue.

She spoke a little bit earlier about the structure and the organization of the investigative panel, and I want to go back to that and help to make the point because sometimes I think, in our passion and the emotions as we talk about bills, we begin to attribute to legislation jurisdiction that may not be there.

This is a small bill. It is very explicit in how the energy of the investigative panel is going to be utilized. There are six items that they are being tasked to investigate.

Number 1, medical procedures and business practices used by entities involved in fetal tissue procurement. We know there are questions that surround this, whether it is a not-for-profit or a for-profit entity.

Number 2, any other matters with respect to fetal tissue procurement.

Number 3, Federal funding and support for abortion providers.

Number 4, the practices of providers of second- and third-trimester abortions, including partial-birth abortion procedures that may lead to a child born alive as a result of an attempted abortion.

Number 5, medical procedures for the care of a child born alive as a result of an attempted abortion.

And number 6 will be any changes in law or regulation necessary as a result of any of the findings which are there from the committee.

I want to clearly state this is about getting answers of how we treat and protect life in this country.

The select panel will act to centralize the investigations that are at the Energy and Commerce Committee, Judiciary and Oversight Committees, and bring it all under one umbrella.

Over the past several weeks, we have had lots of serious questions. They are troubling questions that have been asked. I think that the investigations we have had have raised a lot of those questions.

It is imperative that we centralize these operations and bring it together under one umbrella.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume because I have some important information that I got recently that I want to bring to my colleagues' critical attention.

The chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Congressman JASON CHAFFETZ, has in his possession right now a computer hard drive that contains videos produced by David Daleiden, the head of the group that tried to entrap Planned Parenthood.

Those videos are official committee records, but Chairman CHAFFETZ is refusing to give the Democratic Members a copy of those videos.

On September 22, Chairman CHAFFETZ issued a subpoena to Mr. Daleiden, who is the Executive Director of the Center for Medical Progress. The subpoena demanded that Mr. Daleiden provide all of his unedited video footage.

We believe that the videos will show how Mr. Daleiden deceptively edited his videotapes to distort the truth, but those tapes are being hidden away. It appears that the Republicans do not want the Democrats to be able to see these videos.

Chairman CHAFFETZ's subpoena explicitly required that a copy of the videos be provided to both the Republicans and Democrats. Specifically, paragraph 18 of the subpoena's schedule instructions stated, ''Two sets of documents shall be delivered, one set to the Majority Staff, and one set to the Minority Staff.''

On Friday, September 25, 2015, Mr. Daleiden delivered those videos to the committee, but provided them only to the Republicans. He did not provide a copy to Democrats, a direct violation of the subpoena.

Chairman CHAFFETZ and his staff members then refused to open the package until today, two weeks later, and now the chairman's staff is refusing to allow Democrat Members to have a copy of the videos that are only in his possession.

So I have a couple of questions I need to ask here. On what authority are the Republicans refusing to provide the Democrat Members of the body a copy of the videos?

And we know that Republicans actually have no authority to do that.

By the chairman's own subpoena, Democrats are entitled to a copy. That is explicit in his subpoena.

Another question that we must ask of our colleagues is: Last night at the Rules Committee, Representative MARSHA BLACKBURN said the intent of establishing a select committee is ''to bring all the work under one panel.''

Now, we know that Energy and Commerce has a hearing scheduled for tomorrow, according to one of the members. What we need to know is: Will Chairman CHAFFETZ be permitted to continue his investigation of Planned Parenthood if the select committee is in existence?

And how will that bring all the work under one panel if he is allowed to continue his own investigation if the Energy and Commerce Committee are allowed to bring theirs?

I would like to know if the chairman would assure Members of this body that he plans to immediately provide a copy of these videos to Democrats, as required by his own subpoena, so that all Members of the committee have equal access.

And I also need to know whether the chairman will be required under this resolution to immediately provide the videos to the new select panel today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on the Budget.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the ranking member for bringing those troubling revelations to the attention of the House. It shows what a sham process this has been from the beginning.

Mr. Speaker, we have got a lot of work to do in this Congress. We have got to come together with a budget agreement to keep the government open, to invest in our economy, to deal with modernizing our transportation infrastructure in this country.

Yet, what are Republicans bringing to the floor? Another measure to create another so-called select committee to investigate Planned Parenthood, when, as we have heard today, three other House committees have already done that. And what has been the sum total of that investigation?

Well, the chairman of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee told us on national television when he was asked if Planned Parenthood had broken any laws, ''No, I'm not suggesting they broke the law.''

So when you don't get the answer you want, what do you do? Create another special committee.

Rather than creating a special committee, the Government and Oversight Committee owes an apology to Cecile Richards, the president of Planned Parenthood, for dragging her through a committee process that was disrespectful, where the chairman of the committee began with a chart that PolitiFact determined was a pants-on-fire misrepresentation. That is the most untrue ranking you can get from PolitiFact, Pants on Fire.

That was the gist of that hearing. And now we are learning today possible nondisclosure of certain documents. So what is happening here?

As the late Yogi Berra would say, ''This is deja vu all over again.''

They had many committees investigating Benghazi to try to get to the bottom of a tragedy in the House and the Senate, and all those committees concluded there was no wrongdoing.

And so what did our Republican colleague do? Spent $5 million on a special committee on Benghazi, which, the Majority Leader just announced the other day on national television, was simply about politics, simply about hurting Secretary Clinton. So that is what this is all about.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I yield the gentleman another 1 minute.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I want to thank the ranking member.

So that is what this all boils down to. When committees in the House and the Senate investigated Benghazi—and not just any committees—the Defense Committee, the Intelligence Committees in the House and the Senate—they all concluded that the allegations were false, that it was a terrible, awful tragedy in Benghazi, but nobody was involved in any wrongdoing.

When they didn't get the answer they wanted then, Special Committee on Benghazi, which, as we heard, turned out to be all about politics. And that is exactly what is happening now with Planned Parenthood.

Mr. CHAFFETZ just announced the results of all the hearings on Planned Parenthood. No violation of the law.

And so what do you do when you don't get the answer you want? Let's spend more taxpayer money on another special committee. This is a kangaroo court. This is a misuse of public funds.

So, Mr. Speaker, let's get on with the business of the House. Let's focus on the economy. Let's come together with a budget agreement to keep the government open.

Let's do the real work of the American people and not run a McCarthy-like hearing against Planned Parenthood and women's health. Let's do what we should be doing, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS).

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution.

This summer 10 videos were released that showed high-level executives at major organizations, including Planned Parenthood, StemExpress, Advanced BioResources, speaking candidly about the activities that violate Federal law.

They speak of using ''less crunchy abortion techniques'' to preserve organs, of ''crushing'' certain body parts in order to spare others, and of children killed after they ''fell out,'' that is, after being born alive.

It is interesting to hear people criticize the videos that haven't even watched the videos. These 10 videos constitute sufficient grounds for probable cause that criminal activity has occurred.

Subsequently, thanks to the leadership of the Judiciary Committee, Oversight and Government Reform Committee, and the Energy and Commerce Committee, the House has begun to investigate the scope and prevalence of these activities.

Congressional discovery has already yielded important and revealing testimony. This House, as a body, has already voted to stop giving taxpayer funding to abortion providers and to ban late-term abortions, which are the abortions that yield the highly developed organs sought for medical experimentation.

Deniers of the unborn child's humanity or their human right to life have tried to ignore the clear evidence already uncovered about fetal organ procurement. The deniers have tried to discredit the videos that they are too horrified to watch. The videos speak for themselves.

The deniers have tried to create distractions. They insult pro-life Americans. They make excuses. No wonder, then, that the deniers oppose this panel. They don't want the truth to come out.

Whether you consider yourself pro-life or pro-choice, you should want the truth to come out. This debate ought to be settled by the facts.

It is Congress' duty to the American people that we find out the truth, especially as it pertains to the deaths of millions of innocent Americans and half a billion dollars in annual taxpayer funding. That will be the task and purpose of this select committee.

We, as a legislative body, rely on good information. We ought to base our actions on the facts.

I urge support for the resolution.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I will insert into the RECORD a copy of a letter to Speaker JOHN BOEHNER from Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. ROSA DELAURO, and myself on this issue.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 5, 2015.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

MR. SPEAKER: We are very concerned about the hearing that House Republicans conducted in the Oversight and Government Reform Committee involving Planned Parenthood on September 29, 2015. Notwithstanding the absence of any wrongdoing, its President, Ms. Cecile Richards was cross-examined and accosted with personal questions and accusations for 4½ hours while constantly being interrupted. This hearing was not ''oversight'' it was a witch hunt against her personally and an ideological attack on a critical provider of women's health care.

It became apparent that the Republicans' intentions were not to investigate Planned Parenthood's receipt of federal dollars when shortly after her opening remarks Ms. Richards was questioned about her compensation which had no relevance to the hearing. Never before has a witness had her salary attacked, not even when the Committee has questioned the CEOs of companies that have actually been found guilty of breaking Federal law.

We sincerely believe that the Committee should extend an apology to Ms. Richards and refrain from such ideologically based personal attacks of its witnesses in the future particularly because there was no basis to the allegations from the outset.

In fact, Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Jason Chaffetz, who conducted the hearing, admitted that he had identified no evidence that Planned Parenthood has violated any laws during a recent appearance on CNN's Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer.

On October 1st, the Pulitzer Prize winning PolitiFact News Service awarded Chairman Chaffetz, a rating of ''Pants on Fire'' for springing a highly misleading chart on Planned Parenthood head Cecile Richards during her testimony at the recent hearing. The chart falsely suggested that Planned Parenthood performs more abortions than cancer screenings and prevention services.

PolitiFact found that Chaffetz's chart ''suggests a conclusion that's flat wrong.'' It cited numerous experts who concluded that his chart is ''a damn lie,'' ''ethically wrong,'' ''purposeful deception,'' ''scandalous,'' ''propagandized,'' ''an egregious example of using a chart to mislead,'' and ''absolutely misleading, and intentionally so.''

Republican attempts to defund Planned Parenthood are clearly political and greatly misguided. The majority of Americans recognize that Planned Parenthood is an organization that plays a vital role in providing health care to women across the country. One in five women will use Planned Parenthood for primary and preventative care in their lifetime, and in 103 counties with Planned Parenthood centers, Planned Parenthood is the sole provider of these services. Republicans would eliminate the ability for those women across the country to get basic preventative care that over a lifetime can be life-saving.

After a two month investigation, conducted by three different House Committees, considering tens of thousands of pages of documents and multiple hearings, there is no evidence to substantiate Republican claims of illegal activity by Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood has been the victim of an entrapment scheme conducted over three years in which an opposing political organization actively lied and used deceptive tactics against Planned Parenthood's employees. Clearly Planned Parenthood, and its President, was the subject of a hostile hearing in the absence of evidence of any wrongdoing.

We sincerely hope that you direct the Chairs of House Committees to refrain from conducting this type of hearing in the future and to abandon any thoughts of establishing a Subcommittee to pursue these allegations that the Chairman of the Oversight Committee admitted have not been substantiated.

Sincerely,

CHRIS VAN HOLLEN,
Member of Congress.
ROSA DELAURO,
Member of Congress.
LOUISE SLAUGHTER,
Member of Congress.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS), a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

□ 1630

Mrs. CAPPS. I thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this bill, which is just another political stunt to put the government between a woman and her healthcare provider. This is yet another instance where the House majority is exploiting their position to use hard-earned taxpayer dollars to fund partisan, baseless smear campaigns. Today we are asked to vote to do it again.

Despite finding no evidence of wrongdoing through multiple congressional committee hearings, including those conducted by the Energy and Commerce Committee, despite numerous State-level investigations that have cleared Planned Parenthood of these charges, and despite reports from outside experts that there is no evidence of illegal activity, the House seems insistent on doubling down on this bad idea to waste taxpayer money and time on yet another fabricated investigation.

It is time to say ''no more.'' There are far too many real issues facing our country that Congress should, instead, be addressing. Vote ''no'' on this resolution.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I thank my good friend for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, last month, Pope Francis admonished a joint session of Congress to follow the Golden Rule, to ''do unto others as you would have them do unto you,'' and said that the Golden Rule compels us to ''protect and defend human life at every stage of development'' and that ''it is wrong to remain silent and look the other way.''

Establishing this select committee is the right thing to do. We simply can't

remain silent or look the other way. Instead, Congress needs to thoroughly investigate profoundly disturbing conduct by top-level Planned Parenthood officials. Caught on tape—and I have watched all the tapes, Planned Parenthood's top leadership, not interns or lower level employees, showed callous disregard for children's lives while gleefully calculating the financial gain derived from the sale of baby body parts.

We already know that every day Planned Parenthood dismembers or chemically poisons to death approximately 900 unborn babies. Since 1973, more than 7 million children have been violently killed in Planned Parenthood clinics.

Now, because of the CMP videos, Planned Parenthood's involvement in trafficking in baby body parts has been revealed. In one clip, Dr. Deborah Nucatola, senior director of Planned Parenthood Federation of America's Medical Services says on camera: ''We have been very good at getting heart, lung, liver, and because we know that, I am not going to crush that part. I am going to basically crush below, I am going to crush above, and I am going to see if I can get it all intact . . . I would say a lot of people want liver; and for that reason, most providers will do this case under ultrasound guidance, so they will know where they are putting their forceps.''

Ladies and gentlemen of the House, this is a dismemberment abortion—arms, legs, torsos, decapitation—but the prized body part is preserved, pulled out intact, and then sold to brokers.

This needs to be done. We haven't lost our sense of being shocked.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR), a member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this wasteful maneuver by Republicans in Congress to establish yet another investigative committee at a cost of untold millions of taxpayer dollars.

It is unconscionable to establish such a committee without any basis to do so and at a time when Congress should be focused on higher wages, modern infrastructure, and the basic responsibility to pass an appropriations plan for America. But no, action on all of these pocketbook issues for American families and businesses is being shoved aside by Republicans in Congress for a witch hunt based upon false You Tube videos that are full of distortions and misinformation.

Republican attacks on Planned Parenthood and women's health care is part of an unfortunate pattern of assaults over the last two decades. But this latest maneuver borders on an abuse of power. At best, it is an attempt by Republican leaders to distract the American public from their failure to do their job.

I urge my colleagues to defeat this bill and get back to the business of hardworking Americans.

Ms. FOXX. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, what is unconscionable is the callous disregard for unborn babies that has been exhibited for far too long in our culture and which has been brought home to us full force by these videos that we have seen.

Mr. Speaker, the organizations and providers to be investigated by this select panel maintain a culture with a callous disregard for life.

Recently, a series of undercover videos have exposed in horrifying detail what Planned Parenthood values. They show the organization's leaders admitting to haggling over the prices for the limbs and organs of aborted children; callously recounting the harvesting of a brain from a fully intact, aborted child; admitting that clinics collect ''specimens'' without informed consent and that abortionists will alter the procedure to keep intact in-demand organs.

These videos make clear that neither women's health nor the well-being of their tiny victims will stand between Planned Parenthood and profit.

Since the release of these videos, the big money behind the pro-abortion political machine has kicked into high gear to obfuscate what services organizations like Planned Parenthood truly provide.

We hear about breast cancer screenings, but not a single Planned Parenthood clinic has a mammogram machine. We have heard repeatedly that abortions account for only 3 percent of Planned Parenthood services. The Washington Post Fact Checker assigned this data point, along with others pushed by Planned Parenthood, three Pinocchios. It is also clear from Planned Parenthood's own annual reports and testimony to Congress that a significant portion of its annual nongovernmental revenue comes from abortion.

The undercover videos alone would merit full investigation and review, but the problems at Planned Parenthood are not limited to those discussed in the series by the Center for Medical Progress.

We know that Planned Parenthood clinics in several States have failed to report sexual abuse of young girls, enabling and empowering those who would exploit them:

Just this year, the Alabama Department of Public Health found that a clinic in Mobile performed two abortions on a 14-year-old girl in a single 4-month period without reporting suspected sexual abuse.

Just last year, an Arizona Planned Parenthood counselor intentionally miscoded the sexual assault of a 15-year-old girl by a serial predator as a consensual encounter.

Also last year, a Denver clinic failed to report the rape of a 13-year-old girl by her stepfather, who brought her to the clinic for an abortion.

Mr. Speaker, the list of outrageous acts by these abortion providers goes on and on. It is past time that we investigate and understand just what type of organizations our tax dollars are subsidizing.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds to say what any woman in this room could say: your doctor determines whether you need to go to a radiologist to get a mammogram. None of us get that in our doctor's office, unless it is a most unusual place, and I know you gentlemen wouldn't know that.

I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY), an Energy and Commerce Committee member.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the creation of a select committee to investigate Planned Parenthood.

Let's be clear: this is just another political witch hunt, this time targeting women, their trusted organization, and women's health.

Now, let's talk about the Republican vision for women of America. Just look at their record. First, they passed a budget that completely eliminated title X—that is contraception—the only Federal grant program dedicated to family planning, and slashed funding by 80 percent for the teen pregnancy initiative by over 80 percent.

Then we find that last week the Republicans proved that this witch hunt is not just aimed at Planned Parenthood. They passed a bill that threatened funding for every doctor, clinic, and hospital that dares to participate in abortion services. They also want to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which requires insurance companies to cover maternity care. They don't want to expand Medicaid, which currently covers one out of every three births and more than 43 million children. In fact, they want to turn Medicaid into a block grant program. And Republicans have proposed huge cuts to education.

I want to say to my Republican friends: Be careful what you wish for. The women of America are watching.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the gentlewoman from New York.

Mr. Speaker, many of us have the memory of the back alley abortions and the many dead young women who cried alone without any help. None of us want that. None of us want women to have to make that choice. But we know the Supreme Court has established as the law of the land Roe v. Wade as a matter of choice, and that this procedure is a medical procedure.

Planned Parenthood does not sell body parts. Planned Parenthood has a very infinitesimal amount of fetal research. Planned Parenthood is not the

person who ganged up on them and planned these horribly disorderly, if you will, videos and stole the ID of his high school friend to do these horrible videos.

Abortions have gone down. And so we come again to another Benghazi-like committee where we are ignoring the law. We are allowing unilateral subpoena, even if they are consulting, where we are looking at abortions that are done, but are not done by Federal money.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleagues to vote against this bill that is doing nothing, Mr. Speaker, but politicizing a Presidential candidate and attacking women—attacking women, attacking health care.

Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee, and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, I rise in strong opposition to H. Res. 461, which would establish a Select Investigative Panel of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

The ostensible purpose of this Select Investigative Panel is to investigate and report on all issues related to medical procedures and practices involving fetal tissue donation and procurement; federal funding and support for abortion providers; and late-term abortions.

But make no mistake, the Republican majority's real purpose in establishing this panel is (1) to open another front in their ongoing War Against Women, (2) impede women in the exercise of their right to make their own choices when it comes to their reproductive health, and (3) to persecute, smear, and demonize Planned Parenthood.

We know this from our experience with the so-called ''Benghazi Committee,'' which the Republican leadership claimed was a nonpartisan inquiry into the facts and circumstances surrounding the 2012 tragedy in Libya which claimed the lives of four brave and heroic Americans.

We know now, as confirmed by the Majority Leader and the Speaker-apparent, that the Benghazi Committee was in reality part of politically motivated strategy to disparage and damage the former Secretary of State and leading candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination that has wasted $4.5 million of the taxpayers' money.

The Chairman of the Benghazi Committee sent to Committee Members an investigative plan that set out monthly hearings with all the different agencies involved in preparing for and responding to the attacks in Benghazi, including the State Department, the Defense Department, and the Intelligence Community.

But after the New York Times' email story broke on March 2, however, the Chairman completely abandoned this plan and began focusing almost exclusively on Hillary Clinton.

Since then, the Committee has not held any of the hearings on his schedule, and his upcoming hearing with Hillary Clinton is the only hearing now scheduled.

Abandoned are plans for hearings that were to have been held in April with former Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Secretary Leon Panetta.

The Committee has never held even one public hearing with anyone from the Department of Defense.

The only hearing the Committee has held with an intelligence official, was with the CIA's head of Legislative Affairs regarding the status of document production.

Mr. Speaker, with so many pressing challenges facing our nation, wasting time and taxpayer money on another partisan witch hunt is a luxury we simply cannot afford.

The structure and powers to be given the Select Investigative Panel does not inspire any confidence that it will operate in a fair and impartial manner.

For example, the composition of the committee is lopsided in favor of the majority (8 Republican; 5 Democrat), instead of more equally divided as select committees usually are comprised.

Second, H. Res. 461 gives the chairman of the select panel subpoena power and deposition authority, including the authority to order the taking of depositions by a member of the select panel or the panel's counsel.

Third, the resolution authorized the chairman to recognize members to question witness for periods longer than the traditional five minutes and to recognize staff to question witnesses.

Taken together, these unusual powers are susceptible to abuse and are valued tools to any party wishing to conduct a fishing expedition as opposed to a dispassionate search for facts.

Mr. Speaker, let me save our Republican colleagues some time by pointing out the facts that an objective, fair-minded inquiry would reveal.

In 2011, approximately 1.06 million abortions took place in the U.S., down from an estimated 1.21 million abortions in 2008, 1.29 million in 2002, 1.31 million in 2000 and 1.36 million in 1996.

Based on available state-level data, an estimated 984,000 abortions took place in 2013—down from an estimated 1.02 million abortions in 2012.

Fetal tissue research has been scientifically accepted since the Reagan Administration.

In 1988 the Human Fetal Tissue Transplantation Research Panel (or the Blue Ribbon Commission) sought to separate the question of ethics of abortion from the question ethics of using fetal tissue from legal elective abortions for medical research.

The report of this commission laid the foundation for the NIH Health Revitalization Act of 1993 (which passed overwhelmingly with bipartisan support), prohibits the payment or receipt of money or any other form of valuable consideration for fetal tissue, regardless of whether the program to which the tissue is being provided is funded or not.

The law contains a limited exception that permits reimbursement for actual expenses (e.g. storage, processing, transportation, etc.) of the tissue.

These fees generally amount to less than $l00.

Less than 1% of Planned Parenthood chapters participate in this area of research.

Planned Parenthood reports revenue by source (either government or non-government) rather than the manner of disbursement (income versus grants and contracts).

Payments from Medicaid managed care plans are listed as ''Government Health Services Grants and Reimbursements'' to reflect the ultimate source of the funds.

Planned Parenthood spends about $1.1 billion annually on 11.4 million services, 83% of which is spent on research, client services and education.

Client services are divided into six categories: Cancer Prevention and Screenings, STI Testing, Contraception, Abortion Services, Other Women's Health Services & Other Services.

According to Planned Parenthood financial statements from 2009–2014, 86% of Planned Parenthood's Services fall under the categories of Cancer Prevention and Screenings (12–16%), STI Testing for men and women (35–41%), and Contraception (32–35%).

Only about 3% of its services fall under the Abortion category nationally.

Additionally, Planned Parenthood is already prohibited from spending federal funds on abortion services anyway.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 461 is an irresponsible diversion from tackling and addressing the following critical challenges facing this Congress and the American people, and if unresolved pose grave threats to our economy and communities across the country:

The Highway & Transit Trust Fund expires on October 29, endangering good paying jobs and critical construction projects throughout America;

Treasury Secretary Lew has notified the Congress that the debt limit is expected to be reached on November 5 and action must be taken to raise the limit to protect the full faith & credit of the United States and prevent interest rates for mortgages, student loans, credit cards and car payments soaring;

Funding to keep the government open expires on December 11 and Congress must find a way to keep the government open in the face of irresponsible opposition from 151 Republicans who voted to shut down the government rather than allow women access to affordable family planning and life-saving preventive health care.

In addition, American small businesses and manufacturers continue to suffer from Republicans' refusal to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank.

Mr. Speaker, we have far more important things to do than waste more time and taxpayer money on another partisan attempt to deprive women of their right to make their own decisions regarding their reproductive health that has been recognized as constitutionally guaranteed since 1973 by the Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade.

I oppose H. Res. 461 and urge all Members to join me in voting against this wasteful and irresponsible measure.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, this charge laid about subpoena powers is a red herring. Every House committee holds subpoena power, though the structure differs depending on the committee. Granting this standard authority to

the select panel ensures its ability to investigate thoroughly the issues within its scope. It would make little sense to convene a select investigative panel with limited investigative power.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is left on both sides.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from New York has 10 minutes remaining. The gentlewoman from North Carolina has 11 minutes remaining.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY).

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. I thank my friend for yielding and for her great leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H. Res. 461, to create a select committee on investigating Planned Parenthood.

I take very seriously the congressional responsibility to investigate wrongdoing and improve transparency, but this panel is not at all about due diligence. It is about purely partisan politics, an attempt to ''Benghazi'' Planned Parenthood.

□ 1645

Mr. Speaker, six States have investigated Planned Parenthood and found nothing. Four committee hearings have found nothing. Planned Parenthood has handed over tens of thousands of pages of documents to Congress, and there has not even been a whiff of wrongdoing. Even the chair of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee has said he has no evidence of anything unlawful.

This panel would be a waste of Congress' time and taxpayers' money. I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' and stop this relentless crusade attacking access to health care for women who desperately need it and cannot afford it.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, the facts are clear about the budget for the select panel. The resolution does not authorize or appropriate additional resources for this panel. It will use existing funds solely.

Further, one of Congress' most important duties is oversight of how scarce funds are spent, and that oversight is a proper use of the limited budget the House and its committees receive.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. JUDY CHU.)

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, here we are again with Republicans attacking women and Planned Parenthood on the House floor. But now the attacks are taking the form of yet another politically inspired committee.

As with the Benghazi committee, Republicans are not seeking out truth or better policy. Instead, they want to use taxpayer-funded resources for a political witch hunt.

Here are the facts: Abortion today is protected by our Constitution, and we have found no wrongdoing by Planned Parenthood so far in the three House investigations that are already taking place.

Another fact: Planned Parenthood helps women. Every year Planned Parenthood provides 2.1 million patients with family counseling and contraception. They are trying to prevent unwanted pregnancies from occurring in the first place, something that my Republican colleagues should support. Let's not use lies and edited tapes to unfairly color and bring down this organization. We should be better than that.

Mr. Speaker, I oppose this committee. I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. FRANKEL).

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the resolution to create a select committee to investigate Planned Parenthood. Well, here we go again. Planned Parenthood is the new Benghazi.

Under the ruse of saving lives, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would use the resources of the United States Government to pursue their extreme agenda. The targeting of Planned Parenthood is a gross abuse of political power to punish a trusted organization because it provides a full array of health services that includes abortion, and it sends a chilling message to anybody who would dare to give women choices.

Mr. Speaker, to quote a well-known political thinker, ''There is no greater tyranny, than that which is perpetrated under the shield of law and in the name of justice.''

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H. Res. 461. This resolution supposedly establishes a select panel to investigate Planned Parenthood and fetal tissue procurement.

Now, what do we know already, Mr. Speaker? What facts do we know? We know that these videos have already been entirely discredited and debunked by a team of independent forensic experts. What do we know? We know that women have a legal right to a safe and legal abortion.

What do we know already, Mr. Speaker, while we are investigating Planned Parenthood? We know that fetal tissue procurement signed into law by the venerated Ronald Reagan provides lifesaving research for diseases like Parkinson's, ALS, and others.

No, Mr. Speaker, you are not trying to find the facts. Instead, this is just another pathway to deny a woman a right to a safe and legal abortion.

We already know that the chairman of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee said that there is no ''there'' there. We don't need to get to the bottom of this. Mr. Speaker, we are already at the bottom of this.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Let me thank the gentlewoman for yielding and for your tremendous leadership on this vital issue and so many issues.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H. Res. 461, which really is nothing more than a politically motivated bill. It would establish a select Energy and Commerce Committee to so-call investigate Planned Parenthood.

How outrageous. Let's be clear. This is nothing more than yet another attempt to attack Planned Parenthood and undermine a woman's right to choose.

There have already been multiple hearings and committee investigations, none of which have resulted in any evidence of wrongdoing, and this shameful resolution is the fourth anti-choice vote we have had to take in the last month alone.

Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. We know that Planned Parenthood centers are critical to the health of women all across the country. One in five women have used Planned Parenthood services at some point in her lifetime for vital services like birth control, lifesaving cancer screenings, and STI screenings.

Continuing attempts to restrict access to these health services would hurt our most vulnerable women, including low-income women and women of color.

You want to restrict access to family planning, and you want to restrict access to safe and legal abortions. Come on. It is time to stop this war on women.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

Mr. ENGEL. I thank my good friend from New York.

Mr. Speaker, this is the fourth time in less than 1 month that I have been compelled to voice my opposition to a measure attacking women's health care.

This is just what Congress does not need, another polarizing battle in Congress. I have been on the Energy and Commerce Committee for 20 years, and this is the wrong thing to do. This is just absolutely the wrong thing to do.

The American public wants to see us pass a budget, a transportation bill, keep the government open, do the Export-Import Bank and other things that are important.

What are we doing, getting into another political brawl? We don't need

another committee like Benghazi, which should be abolished.

The Washington Post reported last week that more Americans have supported continued Federal funding for Planned Parenthood than opposed it in every single public survey taken this year.

I don't want to infringe on women's rights to choose whatever is right between them, their doctor, their family, and their God, and I don't think Congress should either.

My friends on the other side of the aisle talk about wanting smaller government. I don't want government to be so big that it intrudes on women's privacy and women's health. This is ill-thought and should be defeated.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this resolution. It is beneath the dignity of this Chamber to participate in an ideological witch hunt, especially one based on entirely false allegations.

The chair of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee spent hours last week cross-examining Planned Parenthood's president about these claims, and even he has publicly admitted that they have no merit. So let us call this proposed committee what it really is, the select committee to attack women's health.

The majority wants to kill Planned Parenthood. If they succeed, many low-income women will have nowhere left to go for breast cancer exams, Pap smears, and a range of other lifesaving services. So this resolution tells these women flat out: We do not care about your health care. We do not care if you die.

The hypocrisy of the majority is breathtaking. One minute they condemn all government spending—even on health care for some of our poorest families—and now they plan to spend millions of taxpayers' dollars on a politically motivated witch hunt.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote against this disgraceful resolution.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY), our colleague.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. I thank the gentlewoman.

Mr. Speaker, I was in my office watching the debate, and I thought, well, if I really thought I was innocent, if I really thought there was nothing that really went with what the other side is claiming, if I really thought I needed to wipe the slate clean, if I really thought that sunlight is truly the best antiseptic.

Forget about the organization. Let's talk about the act. This is one of the most repulsive things you can watch. It turns your stomach to see our unborn—our born—listen, little boys and little girls being dissected and being sold. It is a criminal activity.

So my question comes down to—and if you read ''Rules for Radicals,'' the best way to counteract a charge against you is to go after those who are attacking you and make them the bad person.

I don't understand. In America's House, when we want to have a debate, when we want everybody in America to look and say that this was fair, we are talking about an investigation that, if we are false, if the claims are false, it would wipe the slate clean.

Most people who think they have been wrongly accused of something say, ''Bring the facts out. Let everybody see them. Let's have the conversation. Let's have the debate. Let's really determine if this is really going on.'' Only someone who is afraid it may go against them would say, ''No. No. No. You can't do this.''

I want to tell you, as far as women are concerned and a war on women, I am the father of four children, three boys and one girl. But I have ten grandchildren, six girls and four boys. There is not one of them that, when it comes to how much I love them, it is gender-selective. I love them all in the same way.

In a country that has always stood for human rights, in a country that has always stood for others, for the most vulnerable—and I will not disguise it and say it is not what I am. I am from conception to natural death. I am in favor of life. I will always be in favor of life.

But to have this debate today and to say that you can't possibly do this because it is driven, it is a Republican agenda, because it is a war on women, if anything, this is a war for women.

We have got to protect these people. If there is anything that is a preemptive strike in the war on women, it is gender-selective abortion.

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman.

Mr. Speaker, I would just ask all Members, not as Republicans and not as Democrats, but as members of the human race, and for a House that just abhors what is going on around the world and saying that this is horrible what is going on and we won't ever let this happen in our country, why would we be having this debate today?

If you really want the slate to be clear, if you really want the world to see that there is nothing going on here, then let's have an open investigation so, at the end of the day—I don't care what organizations—they can walk away and say, ''See, we proved that we aren't who they say we are.''

Mr. Speaker, this is just so simple. Why would you argue against it? It actually works to their advantage if it is not true. If it is true, then why in the world would we use hard-earned American taxpayer money to fund illegal and criminal activity? That is just not who we are as Americans.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE), the ranking member of the Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, since a series of deceptive and highly edited videos taken at Planned Parenthood facilities were released to the public, three separate congressional committees have leapt to conclusions, holding hearings and investigations along the way.

However, on the subcommittee on which I serve as ranking member and which has primary jurisdiction over this matter, we did extensive research. We found out that Planned Parenthood broke no laws according to an extensive memo prepared by the Democratic committee staff.

So now what are we going to do? We are going to spend millions of taxpayer dollars having another sham committee. That is a ridiculous waste of money.

I have a proposal for all of my colleagues. Let's spend our time talking on the things that our constituents want their hard-earned taxpayer money spent on: reauthorizing the highway bill, addressing the looming expiration of our debt ceiling, not to mention an overdue bill for funding the Federal Government. That is what they care about.

I just want to say once again, for the umpteenth time, for the RECORD, there is no public money spent on abortion. There is no Federal money spent on abortion. So what we are talking about right here is a totally useless and expensive investigation.

□ 1700

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend for yielding.

A sure sign that the Republican Planned Parenthood hearing failed is that they are now embracing their default, the much-discredited Benghazi Select Committee strategy. But, the Government Reform Planned Parenthood hearing left Planned Parenthood as strong as ever. The majority is trying to do to the Nation's women what they have done to D.C., now deprived of the right to spend even local funds on abortion. But no Federal funds go to abortion, so what is left? Women's health care.

All that this witch-hunting select committee will do is highlight the new GOP war on women.

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

We are being told by our colleagues on the other side of the aisle that we

should be comforted by the fact that the Democratic committee staff did an investigation of Planned Parenthood and found nothing wrong. I think I can say very well with tongue in cheek that is truly like putting the fox to guard the henhouse.

Mr. Speaker, in a few moments I will offer an amendment to the resolution. The amendment will make several changes to the resolution that have been requested by the minority. The amendment will change the ratio on the panel to eight Republicans and six Democrats, giving Democrats an additional one member on the panel. The amendment will also make sure that the select panel's subpoena authority is consistent with existing Energy and Commerce Committee rules.

We have no objection to the requested changes, and we hope this will encourage our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to participate fully in this important investigation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, if we have heard anything this entire day, it is the misuse of public tax money for useless select committees overdoing investigations that everybody that has investigated before has already said that there is no ''there'' there.

We don't need to take the word—although I am happy to do it—of Mr. PALLONE last night saying that the Democratic staff on Energy and Commerce had found there was nothing wrong here. Let's take Mr. CHAFFETZ's word for it. He spent 5 hours delving into what Planned Parenthood does and does not do, and he said, no, they have not broken any law.

But that is not good enough because everybody is doing so well here making political points and attacking a Presidential candidate. That is not our job. In fact, I am pretty sure that is against Federal law for us to use public money for that kind of action. We did it not once, we are going to do it twice, and who knows how many more times before the end of this year.

The big disgrace that is going on is the misuse of tax money of the American people in a House and a Congress that has no budget, no highway bill, no way out, and people who sit at home trying to figure out how they are going to educate their children, put food on the table, keep their job, and even drive on roads that are unfit to get to work.

I would really appreciate it if we would stop this select committee and stop trying to take health care away from American citizens and get to work on their behalf.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, the opponents of this resolution would have Americans believe that this oversight is unnecessary and political. Nothing is further from the truth.

Oversight into entities' use of Federal funds and compliance with Federal law is a fundamental responsibility of Congress and one exercised by both parties, frequently on a bipartisan basis.

It is unfortunate that my colleagues across the aisle are refusing to join with us on this particular issue, but charges that it is a politically driven investigation are false. The investigation to be continued by the select investigative panel at the Energy and Commerce Committee is prompted by allegations that abortion providers that receive Federal funds are dismembering children to sell their body parts, possibly while violating Federal laws.

The most fundamental right our government was formed to protect is life; and when taxpayer dollars are being used by organizations flagrantly violating that right, we are morally compelled to investigate and respond in accordance with our Constitution.

The select investigative panel formed by this resolution is consistent with precedent, including two panels formed by my colleagues across the aisle when they were in the majority. It is laser-focused on the issues raised by the videos and subsequent investigation into Planned Parenthood of fetal tissue collection, abortion procedures, and the Federal laws surrounding those practices. Its existence as a separate body will allow it to complete the full investigation these allegations deserve without shortchanging the important other issues under consideration by the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the full House.

It is disappointing that some Members do not want the full truth to come out. When Federal taxpayers have legitimate concerns that their hard-earned dollars are flowing to organizations that sanction the dismemberment of unborn children and that our system of laws have loopholes allowing these atrocities to continue, we as their elected representatives are responsible for ensuring these concerns are heard and responded to.

If we as elected representatives of our great Nation can't shed our callousness toward the most vulnerable lives in our society and heed the moral cause of this issue, I have a great fear for our Nation's future and the cruelties we may someday allow other lives to be subjected to. Our freedom rests on the cornerstone right we all have to life, and I fear we have lost sight of that.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MS. FOXX

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I offer an amendment to the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 1, line 7, strike ''five'' and insert ''six''.

Page 1, line 5, strike ''13'' and insert ''14''.

Page 3, line 12, insert '', consistent with the notification, consultation, and reporting requirements of rule 16 of the rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce,'' after ''select panel''.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution and expose the truth about these outrages through a thorough investigation. We must have the courage to follow the facts wherever they lead in order to strengthen our laws to end these barbaric practices and ensure that unwanted children are no longer discarded in the bins of parts for sale by profit-hungry abortion providers.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 461, legislation to establish a select panel to investigate the matters that were brought to the forefront in a series of shocking and disturbing videos recently released by the Center for Medical Progress.

These videos, which show Planned Parenthood officials engaging in the sale of aborted baby body parts, must be fully investigated with the utmost detail and attention.

Ten videos so far have been publicized depicting Planned Parenthood engaging in fetal tissue trafficking. These actions are despicable, unspeakable and barbaric.

This select committee will also, investigate, the practices of businesses involved in the second and third trimester abortions, including partial birth abortions and procedures that lead to babies being born alive in attempted abortions.

It's a national disgrace that taxpayer dollars account for 41 percent of Planned Parenthood's revenues, which also serves as the nation's largest abortion provider.

The creation of this investigative panel is an important step in getting to the truth and holding the recipients of taxpayer dollars accountable for what they do.

It is wrong to take money out of the wallets of hardworking Americans and hand it over to organizations like Planned Parenthood.

This select committee will investigate this issue thoroughly—a responsibility that the Obama Administration has refused to do.

I look forward to the panel's findings.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong opposition to the establishment of the panel to investigate Planned Parenthood. The panel's clear partisan aim is to take down Planned Parenthood, an organization providing quality, affordable health care to millions of Americans.

Every person has the right to make informed, independent decisions about their health, sexual activity and family planning. Yet, women's reproductive rights continue to come under constant attack at both the state and local levels For all the rhetoric we have heard about how the government should not be in the business of providing health care, the Majority is all too eager to step in and regulate women's access to health services.

It is unconscionable that the Majority continues funneling taxpayer dollars to support purely political agendas. Millions were spent defending DOMA after the Justice Department decided it was no longer prudent policy. Even more money is being spent suing President Obama over the Affordable Care Act, even after the Supreme Court upheld the ACA's constitutionality not once, but twice. Most recently, more than $4 million has been spent politicizing the terrorist attack in Benghazi. The Majority now demands we use even more tax payer dollars to attack an organization providing health care to those who need it most,

ignoring Congressional committees that found no wrong-doing on the part of Planned Parenthood.

Women's access to health care is challenged over and over again, despite America's high maternal death rate. Women in the United States face a one in 1,800 risk of maternal death, the highest risk of any developed country. In 2014, the overall U.S. health care system ranked last among industrialized nations for the fifth time and is still the most expensive system in the world. The health disparities among our nation's racial and ethnic groups are a disgrace. We should focus our attention on these issues.

Let's call this exactly what it is, a partisan attack against a single, reputable organization. An attack based on highly edited, unsubstantiated statements and videos. This is a waste of time and taxpayer funded resources. We must get back to doing the people's work and put a stop to the constant attempts to roll back women's rights.

I strongly oppose this Resolution.

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

The previous question was ordered.

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

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution, as amended.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, and the order of the House today, this 15-minute vote of adoption on House Resolution 461, as amended, will be followed by 5-minute votes on the motion to recommit H.R. 3192, and passage of H.R. 3192, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 242, nays 184, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 538]

YEAS—242

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
Culberson
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
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
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
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)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—184

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
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jolly
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
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
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—8

Dingell
Granger
Hinojosa
Hudson
Sinema
Smith (TX)
Walorski
Williams

□ 1735

Mr. CURBELO of Florida changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 538, I am not recorded as voting because of prior commitments in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted "Aye."

MOMENT OF SILENCE HONORING VICTIMS OF THE C–130J CRASH AT JALALABAD AIRFIELD, AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart. Six airmen assigned to the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing perished on Friday, October 2, 2015, when their C–130J aircraft crashed shortly after takeoff at Jalalabad Airfield in Afghanistan. Five civilians also died in that crash.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families and friends of those who lost loved ones in this tragedy.

Today we honor the sacrifice of these airmen who served at Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, Texas, and Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford, Massachusetts. They are:

Captain Jordan Pierson, 28, of Abilene, Texas. I had the honor of nominating Jordan to the Air Force Academy;

Captain Jonathan Golden of Camarillo, California;

Staff Sergeant Ryan Hammond of Moundsville, West Virginia;

Senior Airman Quinn Johnson-Harris of Milwaukee, Wisconsin;

Senior Airman Nathan Sartain of Pensacola, Florida;

Airman 1st Class Kcey Ruiz of McDonough, Georgia.

I ask all my colleagues to stand and join me in a moment of silence.

HOMEBUYERS ASSISTANCE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to recommit on the bill (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, offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOULTON), on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk will redesignate the motion.

The Clerk redesignated the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 185, nays 240, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 539]

YEAS—185

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
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
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
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
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
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)
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—240

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
Culberson
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
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
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
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
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—9

Dingell
Granger
Hinojosa
Hudson
Sinema
Smith (TX)
Walorski
Webster (FL)
Williams

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1745

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 passage of the bill.

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

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 303, nays 121, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 540]

YEAS—303

Abraham
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Byrne
Calvert
Cárdenas
Carney
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
Delaney
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Esty
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Himes
Holding
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Keating
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Knight
Kuster
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Larsen (WA)
Latta
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
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 (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters

Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Quigley
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Ruppersberger
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schiff
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Takai
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—121

Adams
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bishop (GA)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conyers
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeGette
DeLauro
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Farr
Fattah
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hastings
Higgins
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Langevin
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lofgren
Lowey
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Nadler
Napolitano
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Pocan
Price (NC)
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Rush
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tonko
Van Hollen
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—10

Dingell
Granger
Hinojosa
Hudson
Kline
Sinema
Smith (TX)
Walorski
Whitfield
Williams

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1752

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 540, I am not recorded as voting because of prior commitments in my District. Had I been present, I would have voted "Aye."

COMMUNICATION FROM THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable NANCY PELOSI, Democratic Leader:

OCTOBER 7, 2015.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER: Pursuant to section 202(a) of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146), I am pleased to recommend the following individual to the Commission on Care.

Ms. Lucretia M. McClenney, Locust Grove, Virginia

Best regards,

NANCY PELOSI,
Democratic Leader.

U.S.-KOREA RELATIONS

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

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to salute the U.S.-Korea partnership and to welcome President Park Geun-hye to Washington next week.

Having chaired the U.S.-Republic of Korea Parliamentary Exchange for over a decade, I have long championed closer ties between our two countries. Our alliance is one that was forged in bloodshed 65 years ago, when U.S. and Korean forces fought and died together. Our own colleagues, Sergeant CHARLIE RANGEL, JOHN CONYERS, and SAM JOHNSON, fought there.

Over 215,000 South Korean soldiers were killed and over 1 million civilians lost their lives. Seoul was leveled, but it has risen from the ashes to become one of greatest cities in the world.

The U.S.-Korea relations have been a linchpin of security for us. We have partnered in deepening our trade ties through KORUS, in our condemnation of Japan's use of Korean women as sex slaves during the war, and, more recently, our committee unanimously passed a resolution to help Korean Americans meet their long-lost relatives separated by the war.

Colleagues, let us take this partnership with South Korea to a new level.

65TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUTBREAK OF KOREAN WAR

(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, this marks the 65th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean war. As Korea has transformed itself in six decades from a war-torn basket economy into the 13th largest economy in the world, it represents one of America's greatest foreign policy success stories in the post-World War II era.

The Republic of Korea has been a strong and steadfast economic and strategic partner of the United States. Both countries are not only bound by history together, but by their shared commitment to democratic values.

Back home, California has an incredibly vibrant Korean American community that contributes to all facets of our society, from thriving businesses to our local churches.

Next week, the President of the Republic of Korea, the Honorable Park Geun-hye, will be making her second visit to Washington, D.C. I hope we will take this opportunity to discuss the rising tensions on the Korean Peninsula, the continued threat North Korea's nuclear program imposes on the region, and the regional concerns regarding the East Sea dispute.

□ 1800

WELCOMING THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

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

Mr. SALMON. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to stand up here today and welcome President Park Geun-hye next week coming to Washington, D.C., because the alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea has been one of the linchpin of peace, security, and prosperity in northeast Asia for more than 60 years, and we are united against the threat of a rogue regime in North Korea.

About 28,000 members of the U.S. Armed Forces stationed in South Korea stand with their Republic of Korea counterparts in defense of the south.

We support President Park's principled vision for peace, prosperity, and a democratic, unified Korean Peninsula. Our alliance today has grown far beyond this single threat, though. We also have strong alliances in economic development and many, many other issues.

We are very, very excited about this wonderful relationship, and we welcome President Park next week.

WELCOMING THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

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

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues in welcoming the distinguished President of the Republic of Korea to the United States of America to confer with our great President.

In 1950, I visited Korea for the first time as a combat infantryman. When I left, it was a nightmare, and I thought I would never want to go back to this place ever again.

To see this country now; to see what, out of the ashes, it has become; to see, from a very poor country, what a great democracy it has; to see the leadership of this great President; to see what a friend we have in that region when we are having a horrible time in economics and peace and in war, that this country always has our back; the great contributions Korea has made to this country, those that have become citizens, makes me proud to be an American.

So when she comes here, the Congress is so proud that some of us were able to make just a small contribution to keep her from falling into the hands of the Communists and then becoming our seventh great trading partner, a leader of the region and a leader of the world.

CONGRATULATING ELISE WARDEL

(Mrs. LOVE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. LOVE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Elise Wardel, who became a U.S. citizen last week in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Like many others, Elise came to Utah to attend one of our quality universities. She has now worked hard, paid taxes, and contributed to Utah's close-knit society and a thriving economy for more than 11 years. She has worked through some difficult processes, becoming naturalized, for more than 2½ years.

She and her husband, Adam, are expecting their first child this coming April and are grateful to raise their child here in the land of the free and the land of opportunity. I am grateful to count her among my newest constituents and extend her and Adam my best wishes.

People like Elise enrich our Nation. I am proud of them for taking the required steps to become U.S. citizens. I believe that Congress must do its job so that Elise and many others, like my father, can enter our Nation through the front door.

As the child of immigrant parents, I welcome all of Utah's new American citizens and pledge to work hard so that they can have access to the American Dream like I have.

WELCOMING THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

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

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome the President of the Republic of Korea, President Park, on her arrival in Washington, D.C., next week.

I had the honor of meeting with President Park during my last visit to Korea last December, where we discussed the synergistic partnerships and opportunities between the U.S., Silicon Valley, and South Korea.

Mr. Speaker, we must look to build new bridges and reinforce the connectors that have already contributed so much to our mutual benefit.

As President Park said when she addressed the joint meeting of Congress in 2013: ''Looking forward, our precious alliance is setting its sights on a better world—a brighter future.''

I wish President Park a very successful and fruitful visit to the U.S. and summit with President Obama. No doubt, our two nations' very special alliance will grow even stronger in the coming years.

MAY GOD BLESS THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, many of you know South Carolina was inundated with a historic rainfall. They call it a 1,000-year rain event. The rivers have not crested yet. The floods continue. Many South Carolinians are displaced. Many are hurting.

I just want to ask the House and America to continue to lift my home State up. But let me remind you then, in the 24th Psalm, it is written: ''The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein, for He hath founded it upon the seas and established it upon the floods.''

Thank you for your prayers, and may God continue to bless the Palmetto State of South Carolina, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NATIONAL HYDROGEN AND FUEL CELL DAY

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, our neighbors in the Senate have introduced and agreed to a resolution that recognizes Thursday, October 8, as National Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Day. I invite my colleagues to support this commemoration and affirm our resolution to bettering our Nation, our economy, and, certainly, our environment.

As the planet's most abundant natural resource, hydrogen has a critical role to play in the way we think about renewable energy. It is already powering homes and vehicles across our Nation and has the potential to do even more if we recognize that energy efficiency should be our fuel of choice.

Businesses are already reporting success stories about their use of hydrogen fuel cells and the elimination of carbon emissions. The once pricey and seemingly unfeasible source has now become a practical avenue for America's energy demand, and it is because we invested in that unique American innovative spirit and made it so. We should learn from this and apply that attitude to other corners in our energy sector.

Our Nation is projected to increase its energy consumption through 2040, and climate change is certainly a reality. We have no choice but to face that head-on. Please join me as we strive to make America the leading nation for renewable energy, a goal we can advance right now by recognizing this day as National Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Day.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to commend my colleagues in the House and Senate for passing the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 and to call on the President to sign this vital bill into law.

It is the constitutional responsibility of Congress to provide for the common defense of this Nation. Right now, our country faces growing and very serious threats. Unrest continues to escalate in the Middle East, and our troops are fighting terrorism around the world. Yet the President has threatened to veto this legislation, which provides our men and women in uniform with the resources they need to defend themselves and America's national security at home and abroad.

The President's veto threat is dangerously irresponsible. We must fulfill our duties to support our troops and their families who sacrifice so much to protect our Nation.

Congress has acted in a bipartisan fashion to pass this legislation, equip our military, and bolster national defense. Instead of putting our national security at risk, the President should sign this bill into law so we can keep our military strong and Americans safe.

WELCOMING THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

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

Ms. MENG. Mr. Speaker, I rise to welcome President Park Geun-hye to the United States for her state visit next week. The United States and the Republic of Korea enjoy a warm friendship built on a commitment to security, joint economic development, cultural exchange, and the democratic process.

This year marks the 65th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean war. Korea has transformed itself in six decades from a war-torn economy into the 13th largest economy in the world, and it represents one of America's greatest foreign policy success stories.

President Park's visit will reaffirm our strong bilateral relationship at an

important time, as our countries work together to address mutual security threats and improve regional security.

President Park's approach to North Korea and her focus on reuniting families who have been separated by the Korean war has given renewed hope to many Korean Americans in the United States. I am sure her visit will lead to new areas of cooperation between our countries.

WELCOMING THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

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

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, as the co-chair of the Korea Caucus here in Congress, as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I extend my warm greetings to President Park on her second official visit to the United States.

The U.S. and the Republic of Korea share deep ties, an alliance forged in blood and sweat and toil. Out of the Korean war emerged one of the great miracles of economic development the world has ever seen, the Republic of Korea.

The ROK has emerged as an economic juggernaut with a vibrant democracy and a strong alliance with us, the United States. During the President's visit, I think she will be glad also to find that those ties are familial. We have a deep and vibrant community, Korean American community here in the United States, including right here in the national capital region and in my district in northern Virginia.

Alliances are often defined by military or economic ties. Our ties go even deeper. Those family ties are what connect us with the Republic of Korea and the Congressional Caucus.

I wish the President well, look forward to a successful trip, and look forward to continuing to work with her and her government as the co-chairman of the Korea Caucus.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF AL PIANTANIDA

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

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I announce that Al Piantanida passed away on August 31.

He was a veteran but, more importantly, a good American. Al is what I would call the perfect constituent, the perfect friend, and the perfect neighbor.

Al would come to his elected officials' offices all the time and let us know what was going on in the community and what was going wrong in the community, but never once—never once—did Al complain. He always said: How can I be part of the solution?

To me, that is not only a good person, but that is what makes America great: human beings who have the time and the resources to give of themselves and are not there to complain but are there to make sure that their neighborhood, their community, and their country are a better place.

We are going to miss Al. He was a selfless individual and someone who was always giving of himself, and he always was creative in making sure that he was part of the solution and was always there for his community in every way possible.

Al was a personal friend. I met him through my responsibility as an elected official in the community, but I grew to love him as a person and to appreciate him very much.

We are going to miss you, Al, but you will never be forgotten.

□ 1815

FUTURE FORUM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from California (Mr. SWALWELL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to kick off the Future Forum Special Order hour. Today we will be bringing attention, once again, to the issue of college affordability and student loan debt. We also have a few surprises in store today, as I will be joined by my Future Forum colleagues.

I first want to report that just earlier this week, on Monday, the Future Forum, which is a group of about 16 to 17 of the youngest members in our caucus, went out to Seattle. Congressman KILMER, who represents the Seattle area, was joined by myself and RUBEN GALLEGO of the Phoenix, Arizona, area.

We went across the Seattle area. We talked to college students, community college students, college graduates, a millennial workforce, and also folks in the tech sector in Seattle.

We went to the University of Washington Tacoma and met with veterans. We went to the University of Puget Sound and talked to students. We went to an SEIU training center and talked to the next generation of their workforce.

We were also able to go to Amazon. We went to amazon.com and had a town hall there with their millennial workforce, and we were able to listen to them and their concerns about the future.

We heard a common thread through all of these diverse groups, America's largest generation, millennials, 80 million people. They are concerned about their future.

They are concerned about their ability to afford and have access to go to college. They are concerned about how much it is going to cost them when they get out and the student loan debt that they are going to be burdened with.

It was another successful Future Forum trip. It was the eighth one we have taken this year, ranging from New York, Boston, New Hampshire, Phoenix, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Los Angeles, and now Seattle.

I encourage anyone watching to engage with us on Twitter. I will be a part of the conversation. I will read and respond to any questions as we go along.

First, today I am joined by a colleague of mine, a Future Forum member from the Dallas/Fort Worth area, Congressman MARC VEASEY.

Congressman, we are encouraging a conversation around these issues at #futureforum.

I have been to the Dallas/Fort Worth area. I have seen the way you engage with young people in your district.

I want to know just what are you hearing out there about your constituents and their ability to go to college, your constituents and their ability to pay for college? And, once they get out, how is student loan debt affecting their opportunities?

Mr. VEASEY. Congressman SWALWELL, thank you very much. I really appreciate your leadership on Future Forum and bringing up important issues like student debt. It is a real issue that so many of our young people struggle with when they graduate from college.

In one of the articles that I was reading about student debt, a national magazine put some Instagram photos up of young people and the problems and the issues that they have with student debt. Some of the kids put up some really creative things.

One of the graduating students, on their graduating hat, instead of ''Game of Thrones,'' it said ''Game of Loans.'' Another sign that I saw at one of the college graduations said, ''I will soon be joining millions of other young people that are graduating from college, and I will be consumed with thousands of dollars in debt.''

But while these Instagram photos are cute and funny and I am sure are a way for young people to take their minds off of what is going to be facing them in thousands of dollars of debt, we know that this is a very serious issue.

Our young people that are graduating from college are putting off buying a house. They are putting off buying that new car. Those sorts of things play a role in how well our economy does.

And I think, more importantly, you hear a lot of young people that are graduating from college saying that they are putting off starting a family.

That is one of the most important things that we do as young people as we graduate from college and make our way into the world, is that we start that next generation.

And in order for us to start that next generation with confidence, kids need to know that when they graduate from college, they are not going to be burdened with all of this debt.

We know that college is becoming less and less affordable each day, and it negatively impacts the lives of thousands of Americans across our great Nation, including many of the constituents that I represent in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

Right now we have about 40 million young people in this country that have over $1.3 trillion in debt.

In the State of Texas, the average debt per student is over $25,000, with over 70 percent of bachelor's degree recipients graduating with a student loan. About 16 percent of students in Texas have defaulted on their loans. These numbers can easily create an economic crisis for an entire generation.

While the cost of higher education continues to rise, grants are not going up on the same per-student basis. We have seen the Federal Pell Grant funding levels remain stagnant despite House Democrats urging Republicans to do something, to step in and help these kids, and let's increase Pell Grant funding levels. But we have seen absolutely no action from the Republicans on this.

Mr. Speaker and Congressman SWALWELL, I think it is important that we do work together on commonsense proposals that provide grants to the most needy and to make Federal loans affordable so that young people can obtain a degree, contribute to our economy, and keep our country going strong without the burden of insurmountable student debt.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Congressman VEASEY, part of what the Future Forum has tried to express across the country to young people has been, first, our members, we understand you, we hear you, because we know the struggle you have gone through.

Personally, I have over $100,000 today in student loan debt. Half of my college was paid through an athletic scholarship, and I still had that much student loan debt that I racked up because of tuition going up every single year.

Could you tell us just a little bit about your personal story or those of any family members or friends and how you have personally seen this debt affecting people.

Mr. VEASEY. Absolutely. When I graduated from college, paying back my student loans was very, very difficult. And I will tell you that one of the things that I lucked into when I was still in my twenties was that I became a congressional aide. I worked for a Member of Congress.

And there was a student loan program for young people that worked on Capitol Hill for them to be able to have some of their student loan debt repaid. Had it not been for that, I don't know what I would have done because the student debt was eating into my discretionary income.

Again, we want young people to contribute to our economy. We want young people to go and buy that car that they couldn't afford in college. We want young people to start a family, buy a home.

I mean, the American Dream is being able to start a family and buy that home and be able to raise your kids in that home and be able to provide for your family.

But, unfortunately, more and more of our young people are saying, ''You know what. I am going to put off getting married. I am going to put off buying that home. I am going to put off putting money into our local economy. I am going to not buy so much for Christmas for my siblings and my parents and other people. I can't afford to because I have thousands and thousands of dollars' worth of student debt.''

We have to figure out some way to do something about this, Representative SWALWELL, or we are going to have an entire generation of young people that just has absolutely nowhere to turn.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. You know what was interesting? We have had these conversations with people.

A story I will never forget: We were in the Boston area, and we went to Thermo Fisher. We had this town hall with about 200 young people at their workforce, talking to us about student loan debt. I was with Congressman MOULTON.

Once we started getting into the back-and-forth of the questions with the participants, a woman in the back who was around 55, 60 years old raised her hand and said kind of jokingly, ''You know, I know I am not supposed to be here. This is a millennial town hall.'' And we told her, ''No. No. It is a mindset. It is not an age.''

But she said, ''I think you are missing the fact that student loan debt doesn't just affect millennials,'' and she told a story about her daughter who had gone to college, which is also a part of that American Dream where we want our young people to go to college, educate themselves.

But she said that she has found that her daughter has come home from college, has over $30,000 in student loan debt and, because of that debt, is not able to even rent near where she works. So what her daughter has done is she has come back home. We are becoming the boomerang generation.

So that reinforced for me that this issue affects the 40 million millennials that you talked about. But, actually, it is a family matter. It affects everyone in the household.

Have you heard stories like that or seen examples of that?

Mr. VEASEY. Yes. I have absolutely heard so many stories like that.

And it is really interesting. I think, when we are all in our twenties, we never think that we are going to get older.

I have been working in politics now since I have been in my twenties, starting off as a congressional aide and spending 8 years in Texas State Legislature and now as a Member of Congress.

When you meet kids that are in their teens, kids that are in their twenties, they never ask you about Social Security. They don't ask you much about what is going on with the national defense. And, for years, I can tell you that young people in their teens and twenties never asked me a lot of questions, as an elected official, about many of the issues that affect our country.

Most of the questions that I would get from individuals were usually from people that were baby boomers and older that were concerned about Social Security, concerned about the high cost of food or goods or whatever it may happen to be.

But let me tell you something. For young people in this country, this issue is getting their attention, not being able to pay back their student debt.

And I can tell you that, when I am at townhall meetings, when I am out doing the different events throughout the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex, the one issue that young people come to me about—and I know that, if someone is in their twenties or early thirties and they are approaching me about an issue, it is probably going to be about student debt. It has really galvanized them like I have never seen before.

Again, they are going to social media like some of the examples that I have talked with you about earlier. They are going to social media. They are going to Instagram and Facebook, talking about student debt, begging the Congress to do something about providing more grants.

Again, we want our country to be well-educated. That is how we are going to be able to compete with the rest of the world.

But guess what. More and more young people are hearing, you know, ''Why go to college? Why go to college and be burdened with student debt?''

And guess what. If more and more young people hear that, it is going to make us less competitive in the world at a time where we need to be more competitive in all sectors, whether it is in technology, whether it is in manufacturing. We need an educated workforce.

I can tell you that young people are being discouraged because of a lack of action specifically, really, by Republicans in Congress. So we have to keep raising this issue.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Again, I appreciate you being with us today, Congressman VEASEY of Texas.

You are right. It is about solutions and who is acting. I think we all would welcome the bipartisan approach to this. But right now the silence is deafening, and it is affecting a whole generation that is just stuck in financial quicksand.

One of the solutions that the Future Forum has put out there is this idea: Hey, you can refinance an auto loan. You can refinance your home loan. Why shouldn't our students who are in this financial quicksand be able to refinance their student loans at the lowest

available rate? We have got legislation on that, and I hope it becomes bipartisan legislation. But I agree with you on a call to action on this.

Mr. VEASEY. Thank you, Representative SWALWELL. I appreciate that.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Well, the Future Forum is a group that has evolved since April, and we are quite interested in engaging with millennials.

Again, I would invite people tonight to engage with us on #futureforum, and we will take questions.

But this idea of reaching out to a generation that is not necessarily yet engaged in new, innovative ways is older than the Future Forum. It actually started about 10 years ago.

And today we have a little bit of a surprise for our Future Forum followers. We are going to welcome some of the original members of the Future Forum who 10 years ago on this House floor redefined what it meant to reach out and talk to the next generation of leaders.

So it is my honor, it is my privilege, to first welcome Congressman TIM RYAN of Ohio. TIM said it best in 2005, 10 years ago, when he led the 30–Something Working Group and they took questions on this House floor, as we take them now from Twitter. Congressman RYAN took them via email.

He said, ''Being the 30–Something Group, we are trying to take our communications to the next level, trying to reach out to the American people, because we have said for quite some time that if we are going to solve problems in this country, that we have to engage the best and brightest talent that is out in the country in order to do this.''

□ 1830

Does that sound familiar to the gentleman from Ohio?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I don't remember that, but that sounds like something I would have said. That is great.

Well, thank you. This is bringing back a lot of memories. I look at some of our friends that staff the House of Representatives, and we had a lot of long nights where we would come to the House floor sometimes once or twice in an evening back in 2003, 2004, 2005, and then going into 2006 and really used the House floor. There wasn't Twitter back then, and so a lot has changed with the ability to communicate and organize.

We had key issues at that point that we were working on with DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Congressman Kendrick Meek from Miami. We were kind of the three Members that would come in here every night. It helped us communicate with not just young people who may or may not be watching C–SPAN, because there weren't a lot of them, but we were on later at night, and so we did get some college students who were paying attention to what was going on. We were also talking to their parents, and we were also talking to their grandparents.

I think what you guys are doing now with the Future Forum is having a conversation with everyone about what the future needs to look like. I think that is critically important. You talk about student loans, student debt, and all the rest. I think one issue, too, that we are talking about that doesn't get a whole lot of coverage is how we create an economy for these young people to go into and what that looks like. I believe that there is an opportunity for us to kind of bring the whole thing together.

We talk a lot about the environment because we are concerned with global warming and what direction we are going in as a country. If you look at places like Iowa and other places, you will see that they have 25 or 30 percent of their energy coming from renewable sources.

I represent a district in northeast Ohio, heavily manufacturing, lost thousands and thousands of manufacturing jobs over the last couple of decades. When I look at what we need to do to reduce our carbon footprint, to move away from fossil fuels, and to move into a more renewable economy, to me, wind and solar are an opportunity to do that. But it is also an opportunity for us to bring manufacturing back.

So not everyone is going to be a Ph.D. and not everyone is going to be a STEM graduate, but if we can get enough of those graduates to figure out how we move the country forward, how we manufacture things again here in the United States, when you think about a windmill that consists of 8,000 component parts, hundreds of tons of steel, gearshifts, bearings, hydraulics, all kinds of component parts that need to be fabricated, to me, if we are going to resuscitate manufacturing in the United States, moving into a renewable economy with wind and solar and all the component parts it entails is an opportunity for us to re-create the middle class.

So when we talk about what the future is, yeah, maybe the college students are going to be graduating from the STEM college and they may be engineers, but we have got to deal with the grid. We have got to deal with battery storage, and we have got to do research and development to figure out how to do it, how to store the energy and all the rest, but we also need to resuscitate manufacturing.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. What colleges do you have in your district?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. In my district, I have three. We have Youngstown State University, which had the first STEM college in the entire State of Ohio, and Akron University, which does a ton of work converting. It used to be the rubber capital of the world. Now they are doing polymers, which has a really bright future as well. And we have Kent State University, which is focused on liquid crystal. So we have these universities.

But, to me, at the end of the day, if you don't get into manufacturing, it needs to become a bigger and bigger part to where we are exporting our products, high-end, high-end manufacturing, advanced manufacturing, and additive manufacturing to the rest of the world. We know we are going to lose some manufacturing, of course, to the lower cost countries, which is a natural evolution of the global economy. The Future Forum and what you are talking about has to be about and is about how we create an economy for these young people, and you are in the process of doing that.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. So, in your district, say Youngstown, or my district, Cal State, East Bay, what I have found talking to young people, when we talk about this renewable economy and young people hear that, we are actually in this Congress, under Republican leadership slashing the amount of money we invest in renewables and increasing the amount that we spend on fossil fuels, I find that young people, their reaction is: Wait. What? You guys, the rest of the world is going forward in this renewable economy. Germany has 30 percent of its energy from renewables, and the United States is still stuck around 10 to 11 percent?

I found it generationally, Republicans and Democrats, millennials, they don't understand why we are kind of stuck in the mud on this issue. I don't know what you have heard.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Definitely in agreement across generations, across party lines. Being young, you kind of understand it. I think if we can move the conversation away from kind of the dark, the world is going to end, globalization, global warming talk, and more into, okay, how do we become sustainable and what is the path forward, and how is that going to benefit everyone moving forward—and I am a kind of an all-of-the-above guy. I think natural gas can be a transition for us, and I think there are a lot of opportunities to do that.

I will tell you this, and I don't want to get into a deep discussion because a lot of people are not in agreement on this. But when you look at the hydraulic fracturing which allowed a lot of the natural gas to come up and for us to access it, which is fairly controversial in some quarters, but the technology was a partnership between the Department of Energy and the private sector for 30 years, starting in the Carter administration, that allowed us to be able to go in and then access this natural gas that is there.

The same concept as what you were talking about is putting the money into the renewables, driving the costs down, having the tax credits in place over a long-term period so that we can bring the costs down and incentivize some investments. At the end of the day, that is how you move forward with creating new sectors of the economy.

I see the gentleman from Georgia, and I thought he was just hanging on

every word I was saying here, and you were so enthralled, and yet you were here to file a rule.

Mr. WOODALL. I say to my friend, you had me at all of the above. You had me at American manufacturing. You had me at jobs for the next generation, and you had me at looking forward instead of backwards, not doom and gloom, but how we can work together to solve problems.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Look at what just happened here on the House floor.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. We will talk. We will send over some ideas, and we will take some of yours.

Mr. WOODALL. I will look forward to that.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Congressman RYAN, one of my favorite things to do in the spirit of what you and Congresswoman WASSERMAN SCHULTZ did is you went out and engaged people in new, inventive ways. We do what is called a word cloud. We go to these townhalls, and they can text in answers to questions we pose. One that we often ask them is: What would you spend your money on if you had more money at the end of the month that wasn't going to student loans? You can see in the word cloud here, which was taken from a recent event, it ranges from rent, house, buy a house, groceries, mortgage, and savings.

Have you heard this out in Ohio?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Same deal, and that is what every one of those words references is a stronger economy because you have people who are putting money in buying a car or renting a house or buying a house or doing any one of these things. And there they are. There they are.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. I have the privilege of having both of you on the floor now, and you can see it is the 10-year reunion of the 30-Somethings. The two of you really charted the path forward for us to do this as the Future Forum.

We are now joined by the gentlewoman from Florida, Congresswoman DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

I went back and I saw many of the different, inventive, and creative ways that you guys engaged our young people. I was hoping you could just talk about back then, because some of the issues you talked about—rising gas prices at the time, the war in Iraq, and privatization of Social Security—you brought attention on this House floor of these issues to the next generation. Maybe you could just talk about how you did that and then how we can do that today.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Absolutely. I thank the gentleman from California for yielding, and I say to my friend from Ohio that it is good to get the band back together.

It is really incredible that it has been 10 years. I don't really want to think about the birthday that I just had and where that puts me. I guess a few years after we started the 30-Something Working Group at least I and our former colleague Kendrick Meek from Florida passed the status of being 30-something, and we were 30-somethings in spirit while we were doing that for a little while.

I am a little longer past being a 30-something now, but it is absolutely critical that we have an opportunity now to pass the torch, Mr. RYAN, to the next generation of 30-somethings who are focused on making sure that, as we go from generation to generation, as Democrats, we are focused on making sure about those cornerstones of a middle class life that we talked about 10 years ago, making sure that you don't have to choose between buying your groceries or filling your gas tank so you can get to work, which then, if you can't, would cause you not to be able to afford your groceries.

Now, 10 years later, Mr. SWALWELL—I had young children back then. Mr. RYAN was single, and now he has young children. My twins are actually 2 years from going to college, so the student debt crisis that has been looming and has existed and has overly burdened so many Americans is now something that my family has trepidation about. So it is incredibly timely that we relaunch this working group and make sure that the issues that are important to that next generation get the attention and the focus on the floor of the United States House of Representatives.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. We talk a lot about the next generation, and Congressman RYAN and I were talking about how this affects millennials—and I invite my colleague from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) to take the other podium.

I don't know if you have heard this in your district, but this issue of college access and affordability is actually a family matter. We just got a tweet from @SKAU61, and she said that she wants to get a BA in accounting, and at 53 she can't afford to do it. So we are hearing that it is multigenerational, this access.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SWALWELL of California. I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. In response to your question, whether I have heard this in my district, absolutely. The average debt that an individual carries in student loan debt is about $29,000. That is crushing debt for years to be burdened with. Even President Obama, not long prior to becoming President, he and the First Lady had both talked about how they only just had paid off their student loan debt just before he took office.

Imagine into your not even late fifties, late forties, still paying off your debt from college and postgraduate school. It is just outrageous. Yet Republicans—and let's make sure that we zero in on brass tacks here—Republicans have consistently denied Americans the opportunity to reform the student loan program so that we can ensure that when they are paid a salary that it is in line with how much they have to actually pay back out of their monthly paycheck to actually make sure that they can make ends meet.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Reclaiming my time, I don't know if either Mr. RYAN or Mr. JEFFRIES has heard constituent casework like this, but we have constituents in our district who are having their Social Security checks garnished because of student loan debt.

So I yield to Mr. RYAN or Mr. JEFFRIES, if you heard about this multigenerational challenge.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I feel like we are here to provide a little historical context. So when we, back in the day, and that was 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, before the Democrats took over the House a few years back, we had a student loan system that the banks would do the loans, and the rates were 7, 8, and 9 percent. Then, the Federal Government would back the loan if someone defaulted. So I loan you $100, and if you default, the gentleman from California will pay me. What a great business to be in. No lose. Right? So they were covered, regardless. We came in and made some serious reforms to limit the amount of monthly payments and for how many years if you are in the public service.

□ 1845

So we made some reforms that I think were really, really important. But as the gentlewoman from Florida said, that is the difference. We are aggressively trying to pursue ways of fixing the problem, and if we do a piece, we come back and then we try to get to the next piece. In the last few years since 2010, we keep running into a brick wall where we are not getting the kind of cooperation.

But these are the kind of things that the government is supposed to do. I think we are pretty clear about that. That is why it is important, as DEBBIE said, for you to keep coming out here night in and night out, because every night somebody is listening to you, some nights more than others. Some nights we weren't sure if anyone was listening.

But somebody is listening. You have to just keep pounding and pounding and pounding that message because this is what is best for the economy, for families, and everyone else that really is going to make a difference. So it is good you are out here pounding away.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentleman, first, from California for his leadership and for all that you have done to make sure that issues of importance to the next generation of Americans, such as the one that we are discussing here today, get prominence on the House floor, this great vehicle for communicating to the American people, and, of course, to be here with the still young pioneers of this wonderful effort, Congresswoman

WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Congressman RYAN. It is just a great honor.

Clearly, we have a student loan debt crisis that commands the attention of the American people and should command the attention of people here in the House of Representatives and on the other side of the Capitol, but does not always do so, which is why communicating the urgency of the situation is so significant, just the notion.

I have got constituents just shocked by the fact that, collectively, we have got over $1 trillion of student loan debt here in America. That is a very real number in terms of its implications, as you pointed out, Congressman SWALWELL, for the capacity of younger Americans to robustly pursue the American Dream.

When you are saddled with that level of debt burden, it makes it far more difficult to start a family, far more difficult to purchase a home, far more difficult to be part of the next generation of great American entrepreneurs and innovators, because you are less likely to take a risk if you have got this monthly student loan bill that you are unsure as to how you would pay if you were to take some time off to start a business, to invent the next Google or Facebook or Twitter.

And so this is really an issue of great significance to us, as Americans. And it is a shame. I will make this last observation.

I sat on the Budget Committee for the previous 2 years in the 113th Congress, and the same is the case this year, that Republicans continue to put forth a budget that is not designed to alleviate the problem of higher education affordability. It is designed to make the problem worse.

It will cut over $220 billion over a 10-year period in Federal Government assistance in a variety of ways to younger Americans who are struggling to get a college education and pursue the American Dream.

That is something that we have got to be able to address moving forward or move in a different direction in terms of who the American people send to this Congress to do their business.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. I am wondering, especially for our pioneers here tonight, if it would surprise you to hear that, since 2004, when you started this effort, student loan debt has increased from $346 million collectively for the country to the $1.2 trillion that it is today. That is an increase of 235 percent.

What has happened or what hasn't happened?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Well, what hasn't happened is a focus in a bipartisan way on making sure that we make college affordability a top priority.

I will tell you that I know my husband and I are at the intersection in our family of wanting to make sure that, as we send our twins, two at once, off to college 2 years from now, we will be able to, one, be able to supplement as much as possible their college education so that, knowing what we know about the potential for them to have that debt burden when they graduate, we can relieve that possibility, and trying to figure out how the heck we are going to add that double-whammy expense when they start college and at the same time being pretty panicked about how much debt they will have to go in themselves if we can't really make sure—and families all across—less about me and more about the sort of average middle class family that is trying to make sure that they can make ends meet for their whole family and make sure that they can send their kids off to start their lives, which is why President Obama and congressional Democrats have proposed that the first 2 years of college be free.

I will tell you that I have a lot of folks at home in south Florida who have said to me, ''You know, if I only had to worry about my kid's junior and senior year and how we were going to pay for that and we knew that at least they could get an AA degree.''

Over 100 years ago, when we established free universal access to public education in elementary grades and eventually secondary grades, no one would question. That was considered controversial back then. No one today would consider universal free public education, except maybe some of our friends on the other side of the aisle. Actually, I take that back. But you wouldn't question, you wouldn't think, that universal access to public education should be free.

We are at the point now in the 21st century where there shouldn't be any question that the first 2 years of college should be free, and we need our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to join us in that.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And part of this is not just the first 2 years of college free, but Democrats are also pushing initiatives like how do you streamline and get high school kids into community college classes early while they are still in high school to start taking and reducing some of those costs.

We have programs in Canton at Stark State where you can get 13 credit hours towards a welding certificate. Thirteen of 30 hours can be done before you even graduate from high school. So that reduces and it is free because it is part of your high school public education. So now you are already starting.

So it is not just about reducing student loans and reducing debt and Pell Grants and streamlining the first 2 years. But we also, I think, have an obligation to streamline the current system that is K–12 or K–14 and make sure we narrow that down.

I have got to step out, but I just want to say thank you. You have got another Irish guy here to carry the flag.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Another Floridian, too.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Another Floridian. I do want to say just keep pounding away. This is a great way to communicate. You guys are doing it. We have to get more and more from your classes to be up here. So keep up the good work. And I am out.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. I am glad this reunion happened. You inspire us to continue going forward.

I want to ask the gentleman from New York—I have been to Manhattan. It reminds me a lot—Manhattan and Brooklyn and Queens and Harlem—reminds me a lot of what we see in Silicon Valley and San Francisco, just the young entrepreneurial minds.

But when we go to these startup spaces or these incubator hubs, I constantly hear how much student loan debt affects their ability to invest in themselves and their businesses, and we are finding that our generation is the least entrepreneurial generation America has ever known at our time.

I am wondering if you have heard stories about that and how it is limiting investment.

Mr. JEFFRIES. That is absolutely correct. I think what we have to do is really work on changing the equation to facilitate the great minds that we have got in this current generation of younger Americans to be able to go out and be innovators and entrepreneurial in the context of a vastly changing economy as well as a changing dynamic in terms of the affordability of college education.

I am troubled by the fact, one, if you look at the productivity of the American worker, what we have seen, of course, since the early 1970s is that it has increased dramatically, in excess of 275 percent in terms of American worker productivity.

At the same time, wages during that period from the early 1970s to the present have remained largely stagnant, less than 10 percent. So the equation for the American worker has changed.

So what we have is that we have got younger Americans entering into a workforce where the fundamental equation in terms of their compensation has changed dramatically for the worse, the cost of a college education has increased, the amount of financial assistance relative to the cost of that college education has remained stagnant, if not declined in real dollars, and the expectation in terms of the student debt loan burden one is expected to shoulder upon graduation has exploded exponentially.

You add all those things together and it is no surprise that you are going to find yourself in a situation where people don't have the same capability of being entrepreneurial as prior generations.

FDR, of course, brought forth the New Deal. What we need for this current generation of Americans is just a fairer deal in the context of giving them the same opportunities to robustly pursue the American Dream, start great companies, innovate as prior generations, so we can continue to be great.

I would also note that downtown Brooklyn, interestingly enough, which I represent in the wonderful Eighth Congressional District——

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Is that where Silicon Alley is?

Mr. JEFFRIES. That is part of Silicon Alley. I am so glad that you are familiar with our East Coast lingo.

But it also has more college students in downtown Brooklyn than Boston and Cambridge combined. So there has been a great number of young people who have come to Brooklyn who are contributing to our fantastic innovation culture, but who are struggling with the fundamentals of today's economy and higher education structure that is working against them.

That is why we are here on the floor of the House of Representatives fighting to change that.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Here on the floor any Californian would be nervous when he or she is outnumbered by Floridians.

We are joined by the gentleman from Florida who represents West Palm Beach, Jupiter/Martin County area.

What are you hearing in your district about student loan debt?

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. First of all, I want to thank the gentleman from California for putting this together and, really, your leadership. You have been at this for years now, talking to other Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle, reminding them about what a critical issue this is.

Whether I am talking to constituents in my district throughout the State of Florida or people here in the House, we have to do more to help more people get access to quality and affordable education at all levels, but certainly higher education.

When you look at what I would argue is one of the biggest problems in our country right now—and that is the disappearing middle class and this growing divide we have in our country—unfortunately or fortunately, depending on how you look at it, as economies continue to evolve and progress, education becomes more and more of a critical component of that.

Yet, you look at the policies and you look at really what is holding so many people back, just listening to the gentleman from New York here talking about that lack of opportunity and the debt that is holding so many people back from taking that risk to go ahead and become that entrepreneur, to be that innovative spirit that made America so great because they might have $100,000 of debt, they might have a family, they might have some kids, and they are so concerned about this debt, they don't want to take that risk.

That is not what America is about. America is about taking that risk with having education to do it and then turning it into something great. And understanding that not every risk is going to always pay off, but you have to have that background, that education, to get you there.

And if you are saddled with hundreds of thousands of dollars of debt and overly complex methods to repay them, not being able to refinance, et cetera, then you have a problem.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Because I want to engage as we used to do. And I know that you do this as well. But I just want to follow up on what you just said because the gentleman from California posed the question and stated the fact that millennials today really aren't starting new businesses. You would think—and we envision them to be the start-up generation. They are living in a start-up era, but, yet, they can't see it.

To use the vernacular of the gentleman of Florida, Congressman MEEKS, when we were throwing things around on the House floor 10 years ago, let's put the cookie on the bottom shelf here.

If, as you just said, they are saddled with the burden of significant debt coming out of college when they get a degree, it is very difficult for them to see a pathway to develop that small business, to envision being a pioneer of the next great industry.

So we are literally saddling them with a heavy burden as they leave what is supposed to be the jumping-off point for the next phase of their lives. We are supposed to be passing them the baton so that they can move America forward. It is just not fair. It is not right. And our friends on the other side of the aisle are part of the problem.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Millennials are very collaborative. They are, I would believe, a problem-solving generation.

What is so frustrating when we talk to them at college campuses or at their work sites is they ask, ''Well, what are you doing about it?'' And I believe my colleagues here would be happy, thrilled, to work with our colleagues across the aisle on solutions on this.

But I am just curious. Do you know how many bills we voted on to address student loan debt this Congress? Zero. Zero bills.

□ 1900

At the end of the day, it is not just the least entrepreneurial. We are the least home owning. We are more likely to delay starting a family by about 5 years. So everything that the generation before us had, we are delaying: buying a home, starting a family, starting a business. As the gentleman from New York pointed out, it is affecting the economy.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I wanted to share my own personal story very briefly.

You know, I happened to get married fairly young at 24 years old. Graduating from a public university, the University of Florida, without debt, the progress I was able to make at the beginning of my adult life, at the beginning of my professional life, enabled me to have a much longer ramp and see many more possibilities because I didn't have that debt.

My husband and I were able to buy our first house right after we got married, and we have been able to make sure that we can make choices that will maximize our opportunities to ensure that our children, when we had them and now are raising them, have opportunities.

It is so sad that the millennial generation really doesn't see it, doesn't believe it, and that is because there is obstacle after obstacle being thrown in their way right from the start of their most formative years.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. On an issue you would never imagine to be partisan.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Unbelievable.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Well, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for joining us. I hope to see her back.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the gentleman from New York heard, but in 2012, the New York Fed reported that for the first time in a decade, 30-year-old student borrowers were less likely to take out a home mortgage than other young people.

Are you seeing in the New York area or hearing from your constituents about how student loan debt is affecting their ability to buy a house?

I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely the case. Certainly in Brooklyn, which has become now an attractive place for so many people to reside, not just from the city, the region, all across the country and, indeed, the world, yet many of the young people who have moved to Brooklyn who are starting a life in Brooklyn are renting in Brooklyn. They are unable to purchase a home.

Some of that has to do with the significant appreciation in home value that we have witnessed over the last decade, but a lot of that has to do with the fact that they can't see their way to either a downpayment on a home or carrying a monthly mortgage, given the student loan debt burden that they have been forced to shoulder as a result of the structure that has been put in place in terms of higher education in America.

You made an important observation earlier in referencing the President's plan for free community college education. If we can just dwell there for a second, what is important to note is it used to be the case, for prior generations who started the great American middle class after helping to liberate the world coming back home to America after World War II, that if you just had a high school diploma, for many individuals, that was a pathway into

the middle class. That is no longer the case in today's 21st century economy.

You can get a high school diploma at a high-quality public school for free without any debt. So, at that point, as you entered into the workforce, you could think about starting a family, purchasing a home, and doing other things consistent with what it means to be part of the great American middle class. That is no longer the case. A high school diploma is not a pathway into the middle class. You have got to at least go to college, if not get a graduate degree.

Given the high cost of a college education, it has changed the equation for younger Americans in terms of their entry into the middle class. That is why looking at bold proposals, such as dramatically reducing, if not eliminating, the cost of public higher education at the community college level, if not beyond, is something that we have got to put front and center on the agenda here in the House of Representatives.

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, adding on to what the gentleman from New York said, not only should we be looking at those sorts of proposals, but we should be looking at some of the existing programs we have, like Pell grants. The numbers that we have been talking about, this skyrocketing cost of education has increased 200-some percent over the last decade. That is unsustainable.

Yet look at what Pell grants have done. The maximum Pell grant has not gone up ratably in the same amount of time. So let's talk about expanding these programs.

I think we need to really change the dynamic of the conversation to your point where it is really about return on investment. You know, we need to look at this from a business perspective: What is the best ROI of taxpayer money?

I look at some of the bills that we have all worked on together here. One bill that comes to mind is called the SAVE Act. It is a bill where we identified $479 billion of wasteful, duplicative, fraudulent government spending. Let's start implementing and start finding those savings and putting that into education, ensuring that that return on investment for taxpayer money is truly there. We all know a dollar spent on education is going to come back in droves for future generations in this economy.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Congressman MURPHY, your district, the State of Florida, has a lot of veterans. People always ask: What is the biggest surprise you have found since going to Congress?

I don't know if you guys have had that question posed to you.

For me, the biggest surprise I have found since coming to Congress is just how poorly our veterans have been treated. Something that is even more surprising, which I found doing these Future Forum tours—I don't know if you have heard about this—but a GI Bill doesn't even cover the full cost of college anymore.

So the veterans who have served our country, fought abroad, risked their lives, saw their friends and sometimes family members killed, when they come back home, the GI Bill can't even get them all the way through college. That is how expensive college has become, and we can't even take care of our veterans.

So when you talk about Pell grants, I am wondering if you have talked to veterans and heard about the gaps in funding that they are experiencing as they try and advance their skills when they get back home.

I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have, and I think it is a great topic to talk about, and one that we should be able to find bipartisan support on.

Because of some of the conversations I have had with some veterans and folks in my district, we introduced some legislation that would help veterans with their application costs. It's not just the cost of education. Sometimes it is just getting there. And these application costs getting into college can be $200, $500, and it could be even more than that.

So when you are coming back and you are thinking about a decision, you might only have a couple of hundred bucks and you might have to make a decision, I am only going to apply to one school. That is not, I don't think, the intent. You should be able to have some options and see what options come back to you where you get accepted, et cetera.

So, in this legislation, the intent is to waive some of these fees for application costs for these veterans to help them get onto that higher education.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, if I can add to that observation that was made by my good friend from the Sunshine State, the three of us had a wonderful opportunity to visit Israel together, along with several other members of our class and, of course, STENY HOYER, who led the delegation in August of 2013.

I was struck in our conversations with some of the members of the Israeli society how well those individuals who had served in the IDF and then matriculated into society were treated. Their service in the IDF was highly valued—not just via words, but through deeds—and it enabled them to really build a successful career. They were treated with reverence.

Congressman SWALWELL, one of the things that perhaps was most disconcerting about my first few years in this institution is there is a lot of rhetoric—I guess I shouldn't be surprised that this is a place where there is a lot of hot air often spewed—that is devoid of substance. And in the area of veterans, in particular, what we find is that there is a lot of talk about treating veterans appropriately in terms of the sacrifice that they have made, their service, but we haven't really filled in the blanks in terms of substance.

One of the areas that clearly is problematic is the fact, though we are promising to enable them once they leave their service to assist with furthering their educational goals, we are not providing them with the financial assistance and the resources necessary to actually make that happen. So I embrace efforts by Congressman MURPHY and others to try to fill in the blanks in that regard, but a whole lot more needs to be done. We should be treating our veterans with the same reverence and respect, not just rhetorically, but substantively, as is done in Israel, our good friend and ally, and many other places in this world.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, it was an unforgettable trip. We learned a lot about their innovation economy, but we also saw firsthand how they valued the service of those who stood on the front lines for their country.

So we are hitting the end of our hour here.

The gentleman from Florida, any parting thoughts or actions?

Our generation, we are an action-oriented generation. We are not very patient. We are a little stubborn. We like to see results.

And you come to Congress under the leadership of this House across the aisle, and we don't see many results. I think we collectively want to work with anyone who is willing to work with us on our Republican colleagues' side to find results.

Any thoughts on what can we do to help a whole generation that is in financial quicksand right now?

I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to remind those watching and our friends on the other side of the aisle that this is, I think, a great opportunity for bipartisanship.

When I talk to voters, whether it is around the district or around the State, they are tired of seeing the nonsense. You know, they look at their jobs and they haven't seen a raise in 10 years. They look at their children who either maybe haven't gotten into college or do get into college and graduate and they have got hundreds of thousands of dollars of debt. When they turn on C–SPAN, they see us bickering and arguing about nonsense.

This is a serious problem. This is something that has to be addressed soon. It should have been addressed years ago. Let's stop the rhetoric and let's start talking to each other and solving these problems and making sure that, not only are we bringing down the cost of higher education, but we are making sure that those who do have the student loans are on an orderly repayment structure, one that makes sense, one that is reasonable per

their income. Let's make sure that the dream of America is still alive for future generations.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for participating in this.

I invite anyone at home to follow along, follow the conversation at #futureforum. Engage with these Members and others.

I yield to the gentleman from New York. Any parting thoughts on what we can do as a Congress to unite and solve this problem?

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from the Golden State for his leadership and for putting forth this effort, bringing in younger Members of Congress to be able to speak to issues of relevance, not just to the entire body of the American people, but specifically to the next generation of Americans that will continue to make this country great as long as we provide them with the tools and the opportunity.

I agree with my good friend from Florida that this is an issue that should not be partisan in nature. This is an issue that impacts people from north to south, to the east and the west, from urban communities, suburban communities, rural communities, red States, blue States, all over America. I think what we are saying here today is that we extend out our arms, our olive branch of friendship and partnership on behalf of the American people to try to solve this problem together.

It is clear that there is a problem, it cannot be denied, and it is one that requires urgent intervention in order to make sure that we can continue to preserve the American Dream for the greatest number of younger Americans possible. Right now, the dream is being suffocated in ways that threaten our economic vitality moving forward, and that is a tragedy. But I remain optimistic. We were sent here all collectively to get things done, and I look forward to working together in that regard.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, that is right. We were sent here to do our job, to be problem solvers and really be voices, I think, for all generations of Americans, but especially this generation which is the largest generation America has ever known. It is the most diverse generation America has ever known, and I think it is one of the most aspirational generations America has ever known. They are waiting for anybody in this body to help them get out of this financial quicksand and start being able to be empowered and really realize their own American Dream.

So I thank the gentlemen for participating today. I thank our pioneers from the 30-Somethings and invite them to come back for a 10-year reunion.

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

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 538, NATIVE AMERICAN ENERGY ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 702, ADAPTATION TO CHANGING CRUDE OIL MARKETS

Mr. WOODALL (during the Special Order of Mr. SWALWELL of California), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114–290) on the resolution (H. Res. 466) providing for consideration of the bill (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, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 702) to adapt to changing crude oil market conditions, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. GRANGER (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of attending a funeral.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION REFERRED

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

S. Con. Res. 22. Concurrent Resolution recognizing the 50th anniversary of the White House Fellows program; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

SENATE ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to enrolled bills of the Senate of the following titles:

S. 986. An act to require the Secretary of the Interior to take into trust 4 parcels of Federal land for the benefit of certain Indian Pueblos in the State of New Mexico.

S. 1300. An act to amend the section 221 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide relief for adoptive families from immigrant visa fees in certain situations.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 14 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, October 8, 2015, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

3071. A letter from the Under Secretary, Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's Chemical Demilitarization Program Semi-Annual Report to Congress, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1521(j); to the Committee on Armed Services.

3072. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, FDA, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — National Environmental Policy Act; Environmental Assessments for Tobacco Products; Categorical Exclusions [Docket No.: FDA-2013-N-1282] received October 5, 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.

3073. A letter from the Deputy Director, ODRM, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — 2015 Edition Health Information Technology (Health IT) Certification Criteria, 2015 Edition Base Electronic Health Record (EHR) Definition, and ONC Health IT Certification Program Modifications (RIN: 0991-AB93) received October 6, 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.

3074. A letter from the Deputy Chief, Competition Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Technology Transitions [GN Docket No.: 13-5]; Policies and Rules Governing Retirement of Copper Loops by Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers [RM-11358]; Special Access for Price Cap Local Exchange Carriers [WC Docket No.: 05-25]; AT&T Corporation Petition for Rulemaking to Reform Regulation of Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier Rates for Interstate Special Access Services [RM-10593] received October 5, 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.

3075. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final NUREG — 17.5 Quality Assurance Program Description — Design Certification, Early Site Permit and New License Applicants (NUREG-0800) received October 5, 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.

3076. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a certification, pursuant to Sec. 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, Transmittal No.: DDTC 15-032; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3077. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a certification, pursuant to Sec. 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, Transmittal No.: DDTC 15-069; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3078. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a certification, pursuant to Secs. 36(c) and 36(d) of the Arms Export Control Act, Transmittal No.: DDTC 15-062; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3079. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's combined reports on ''U.S. Assistance for Palestinian Security Forces'' and ''Benchmarks for Palestinian Security Assistance Funds'', pursuant to the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2015 (Division J, Pub. L. 113-235); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3080. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser, Office of Treaty Affairs, Department of

State, transmitting agreements prepared by the Department of State concerning international agreements, other than treaties entered into by the United States, to be transmitted to the Congress within the sixty-day period specified in the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3081. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's final rule — Overtime Pay for Border Patrol Agents (RIN: 3206-AN19) 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.

3082. A letter from the Chairman and Members, United States Capitol Police Board, transmitting the Board's letter commending the United States Capitol Police and a number of Senate, House and Congressional support offices for their tireless work over the past six months to plan, coordinate, choreograph and execute the Papal visit to the United States Congress; to the Committee on House Administration.

3083. A letter from the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Disturbance Monitoring and Reporting Requirements Reliability Standard [Docket No.: RM15-4-000; Order No.: 814] received October 5, 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.

3084. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Exchange of Flatfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No.: 141021887-5172-02] (RIN: 0648-XE183) received October 6, 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.

3085. A letter from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; 2015 Commercial Accountability Measure and Closure for South Atlantic Gray Triggerfish; July Through December Season [Docket No.: 141107936-5399-02] (RIN: 0648-XE004) received October 5, 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.

3086. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries [Docket No.: 120328229-4949-02] (RIN: 0648-XE095) received October 5, 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.

3087. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Snapper-Grouper Resources of the South Atlantic; Trip Limit Reduction [Docket No.: 130312235-3658-02] (RIN: 0648-XE126) received October 5, 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.

3088. A letter from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Fisheries; 2016 Fishing Quotas for Atlantic Surfclams and Ocean Quahogs; and Suspension of Minimum Atlantic Surfclam Size Limit [Docket No.: 900124-0127] (RIN: 0648-XE164) received October 5, 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.

3089. 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 Pacific Cod in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No.: 141021887-5172-02] (RIN: 0648-XE203) received October 5, 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.

3090. A letter from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Bluefish Fishery; Quota Transfer [Docket No.: 140117052-4402-02] (RIN: 0648-XE096) received October 5, 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.

3091. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's modification of fishing seasons — Fisheries Off West Coast States; Modifications of the West Coast Commercial and Recreational Salmon Fisheries; Inseason Actions #22 through #29 [Docket No.: 150316270-5270-01] (RIN: 0648-XE121) received October 5, 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.

3092. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Bluefish Fishery; Quota Transfer [Docket No.: 140117052-4402-02] (RIN: 0648-XE162) received October 5, 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.

3093. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Exchange of Flatfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No.: 141021887-5172-02] (RIN: 0648-XE152) received October 5, 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.

3094. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Northern Rockfish in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No.: 140918791-4999-02] (RIN: 0648-XE170) received October 5, 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.

3095. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Empresa Brasileira de Aeronautica S.A. (Embraer) Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2014-0586; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-255-AD; Amendment 39-18256; AD 2015-17-23] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 5, 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.

3096. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2014-0753; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-128-AD; Amendment 39-18270; AD 2015-19-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 5, 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.

3097. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company [Docket No.: FAA-2014-0126; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-236-AD; Amendment 39-18267; AD 2015-19-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 5, 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.

3098. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2013-1071; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-204-AD; Amendment 39-18264; AD 2015-19-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 5, 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.

3099. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2014-0127; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-237-AD; Amendment 39-18265; AD 2015-19-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 5, 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.

3100. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2014-0194; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-022-AD; Amendment 39-18266; AD 2015-19-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 5, 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.

3101. A letter from the Chief, Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Extension of Import Restrictions on Certain Categories of Archaeological Material From the Pre-Hispanic Cultures of the Republic of Nicaragua [CBP Dec. 15-13] (RIN: 1515-AE05) received October 6, 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.

3102. A letter from the Chief, Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's Major interim final rule — Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) Filings for Electronic Entry/Entry Summary (Cargo Release and Related Entry) [USCBP-2015-0045] (RIN: 1515-AE03) received October 6, 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.

3103. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue

Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Request for Comments on Definitions of Section 48 Property [Notice 2015-70] received October 6, 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.

3104. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — 2015 Marginal Production Rates [Notice 2015-65] received October 6, 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.

3105. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — 2015 Section 43 Inflation Adjustment [Notice 2015-64] received October 6, 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.

3106. A letter from the Deputy Director, ODRM, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Major final rules — Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Electronic Health Record Incentive Program — Stage 3 and Modifications to Meaningful Use in 2015 through 2017 [CMS-3310-FC and CMS-3311-FC] (RINs: 0938-AS26 and 0938-AS58) received October 6, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; jointly to the Committees on Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

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

Mr. BYRNE: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 466. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (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, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 702) to adapt to changing crude oil market conditions (Rept. 114–290). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin: Committee on Ways and Means. H.R. 3442. A bill to provide further means of accountability of the United States debt and promote fiscal responsibility (Rept. 114–291). 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 Ms. TITUS:

H.R. 3696. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to prevent Medicare part B premium and deductible increases for 2016; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. VELÁZQUEZ:

H.R. 3697. A bill to modernize and improve the program for economic opportunities for low-income persons under section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. COFFMAN (for himself, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. KING of New York, and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

H.R. 3698. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to authorize the enlistment in the Armed Forces of additional persons who are residing in the United States and to lawfully admit for permanent residence certain enlistees who are not citizens or other nationals of the United States; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. WESTMORELAND (for himself, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, and Mr. SMITH of Missouri):

H.R. 3699. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to require an annual report from the Financial Management Service within the Department of the Treasury regarding amounts paid or payable by Federal agencies to the judgement fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LUETKEMEYER:

H.R. 3700. A bill to provide housing opportunities in the United States through modernization of various housing programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mrs. BLACK (for herself and Mr. MCDERMOTT):

H.R. 3701. A bill to require that the Secretary of the Treasury make available an Internet platform for Form 1099 filings; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas (for himself, Mr. COLE, and Mr. BECERRA):

H.R. 3702. A bill to provide for additional space for the protection and preservation of national collections held by the Smithsonian Institution; to the Committee on House Administration, 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. KIND (for himself and Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 3703. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend qualified zone academy bonds for 2 years and to reduce the private business contribution requirement with respect to such bonds; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. MEADOWS (for himself and Mr. BUTTERFIELD):

H.R. 3704. A bill to clarify that nonprofit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity can accept donated mortgage appraisals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. PITTENGER:

H.R. 3705. A bill to require certain financial regulators to determine whether new regulations or orders are duplicative or inconsistent with existing Federal regulations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, 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. REICHERT (for himself, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. LEE, and Mr. MCCAUL):

H.R. 3706. A bill to implement policies to end preventable maternal, newborn, and child deaths globally; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. TSONGAS:

H.R. 3707. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Groundwork USA national office, to provide grants to certain nonprofit organizations; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Natural Resources, 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.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

142. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the Legislature of the State of California, relative to Senate Joint Resolution No. 10, requesting that the Congress of the United States take immediate action to extend the federal investment tax credit in Sections 48 and 25D of Title 26 of the United States Code; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

143. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of California, relative to Assembly Joint Resolution No. 17, urging the President and the Congress of the United States to enact Senate Bill 664, known as the Foster Care Tax Credit Act, which would provide tax relief to short-term foster parents by helping to cover the actual costs of caring for a foster child; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

144. Also, a memorial of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, relative to Senate Resolution No. 54, urging the President and the Congress of the United States to consider imposing tariffs on imported anthracite coal in order to preserve American jobs; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

145. Also, a memorial of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, relative to Senate Resolution No. 136, condemning the International Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement and its activities in Pennsylvania for seeking to undermine the Jewish peoples' right to self-determination, which they are fulfilling in the State of Israel; jointly to the Committees on Foreign Affairs and the Judiciary.

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 Ms. TITUS:

H.R. 3696.

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

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 Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

By Ms. VELÁZQUEZ:

H.R. 3697.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

''The Congress shall have Power to . . . provide for the . . . general Welfare of the United States; . . .''

By Mr. COFFMAN:

H.R. 3698.

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

Article 1 Section 8 Clause 14 states that ''Congress shall have the power to make

rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces.'' This Act amends the enlistment rules to include selected individuals who are not natural citizens or legal permanent residents.

Article 1 Section 8 Clause 4 states that ''Congress shall have the power to establish an uniform rule of naturalization.'' Congressional power over naturalization is an exclusive power and this power is the only one free from constitutional limitations on its exercise. Citizenship by naturalization is a privilege to be given, qualified or withheld as Congress may determine and an individual may claim it as a right only upon compliance with the terms Congress imposes.

By Mr. WESTMORELAND:

H.R. 3699.

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

Article I, Section 8, of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. LUETKEMEYER:

H.R. 3700.

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

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the explicit power of Congress to regulate commerce in and among the states, as enumerate in Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3, the Commerce Clause, of the United States Constitution.

Additionally, Article 1, Section 7, Clause 2 of the Constitution allows for every bill passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate and signed by the President to be codified into law; and therefore implicitly allows Congress to repeal any bill that has been passed by both chambers and signed into law by the President.

By Mrs. BLACK:

H.R. 3701.

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

The Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution as well as Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution which grants Congress the authority to lay and collect taxes and duties. It is the inherent duty of elected members of Congress to protect U.S. taxpayer information from misuse.

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas:

H.R. 3702.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 17, giving Congress exclusive jurisdiction over the District of Columbia. That clause was cited as the authority for the government's ability to accept the original Smithson donation and the creation of the Smithsonian Institution via the Act of August 10, 1846.

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18, the Necessary and Proper clause, which provides the power to enact legislation necessary to effectuate one of the earlier enumerated powers, such as the authority granted in Clause 17 above.

By Mr. KIND:

H.R. 3703.

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

All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives; but the Senate may propose or concur with Amendments as on other Bills.

ARTICLE I, SECTION 7, CLAUSE 1

By Mr. MEADOWS:

H.R. 3704.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1:

Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

By Mr. PITTENGER:

H.R. 3705.

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

Article I Section 1: All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States

By Mr. REICHERT:

H.R. 3706.

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

''The constitutional authority of Congress to enact this legislation is provided by Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically clause 1 (relating to providing for the general welfare of the United States) and clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress), and Article IV, section 3, clause 2 (relating to the power of Congress to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States).''

By Ms. TSONGAS:

H.R. 3707.

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

Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 10: Mr. MULVANEY and Mr. BLUM.

H.R. 140: Mr. HUDSON.

H.R. 167: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey and Mr. POSEY.

H.R. 223: Mr. TURNER.

H.R. 224: Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. PLASKETT, Ms. LEE, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. HASTINGS, and Ms. ADAMS.

H.R. 226: Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 241: Mr. COFFMAN.

H.R. 244: Mrs. ROBY.

H.R. 257: Ms. JACKSON LEE.

H.R. 346: Mr. LYNCH.

H.R. 390: Mr. POLIS.

H.R. 410: Mr. DEUTCH and Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 482: Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia.

H.R. 539: Mr. VISCLOSKY and Ms. DUCKWORTH.

H.R. 546: Mr. ASHFORD.

H.R. 592: Mr. POMPEO, Mr. ASHFORD, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, and Mrs. ROBY.

H.R. 711: Mr. WEBER of Texas.

H.R. 748: Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 775: Mr. WALDEN, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, and Mr. COOK.

H.R. 823: Ms. DUCKWORTH.

H.R. 842: Mr. GUTIÉRREZ.

H.R. 851: Mrs. RADEWAGEN.

H.R. 921: Mr. HENSARLING and Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia.

H.R. 953: Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. DESAULNIER, and Mrs. BEATTY.

H.R. 985: Mrs. DINGELL.

H.R. 1062: Mr. HULTGREN.

H.R. 1078: Mr. BERA.

H.R. 1090: Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. HECK of Nevada, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mrs. BLACK, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Mr. HUDSON, and Mr. FLORES.

H.R. 1093: Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 1094: Mr. JONES.

H.R. 1192: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. HUNTER, and Mr. YODER.

H.R. 1217: Mr. SERRANO, Mr. ISRAEL, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. BERA, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. BEYER, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CROWLEY, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. HOYER, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. HONDA, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. COURTNEY, and Mr. JEFFRIES.

H.R. 1218: Mr. ASHFORD.

H.R. 1220: Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. VELA, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. ASHFORD, and Mr. LOBIONDO.

H.R. 1233: Mr. HURD of Texas, Mr. MICA, and Mr. ROONEY of Florida.

H.R. 1258: Mrs. WAGNER and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.

H.R. 1292: Mr. ROSS, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. WELCH, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, and Ms. LOFGREN.

H.R. 1309: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. LONG, and Mr. ROONEY of Florida.

H.R. 1356: Mr. ZELDIN and Mr. MOULTON.

H.R. 1405: Mr. FOSTER and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 1421: Ms. LOFGREN.

H.R. 1475: Mr. VARGAS, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. DENHAM, and Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H.R. 1479: Mr. HENSARLING.

H.R. 1559: Mr. HURD of Texas and Mr. YODER.

H.R. 1586: Mr. ELLISON and Mr. BEYER.

H.R. 1594: Mr. HILL and Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H.R. 1603: Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. YODER, Mr. AMODEI, and Mr. VALADAO.

H.R. 1608: Mr. MEADOWS.

H.R. 1610: Mr. GUTHRIE.

H.R. 1655: Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. EMMER of Minnesota, and Mrs. KIRKPATRICK.

H.R. 1666: Mr. COFFMAN.

H.R. 1671: Mr. RIBBLE and Mr. KELLY of Mississippi.

H.R. 1716: Mr. NUGENT.

H.R. 1736: Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.

H.R. 1737: Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. NUNES, Mr. ALLEN, and Mr. HUDSON.

H.R. 1784: Mr. YODER and Mr. LATTA.

H.R. 1786: Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Ms. BASS, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. HOYER, and Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 1859: Mr. GIBSON.

H.R. 1877: Mr. AGUILAR and Mr. ASHFORD.

H.R. 1942: Mr. SABLAN, Ms. PINGREE, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. SALMON, and Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 2017: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.

H.R. 2043: Mr. ZINKE, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. LATTA.

H.R. 2046: Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.

H.R. 2067: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.

H.R. 2083: Ms. BASS.

H.R. 2090: Ms. ADAMS and Ms. FUDGE.

H.R. 2114: Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 2156: Mr. ZINKE.

H.R. 2172: Mr. PIERLUISI.

H.R. 2205: Mr. MOOLENAAR and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.

H.R. 2216: Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 2248: Mr. FATTAH.

H.R. 2255: Mr. SMITH of Nebraska.

H.R. 2315: Ms. MOORE.

H.R. 2327: Mr. KIND.

H.R. 2342: Ms. MOORE and Mrs. BEATTY.

H.R. 2350: Mr. MURPHY of Florida.

H.R. 2368: Ms. LOFGREN and Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 2400: Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. KNIGHT, and Mr. CALVERT.

H.R. 2404: Mr. MOULTON and Mrs. TORRES.
H.R. 2406: Mr. RATCLIFFE.
H.R. 2450: Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. NADLER, and Ms. TITUS.
H.R. 2451: Mrs. KIRKPATRICK.
H.R. 2463: Ms. DUCKWORTH.
H.R. 2494: Mr. KATKO and Mr. CARTER of Georgia.
H.R. 2553: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. BEYER, and Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.
H.R. 2597: Ms. SINEMA.
H.R. 2639: Mr. FATTAH.
H.R. 2646: Mr. ASHFORD and Mr. YODER.
H.R. 2652: Mr. FLEMING.
H.R. 2654: Mrs. DINGELL and Mr. FATTAH.
H.R. 2671: Ms. SINEMA, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. BORDALLO, and Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.
H.R. 2672: Ms. SINEMA, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. BORDALLO, and Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.
H.R. 2673: Ms. SINEMA, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. BORDALLO, and Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.
H.R. 2674: Ms. SINEMA, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. BORDALLO, and Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.
H.R. 2675: Mr. PETERSON.
H.R. 2680: Mr. FATTAH.
H.R. 2698: Mr. HANNA and Mr. SIMPSON.
H.R. 2699: Mr. DEUTCH.
H.R. 2713: Ms. BASS.
H.R. 2726: Mr. KNIGHT.
H.R. 2732: Mr. DEUTCH.
H.R. 2759: Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, and Mr. ASHFORD.
H.R. 2805: Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 2847: Mr. BERA and Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 2867: Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. WALZ, and Mr. VISCLOSKY.
H.R. 2896: Mr. MICA.
H.R. 2901: Mr. MARINO.
H.R. 2903: Mr. RYAN of Ohio and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H.R. 2911: Mr. PETERSON, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. ASHFORD, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. HECK of Washington, and Mr. MULLIN.
H.R. 2918: Mr. HASTINGS.
H.R. 2922: Mr. YODER.
H.R. 3024: Mr. KATKO.
H.R. 3033: Mr. NEUGEBAUER.
H.R. 3036: Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. MEEKS, and Ms. KUSTER.
H.R. 3048: Mr. BRIDENSTINE and Mr. MULLIN.
H.R. 3051: Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. ELLISON, and Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 3052: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
H.R. 3084: Mr. TAKANO.
H.R. 3094: Mr. LOUDERMILK and Mr. ALLEN.
H.R. 3099: Mr. AMODEI and Ms. DUCKWORTH.
H.R. 3108: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H.R. 3132: Mr. DESAULNIER and Ms. FUDGE.
H.R. 3136: Mr. RIBBLE.
H.R. 3187: Mr. GROTHMAN.
H.R. 3221: Mr. WITTMAN.
H.R. 3222: Mr. HILL.
H.R. 3286: Mr. TAKANO and Ms. KUSTER.
H.R. 3294: Mr. HECK of Washington.
H.R. 3304: Mr. LYNCH.
H.R. 3309: Mrs. WALORSKI.
H.R. 3314: Mr. YODER and Mr. PALMER.
H.R. 3326: Mr. RATCLIFFE, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. BOST, and Mr. SMITH of Missouri.
H.R. 3339: Mr. PAYNE.
H.R. 3459: Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. LATTA, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. BURGESS, Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. FINCHER, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. ASHFORD, Mr. HULTGREN, and Mr. WESTERMAN.
H.R. 3463: Mr. LATTA, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. KIND.
H.R. 3466: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 3471: Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H.R. 3480: Mr. LOUDERMILK and Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia.
H.R. 3484: Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. LOWENTHAL, and Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD.
H.R. 3531: Mr. CARTER of Georgia.
H.R. 3532: Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.
H.R. 3539: Mr. REED.
H.R. 3542: Ms. ADAMS.
H.R. 3564: Mr. POE of Texas.
H.R. 3568: Mr. PAULSEN and Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 3573: Mr. BOUSTANY.
H.R. 3589: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.
H.R. 3611: Mr. DENT and Mr. CALVERT.
H.R. 3616: Mr. JONES, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. ASHFORD, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. NUGENT, Mr. COOK, Mr. TURNER, and Mr. WITTMAN.
H.R. 3621: Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 3626: Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. MOOLENAAR, and Mr. SMITH of Missouri.
H.R. 3632: Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 3640: Mr. KNIGHT.
H.R. 3641: Mr. ASHFORD.
H.R. 3648: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 3665: Ms. CASTOR of Florida and Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H.R. 3679: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 3687: Mr. ABRAHAM.
H.R. 3690: Mr. VAN HOLLEN and Mr. TED LIEU of California.
H.J. Res. 59: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. BLUM, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. SALMON, Mr. PERRY, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. NEWHOUSE, and Mr. SIMPSON.
H.J. Res. 60: Mr. KIND.
H. Con. Res. 75: Mr. BECERRA, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. COSTA, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. FARR, Mr. GARAMENDI, Ms. HAHN, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. PETERS, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. THOMPSON of California, and Mrs. TORRES.
H. Res. 54: Mr. VALADAO and Mr. ASHFORD.
H. Res. 210: Mr. JONES.
H. Res. 218: Mr. RIBBLE.
H. Res. 377: Mr. JONES.
H. Res. 393: Mr. HECK of Washington, Mr. SERRANO, and Ms. BROWN of Florida.
H. Res. 396: Mr. KIND.
H. Res. 428: Mr. PETERS and Mr. MURPHY of Florida.
H. Res. 431: Mr. RIBBLE and Mrs. WAGNER.
H. Res. 443: Mr. KING of New York.
H. Res. 445: Mrs. LOWEY.
H. Res. 451: Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mrs. WALORSKI, and Mr. LAMALFA.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

OFFERED BY MR. YOUNG OF ALASKA

The amendment filed to Rules Committee Print 114–30 for H.R. 538 by me does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of House rule XXI.

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Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015 No. 147

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, our Strength, thank You for Your providential love. Today give our Senators the wisdom to do what is right. Enlighten their minds with Your truth as You warm their hearts with Your love. Lord, fill their lives with Your power that they may accomplish Your purposes. Make them so aware of Your presence that they will remember that wherever they are and whatever they do, You see them. May they feel nothing but to grieve You and seek nothing except to please You.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2146

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2146) to hold sanctuary jurisdictions accountable for defying Federal law, to increase penalties for individuals who illegally reenter the United States after being removed, and to provide liability protection for State and local law enforcement who cooperate with Federal law enforcement and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

ADOPTIVE FAMILY RELIEF ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, before I speak on the legislation the Senate will consider this afternoon, I want to say a few words about S. 1300, the Adoptive Family Relief Act. I spoke on this bill in July after it passed the Senate with unanimous consent. Now I would like to praise the House of Representatives for passing this important piece of legislation just yesterday.

The issue this bill addresses is of particular importance to me, and I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the legislation. More than 400 American families, approximately 20 of them from Kentucky, have successfully adopted children from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or the DRC. However, due to the DRC Government's years-long suspension of exit permits, many of these families have been unable to bring their adoptive children home to the United States.

To make matters worse, families have been financially burdened by the cost of continually renewing their children's visas while they wait for the day the DRC decides to lift its suspension. In an attempt to help these families, the Adoptive Family Relief Act would provide meaningful financial relief by granting the State Department authority to waive the fees for multiple visa renewals in these and other extraordinary adoption circumstances.

This bill builds on Congress' bipartisan efforts on the adoption issue, including my amendment to this year's budget resolution to encourage a solution to the situation as well as numerous bipartisan congressional letters sent to Congolese officials.

Later today I will have the opportunity to meet with the Brock family from Owensboro. I was grateful to assist in the return of their medically fragile child from the DRC last Christmas. However, their other adopted son still remains in the country.

For this Kentucky family, and for many others still waiting, I again strongly urge the Government of the DRC to resolve the matter expeditiously and in a way that provides for the swift unification of families. Until then, I want to praise the bipartisan action that led to the passage of the Adoptive Family Relief Act. I hope families see this as a message that Congress is supporting them.

This bill will now go to the President for his signature. It is my hope it will bring needed assistance to so many loving families, like the Brocks, who want nothing more than to open their homes to a child in need.

Allow me to also thank the sponsors of this bill, Senators FEINSTEIN and JOHNSON and Representative TRENT FRANKS, for all their hard work. That thanks extends as well to the 78 other cosponsors in both Chambers and both parties, along with the Senate and House judiciary committees for their hard work and truly bipartisan commitment to solving this heartbreaking issue.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter before the Senate this afternoon, I was glad to see the Senate come together yesterday to advance the bipartisan National Defense Authorization Act. This bipartisan Defense bill will support our men and

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

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women in uniform in many, many ways.

The bill attacks bureaucratic waste, authorizes pay raises, and improves quality-of-life programs for our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. It will strengthen sexual assault prevention and response. It will help wounded warriors and heroes who struggle with mental health challenges. Most importantly, it will equip the men and women who serve with what they need to defend our Nation.

The chairman of the Committee on Armed Services was unrelenting in his work across the aisle to craft a serious defense bill with input from both parties. Senator MCCAIN can and should take pride in yesterday's 73-to-26 vote to advance this bill. He should take heart in today's vote to send it to the President as well.

That is where this legislative process should end—with the President's signature, with a win for our forces, and with a win for our country at a time of seemingly incalculable global crises. But the White House has issued threats that the President might actually veto this bipartisan bill for unrelated partisan reasons. That would be more than outrageous—truly outrageous, Mr. President. It would be yet another grave foreign policy miscalculation from this administration, something our country can no longer afford.

Just a year ago, the President announced a strategy to degrade and destroy ISIL. Today, the threat remains as versatile and resilient as ever. ISIL has consolidated its gains within Iraq and within Syria. Russia is now deploying troops and attacking the moderate opposition forces in Syria. Iran is reportedly sending additional forces to the battlefield. Civilians are dying and refugees are fleeing.

John Kerry calls the situation ''a catastrophe, a human catastrophe really unparalleled in modern times.'' He is right.

According to news reports, this is all forcing the President to reconsider his strategy in that region and craft a new one. Regardless of what he decides, it is going to be a protracted area of struggle. It has been profoundly challenging already. That is to say nothing of the countless other mounting global threats, from Chinese expansion in the south China Sea to Taliban resurgence in Afghanistan.

Many Americans would say this is the worst possible time for an American President to be threatening to veto their national defense bill, and especially to do so for arbitrary partisan reasons. I wish I could say it surprises me that President Obama might, for the sake of unrelated partisan games, actually contemplate vetoing a bipartisan defense bill that contains the level of funding authorization that he actually asked for. Let me say that again. This bill contains the funding authorization the President asked for. So I am calling on him not to, especially in times like these, but if he does, it will be the latest sorry chapter in a failed foreign policy based on campaign promises rather than realistically meeting the threat before us.

The President's approach to foreign policy has been nothing if not consistent over the past 7 years. I have described this in detail many times before. From repeatedly seeking to declare some arbitrary end to the war on terror, to discarding the tools we have to wage it, to placing unhealthy levels of trust in unaccountable international organizations, the President's foreign policy has been as predictable as it has been ineffectual.

Take, for instance, his heavy reliance on economy-of-force train-and-assist missions. This has been the primary tool of the President to cover our drawdown of conventional forces. The train-and-equip concept is to train indigenous forces to battle insurgencies in places such as Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. These forces ideally partner with U.S. capabilities, but under the President's policy, they have been left to fight alone as we continue to draw down our conventional forces.

The essence of this was captured in a speech he delivered at West Point just last May. In that speech the President described a network of partnerships from South Asia to Sahel to be funded by $5 billion in counterterrorism funds. By deploying Special Operations Forces for train-and-equip missions, the President hoped to manage the diffuse threats posed by terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Boko Haram, the al-Nusrah Front, the Taliban, Libyan terrorist networks that threaten Egypt, and, of course, ISIL.

The President never explained the strategy—beyond direct action such as unmanned vehicle aerial strikes—for those cases when indigenous forces proved insufficient, as we have seen in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. Nevertheless, this concept of operations suited the President because it allowed him to continue with force structure cuts to our conventional operational units. It allowed him to continue refusing to accept that leaving behind residual forces in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan might represent a means by which this Nation could preserve the strategic gains made through sacrifice. It also allowed him to continue refusing to rebuild our conventional and nuclear forces.

This was never, never an approach designed for success. Today it is clear this is now an approach that has also reached its limits.

The New York Times is hardly an adversary of this administration, but it recently ran a story titled ''Billions From U.S. Fail to Sustain Foreign Forces.'' Once again, this is the New York Times. Here is what it said:

> With alarming frequency in recent years, thousands of American-trained security forces in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia have collapsed, stalled or defected, calling into question the effectiveness of the tens of billions of dollars spent by the U.S. on foreign military training programs, as well as a central tenet of the Obama administration's approach to combating insurgencies.

Without rebuilding the force, we cannot deter China's efforts to extend its conventional reach in the South China Sea. Without rebuilding the force, we cannot deter Russian adventurism in places such as Crimea. Without rebuilding and deploying the force, we cannot hope to deter Russia's gambit to increase its Middle East presence or its air campaign in Syria. And under this strategy, when the host nation militaries we trained and equipped proved inadequate to defeat the insurgency in question, the strategy allowed for a persistent, enduring terrorist threat in those countries. That is just what we have seen with Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, with the Taliban, and now with ISIL.

I thought the growth, advance, and evolution of ISIL last year would have presented a turning point for the President. I thought the fall of Anbar Province and the threat posed to allies such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey would have provoked a reconsideration of his entire national security policy, but it didn't. If the latest stories of White House efforts to revise its ISIL strategy are to be believed, then perhaps the President now finally realizes the threat from terrorist groups like ISIL and Al Qaeda have outpaced his economy-of-force concept. He may even be accepting the reality that withdrawing arbitrarily from Afghanistan is neither consequence-free nor is it a good idea.

One year after the President's ISIL speech, it is time to reverse the withdrawal of our military from its forward presence. It is time to lay the groundwork for the next President to rebuild America's credibility with friend and foe alike. That is true of ISIL and it is true of dissatisfied powers such as Russia, China, and Iran, who are all looking to exploit American withdrawal in pursuit of regional hegemony and dreams of empire.

To paraphrase the President: Russia is calling, and it wants its empire back. Russia wants its empire back. China is calling, too, and so is Iran. They have watched as both our economy-of-force efforts to mask American withdrawal and as other U.S. commitments have proven quite hollow—like the announcement of a strategic pivot to Asia, without the investments to make it meaningful. The next President, regardless of party, will need to craft plans, policies, and programs to balance against expansion. Signing the bipartisan National Defense Authorization Act we pass today—and of course matching the authorization with its corresponding funding—would represent a good first step along that path. If the President is serious in his just-restated commitment to taking all steps necessary to combat ISIL,

then he will know that signing this bipartisan National Defense Authorization Act is anything but the waste of time some of his allies might pretend it to be. In fact, this bill is essential.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL AND BENGHAZI SELECT COMMITTEE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the bill before the Senate this afternoon, in spite of all the statements of my friend the Republican leader, is another piece of political theater. Everyone knows the President is going to veto this. Everyone knows this. The House, if they are called upon first to sustain the veto, will do it. If we are called upon first to sustain the veto, we will do it.

Republicans are trying to paint Democrats as being soft on defense. Based on what we have heard from my friend today, I don't know where he doesn't want American troops—China, Iran, Russia, all over the Middle East. It is stunning to listen to what he has said. We have spent a lot of money training foreign troops. I was in Iraq. Who was training the troops then? General Petraeus. I don't know what my friend wants, but I do tell everyone the gimmick we have in this bill today; that is, having this funny money funding and that is what it is—I can't imagine my Republican friends who have in the past been so supportive of not doing things that deal with funny money, that their—Senator MCCAIN, the chairman of the committee, has acknowledged that sequestration will destroy the military—that is my word—but will badly damage the military. He has said that many times.

So we have a lot of problems here, but the gimmick my friend is so touting today does nothing to support the security we need at home: The FBI, homeland security, border protection. I say to my friend, the Presiding Officer, today: You voted the way I thought Republicans should vote when this matter came before the body yesterday.

It has been a week since it happened, but the American people are still reeling from House Majority Leader KEVIN MCCARTHY's admission that the so-called Benghazi Select Committee is nothing more than a political hit job on Hillary Clinton. That is what he said. Speaking about this committee, he told FOX News:

> Everybody thought Hillary Clinton was unbeatable, right? But we put together a Benghazi special committee, a select committee. What are her numbers today? Her numbers are dropping.

It doesn't take much to figure out the point he was making; that this was nothing more than a hit job on Hillary Clinton. According to Mr. MCCARTHY, the so-called Benghazi Select Committee was orchestrated with one goal in mind—to weaken Hillary Clinton's Presidential campaign. Of course that is shameful. House Republicans have used the tragic deaths of four Americans as political fodder to win an election. Don't the victims deserve better? Don't their families deserve not to have their deceased loved ones pulled into a political inquisition?

Even more shocking, this political farce continues now. House Republicans are showing no signs of bringing this charade to an end. Consider the facts. These are a number of the select committees that have been going on that we have had in the Congress in recent years: Hurricane Katrina, Pearl Harbor, Warren Commission, Iran-Contra, Watergate, and the Benghazi Committee. This big red line sitting here shows this committee has spent far more time than any committee except Watergate. Look at that. It is hard to believe. For 16 months now we have used the tragic deaths in a way that is not what we should be doing. They have spent almost $5 million of taxpayer money on this so-called select committee, and the number continues to climb as I speak. Not only do they have a select committee, they have had six other committees that have held hearings on this. What a waste of taxpayer dollars. The select committee has investigated Hillary Clinton for 17 months, 517 days—longer than the investigations that I mentioned: Pearl Harbor, the Kennedy assassination, and even, timewise, Watergate—close but still more time than on Watergate, and it is still going on. What have they accomplished? What have they achieved after all that time and money has been spent? What have they accomplished for the American people? Nothing. And they have held three hearings in 17 months. Not one American is safer today because of the select committee, not one terrorist attack has been thwarted because of the committee's work, and Republicans are fine with that. They hail the Benghazi committee as a success because it was never the panel's intention to get to the truth. This committee's only real objective was to hurt Hillary Clinton—exactly as Congressman MCCARTHY said. The evidence makes that clear. In 17 months, the committee has interviewed or deposed eight Clinton campaign staffers. They are obsessed with Hillary Clinton and her campaign status. Yet, stunningly, Chairman GOWDY and Republicans have little interest in questioning intelligence and defense experts. They have held only one hearing with an expert from the intelligence community. They have never held a single hearing with anyone from the Department of Defense. The Republican chairman and his colleagues have abandoned their plans to interview Defense officials and instead have gone after Secretary Clinton and her staff. The evidence is clear. The Benghazi Select Committee is a sham. Democrats have known this for 2 years, but now we have the man who is going to be—I understand after tomorrow at noon—running the House of Representatives come November 1. He has acknowledged it is a witch hunt. That is why the Democratic leadership of the Senate wrote to Speaker BOEHNER asking him to disband the select committee. That is why I will not stop reminding Republicans of Congressman MCCARTHY's admission.

If it were up to me, the House Democrats on that panel would nail this quote on the committee room doors as a reminder to everyone that Republicans have manipulated a true American tragedy and turned it into a political circus:

> Everybody thought Hillary Clinton was unbeatable, right? But we put together a Benghazi special committee, a select committee. What are her numbers today? Her numbers are dropping.

He is so proud of himself. Until House Republicans do the right thing and disband this committee, I will continue to tell the American people about the disgrace that is the House Republicans' Benghazi committee.

Mr. President, would the Chair announce what we are going to be doing today.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1735, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

> 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 1 p.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Utah.

THE RIGHT TO EXTENDED DEBATE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, 2 months ago I came to the Senate floor in my capacity as President pro tempore to speak to my colleagues about the importance of maintaining decorum and respect in this body. I reminded them that decorum is essential to the proper functioning of the Senate and to its unique role in our constitutional structure. The Framers designed the Senate to be an institution of deliberation and reason, where Members would work to promote consensus and the common good rather than their own narrow, partisan interests. Today I rise once

more in my capacity as President pro tempore, this time to discuss another defining feature of this body—the right to extended debate.

The Framers designed the Senate to serve as a necessary fence against the fickleness and passion that drives hasty lawmaking—what Edmund Randolph called the turbulence and follies of democracy. James Madison in turn described the Senate as a bulwark against what he called the transient impressions into which the people may from time to time be led. Senators were to refine the popular will to wisdom and sound judgment, reaching measured conclusions about how best to address the Nation's challenges. It is no accident that passing bills through this body takes time. The Framers intended the Senate to be the cooler, more deliberate, more reasoned branch. As Madison once said, the Senate was to ''consist in its proceedings with more coolness, with more system, and with more wisdom than the [House of Representatives].''

Key to the Senate's deliberative nature is its relatively small size, which enables a much more thoroughgoing debate and greater opportunity for individual Members to improve legislative proposals. Longer, staggered terms also give Members flexibility to resist initially popular yet ultimately unwise legislation, and statewide constituencies require Senators to appeal to a broader set of interests than do narrow, more homogenous House districts. To these constitutional characteristics, the Senate has added a number of traditions—some formal, others informal—that have enhanced its deliberative character. Foremost among these traditions is the right to extend debate—what we today call the filibuster.

For many years—indeed, for the first 130 years of this body's existence—there was no formal way to cut off debate. Senators could, in theory, speak as long as they wanted, on whatever subject they wanted. In 1917, the Senate adopted the first cloture rule, which required a two-thirds vote to end debate. Filibusters remained rare, although they were used from time to time to delay legislation. In 1975, under the leadership of Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, the Senate lowered the cloture threshold from two-thirds to three-fifths, where it has remained ever since, with the notable exception of Senate Democrats' unilateral decision last Congress to lower the cloture threshold for most nominations to a simple majority vote. The cloture threshold for legislative filibusters remains three-fifths.

Now, one may wonder why a device that allows a minority of Senators to delay or block legislation is a good thing. My friends and colleagues, the junior Senator from Oregon and the senior Senator from New Mexico spoke on the Senate floor last week about the importance of majority rule and the need to allow legislation to proceed. I do not deny that obstructionism can be a serious problem. Obstinately refusing to allow any legislation to move forward or requiring complete capitulation by opponents is not statesmanship, and it is not what the Framers had in mind. But when exercised properly, the right to extended debate can measurably improve policy.

The filibuster furthers two of the Senate's key purposes. First, it helps to guard against intemperate impulses that may from time to time infect our political order. Second, it facilitates the process of refining the popular will.

The way in which the filibuster guards against intemperate impulses is obvious. By requiring a supermajority to pass major legislation, the filibuster ensures that a narrow partisan majority swept into office through a fluke election does not go about unravelling vast swaths of America's legal architecture. The filibuster also ensures that the same narrow majority does not run riot with new, pie-in-the-sky ideas that cost billions of dollars while producing little discernible benefit.

I would point my colleagues to two major, extremely controversial measures that passed the House in 2009 but went nowhere in the Senate: the cap-and-trade energy tax and the so-called public option for health insurance. Speaker PELOSI was barely able to ram through cap and trade by a vote of 219 to 212. The public option passed by an even slimmer margin of 220 to 215. These two pieces of legislation received little consideration in this body because there were nowhere near enough votes for cloture. Absent the filibuster, however, it is likely both would have passed the Senate and become law. Had that occurred, a temporary electoral victory would have wrought fundamental changes to American energy policy and put our Nation even more firmly on the path to government-run health care.

Many on the left may point to the failure of cap and trade and of the public option in 2009 as reasons to eliminate, not preserve, the filibuster. After all, it prevented progressives from achieving two of their most sought-after policy goals. But consider what happened a mere 2 years later, in the very next election: Voters delivered President Obama and the Democratic Party a sharp rebuke, voting out of office the highest number of Democratic officeholders in generations. Voters disapproved of the Democrats' policymaking, and registered their disapproval at the polls. Note, too, that the Democrats lost their majority in the House—the body that passed cap and trade and the public option—but retained their majority in the Senate—the body that never even took up either proposal.

The filibuster prevented a transient Democratic majority from enacting far-reaching reforms that a majority of voters ultimately opposed. It didn't prevent all reforms. After all, the Democratic majority still managed to enact many of its policy priorities. But the filibuster prevented other extreme measures from becoming law and stopped a short-lived congressional majority from running roughshod over longstanding principles of federalism, free enterprise, and limited government.

To my friends from Oregon and New Mexico and to others who argue that the filibuster is anti-democratic, I would say that it is in fact the opposite. The filibuster ensures that fundamental change comes only through sustained victories at the ballot box. It typically takes two or three successive victories at the polls to build a filibuster-proof majority. This multiyear window gives the public time to evaluate the majority's platform and to determine whether it is in fact the better course of action.

If by democracy one means to win at all costs, perhaps one could say the filibuster is anti-democratic. But if democracy, as I believe, instead means the system for transforming the people's preferences into law, then the filibuster is not anti-democratic at all. Rather, it preserves the people's preferences until they decide emphatically, and with the benefit of review, that it is time for significant change.

I have also said that the filibuster facilitates the process of refining the popular will. It does this in two ways. First, it gives opponents of a particular piece of legislation additional time to explain why the legislation is misguided or how it could be improved. It also gives proponents of the legislation additional time to explain why the objections are unfounded. This helps to increase understanding on both sides and also offers opportunities to correct problems with particular provisions.

Second, by requiring 60 votes in order to proceed on controversial issues, the filibuster ensures increased buy-in. The process of refining the public will works only if Senators actually pay attention to legislation and devote their resources to examining it. By requiring 60 Senators to assent to legislation rather than a bare majority, the filibuster ensures that no bill passes this body without first garnering broad support. The process of getting to 60 requires more scrutiny, more investigation, and more consensus than the process of getting to a bare majority. It also decreases the likelihood of deeply flawed legislation making it to the President's desk because more Senators have to agree that the legislation warrants passage.

To the extent there are problems with the filibuster, they are not problems with the filibuster itself but with how it has sometimes been used in recent years, as a matter of fact. In April of this year, I spoke on the floor about the need for mutual restraint in the Senate, about the need for both sides to exercise discretion in wielding the powers of the majority and the minority. Yes, the filibuster can be a tool for improving legislation and winning important promises from the Executive,

but it can also be abused for narrow partisan ends. It can be used to bring business to a halt for irrelevant or unimportant purposes or merely to make a point. It can be used to win an unsavory favor for a particular individual or constituency, and it can be used to create false narratives about the majority's ability to govern.

From time to time we hear calls—including by Members of this body—to strip the minority of certain rights. Lately, there have been calls by some in the media, on the campaign trail, and on the other side of the Capitol to eliminate the filibuster. Though these calls to abolish the filibuster may be instinctively appealing, we should reject them. Without the filibuster and other important minority rights, the Senate would lose its unique character. It would become less a body marked by deliberation and reasoned debate and more a body where the majority gets whatever it wants. Indeed, stripped of minority rights, the Senate would merely duplicate the work of the House of Representatives. That may be advantageous for the current Senate majority, but it would not fulfill the constitutional design in creating a second House of Congress where the popular will would be refined through prudent judgment.

Those who call on the Senate to abolish the filibuster should keep in mind that this is not the first Congress to face institutional challenges. Indeed, I would urge my colleagues to recall the example of Mike Mansfield, the late Senator from Montana, whom I referenced earlier. Senator Mansfield served as Senate majority leader from 1961 to 1977, longer than any other Senator in history. During Senator Mansfield's time as majority leader, the Nation confronted a number of difficult, divisive issues. Chief among these were debates over school integration and civil rights, which deeply split the Democratic caucus. Near the beginning of his tenure, when a determined minority stalled President Kennedy's legislative priorities, Senator Mansfield faced great pressure from within his own party to exert the majority's power more assertively. In an act of great courage, Senator Mansfield resisted the calls of his colleagues to bend Senate rules. Though tempted by the prospect of important political victories, he instead counselled that the remedy to gridlock ''lies not in the seeking of shortcuts, not in the cracking of nonexistent whips, not in wheeling and dealing, but in an honest facing of the situation and a resolution of it by the Senate itself, by accommodation, by respect for one another, [and] by mutual restraint.''

Senator Mansfield was absolutely right. For the Senate to function effectively, Senators of all stripes must practice mutual restraint—Republican and Democrat, conservative and liberal, majority and minority alike.

The solution to our current strife is not to change the rules but to follow them and to wield them only as necessary to improve legislation. Cooperation, not going nuclear, is what will restore this body to proper functioning. Going nuclear will only hollow out this institution and infect more of what we do with puerile partisan poison.

I wish to close by quoting two great statesmen who loved the Senate and who truly understood its unique role in our constitutional system. The first quote is from the first Adlai Stevenson, who served as Vice President from 1893 to 1897. In his farewell address to the Senate, Vice President Stevenson said the following:

> In this Chamber alone are preserved without restraint two essentials of wise legislation and good government: the right of amendment and of debate. Great evils often result from hasty legislation; [but] rarely from the delay which follows full discussion and deliberation.

Vice President Stevenson understood that deliberation and reasoned debate lead to better policy outcomes than the headlong rush to action. Delay rarely causes great evils. More commonly, it helps to avoid them.

The second quote comes from a man familiar to all of us, the late Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia. Senator Byrd, who served in this body longer than any other Senator in history and who spent the vast majority of his 51 years in the Senate in the majority, said this about the filibuster and minority rights: ''[A]s long as the Senate retains the power to amend and the power of unlimited debate, the liberties of the people will remain secure.''

Senator Byrd recognized that the Senate's cooling function serves as a crucial check on transient majority impulses and on the often misguided desire to act quickly and to act at all costs.

The filibuster is a key bulwark against error and against the ability of short-lived political majorities to work fundamental changes to our Nation. Although it can be deeply frustrating—particularly when misused and overused by an intransigent partisan Senate minority—the filibuster is an important element of the Senate's character and institutional structure. I urge my colleagues to resist calls to abolish the filibuster. Whatever we might win in the way of short-term political gain would be overwhelmed by the enduring, irreparable damage we would do to the Senate as an institution.

I knew Mike Mansfield. I visited with him in Tokyo when he was the Ambassador to Japan. He was a great leader. He was a great human being.

I also knew very well Senator Robert C. Byrd. There were times when I led the fight against labor law reform in 1977, 1978, where I was hard-pressed to like Senator Byrd because he used every tool at his disposal—procedural and otherwise—to try to put that bill forward, which would have changed the whole character of America for the worse.

I was young. I didn't realize how important that man really was. But as I continued to serve in the Senate and saw his devotion to the Senate, his devotion to the Senate rules, his fairness when he dealt with both sides, I got to really respect his understanding of the procedural votes.

I venture to say I don't know that anybody has ever had that full capacity as much as he did, with the possible exception of Senator Allen of Alabama, who I greatly admired also. He stood right over there on that side of the floor and took on his own party time after time. The filibuster was a very important instrument at that time, especially since Mr. Byrd was a very strong personality. The longer I served in the Senate, the more I appreciated Senator Byrd and his devotion to the rules, the Constitution, and the Senate itself. He cared for the Senate.

I can remember him sitting right here in this chair. I went up to him and I said: Bob, I love you. This was right before he died. He looked like he was going to cry, and he said: ORRIN, I love you too. That meant so much to me because in the early days we were principal adversaries. He had more power than I could dream of.

We ended up winning on labor law reform through a miraculous sixth cloture vote. It was a great loss to Senator Byrd. He was not particularly enamored with me for the first number of years. But as we served together, fought together, and worked together, I gained tremendous experience from him and from his ability. I gained a great appreciation for Senator Byrd and his abilities and his dedication to the rules of the Senate and his dedication to not changing them and keeping those rules alive, and those rules have existed for almost a century.

Nobody I know of felt more sad when he had to leave the Senate than I did. Keep in mind, that was after a lot of blood and guts fighting here on the floor where I, as a young freshman Senator, had to take it on the chin regularly because he knew the rules better than I did and he had power that was much stronger than anybody on this side of the aisle. He had a very forceful presence.

I will just say this: He believed in the rules, and he lived by the rules. Even when he lost, he was a gentleman. I think that man did more for the Senate in many ways than very few other Senators did.

Let's not get so rambunctious about passing anything we want to pass around here. Let's think these rules through. The more you think, the more you realize these rules are here for a reason, and they have been here a long time for a reason and have functioned amazingly well and stopped the majority from running over the minority.

Every once in a while, the Democrats are in the minority, although not very often. Over the last number of years, they had the majority around 22 times and we had it maybe 6 times. I can say

this: There are Democrats on the other side who really know these rules are very important, and I hope they prevail as we move on to even more difficult problems and processes in the future and in the time to come. This is a great body. It remains great in large measure because of its rules and because of the people who serve here. We should all respect the rules, and we should all respect each other for the privilege of serving in the U.S. Senate.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CUBA

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today, as I have in the past, in defense of the Cuban people, who long for the day when they are free of the iron fist of the Castro regime, a day when we can honestly say ''Cuba es libre'' and mean it. I rise with great concern over the trajectory of the policy towards Cuba that President Obama announced on December 17 of last year.

In executing this new policy, the Obama administration has spared no generosity towards the dictatorship in Cuba. It commuted the sentences of three convicted Cuban spies, including one serving a life sentence for murder conspiracy against Americans who died while flying a civilian aircraft in international airspace that was struck down by Cuban MIGs. It eased a host of travel and trade sanctions in spite of the purpose and intent of U.S. law. It removed Cuba from the state sponsors of terrorism list, while it continues harboring fugitives from the U.S. justice system and members of foreign terrorist organizations.

Among those people who are in Cuba is Joanne Chesimard, who killed a New Jersey State trooper. She was convicted of doing so, escaped, and is on the FBI's top 10 most wanted terrorist list. Yet we took them off the list of state sponsors of terrorism.

It negotiated an agreement to establish diplomatic relations with Cuba that falls far short of international legal norms in terms of what the people at our Embassy can and cannot do inside of Cuba. It upgraded Cuba in the trafficking in persons report, despite its continued slave labor and human trafficking practices. It even acquiesced to shunning dissidents from attending the U.S. Embassy's flag-raising ceremony in Havana.

Yet Cuban dictator Raul Castro refuses to reciprocate any of these concessions. To the contrary, Castro has emphasized that he ''will not cede 1 millimeter.'' In his speech at last month's United Nations General Assembly gathering, he demanded even more, namely for President Obama to evade U.S. law as regards sanctions, to shut down Radio and TV Marti, which is, in essence, the equivalent of our Voice of Democracy so that the Cuban people can get free and unfettered information, to end democracy programs, to return the military base at Guantanamo, and to pay $1 trillion—not $1 million, not $1 billion, $1 trillion—in damages to his regime.

So today, 10 months later, the metrics of this new policy show it is clearly headed in the wrong direction. The Castro family is poised for a generational transition in power. The Cuban regime's monopolies are being strengthened. Courageous democracy leaders are being relegated to obscurity, their voices muffled by the actions of the United States and foreign nations alike.

Political repression has exponentially increased. The number of Cubans desperately fleeing the island is rising, and the purpose and intent of U.S. law is being circumvented. The trajectory of our policy is unacceptable, and I urge President Obama to correct its course.

While speaking recently to a business gathering in Washington, President Obama argued how he believes this new policy is ''creating the environment in which a generational change in transition will take place in that country.'' But the key question is this: a generational change in transition towards what and by whom?

Cuban democracy leader Antonio Rodiles has concisely expressed his concern. He said: ''Legitimizing the [Castro] regime is the path contrary to a transition.'' CNN revealed that the Cuban delegation in the secret talks that began in mid-2013 with U.S. officials in Ottawa, Toronto, and Rome, and which led to the December 17 policy announcement, was headed by Colonel Alejandro Castro Espin. Colonel Castro Espin is the 49-year-old son of Cuban dictator Raul Castro. In both face-to-face meetings between President Obama and Raul Castro this year, the first at April's Summit of the Americas in Panama City, a summit that is supposed to be a meeting of democracies within the Western Hemisphere—Cuba in no way can qualify under those set of circumstances—and just last month at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Alejandro was seated next to his father with a wide grin.

Now, Alejandro holds the rank—this is him standing next to Raul Castro—of colonel in Cuba's Ministry of the Interior. Now, Cuba's Ministry of the Interior is, in essence, the state security that oppresses its people, with its hand on the pulse and the trigger of the island's intelligence services and repressive organs. It is no secret that Raul is grooming Alejandro for a position of power.

Sadly, his role as interlocutor with the Obama administration seeks to further their goal of an intrafamily generational transition within the Castro clan, similar to the Assads in Syria and the Kims in Korea. We know how well those have worked out. To give you an idea of how Colonel Alejandro Castro views the United States, he describes its leaders as ''those who seek to subjugate humanity to satisfy their interests and hegemonic goals.''

But, of course, it also takes money to run a totalitarian dictatorship, which is why Raul Castro named his son-in-law, General Luis Alberto Rodriguez Lopez-Callejas, as head of GAESA, which stands for Grupo de Administracion Empresarial, S.A., or, translated, the Business Administrative Group.

GAESA is the holding company of Cuba's Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, Cuba's military. It is the dominant, driving force of the island's economy. Established in the 1990s by Raul Castro, it controls tourism companies, ranging from the very profitable Gaviota, S.A., which runs Cuba's hotels, restaurants, car rentals, and night clubs, to TRD Caribe, S.A., which runs the island's retail stores. GAESA, this holding company of Cuba's Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, controls virtually all economic transactions in Cuba.

According to Hotels Magazine, a leading industry publication, GAESA, through its subsidiaries, is by far the largest regional hotel conglomerate in Latin America. It controls more hotel rooms than Walt Disney Company. As McClatchy News explained a few years back, ''Tourists who sleep in some of Cuba's hotels, drive rental cars, fill up their gas tanks, and even those riding in taxis have something in common: They are contributing to the [Cuban] Revolutionary Armed Forces' bottom line.''

Now, GAESA became this business powerhouse thanks to the millions of Canadian and European tourists who have and continue to visit Cuba each year. But these tourists—going over a decade and a half, maybe two—have done absolutely nothing to promote freedom and democracy in Cuba. To the contrary, they have directly financed a system of control and repression over the Cuban people, all while enjoying cigars made by Cuban workers paid in worthless pesos and having a Cuba Libre, which is an oxymoron, on the beaches of Varadero.

Yet, despite the clear evidence, some want American tourists to now double GAESA's bonanza—and, through GAESA, double the regime's bonanza. An insightful report this week by Bloomberg Business also explained how:

> [Raul's son-in-law, General Rodriguez] is the gatekeeper for most foreign investors, requiring them to do business with his organization if they wish to set up shop on the island. . . . If and when the U.S. finally removes its half-century embargo on Cuba, it will be this man—

Castro's son-in-law—

> who decides which investors get the best deals.

Of course, it is those investors in the company that ultimately is the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces, Cuba's military. In other words, all the talking points about how lifting the embargo and tourism restrictions would somehow benefit the Cuban people are empty and misleading rhetoric. It would only serve as a money funnel for Castro, Inc.

Now, here is what over a dozen of Cuba's most renowned prodemocracy leaders, including the head of the Ladies in White—the Ladies in White are a group of women, composed of mothers, wives, daughters, and other relatives of Cuban political prisoners. These are political prisoners who basically have languished in Castro's jail, not because they did anything violent, not because they broke the common law, as we would understand it here in the United States, but because they sought to create peaceful change.

They march every Sunday, dressed in white, holding a gladiola, peacefully to church. They are beaten savagely and arrested. And yet they do this every Sunday.

Berta Soler, shown in the middle, former prisoner of conscience Jorge Luis Garcia Perez ''Antunez,'' and Sakharov prize recipient Guillermo Farinas, who are all pictured here, warned in an open letter to the U.S. Congress, dated September 25, 2015:

> The lifting of the embargo, as proposed by the [Obama] Administration, will permit the old ruling elite to transfer their power to their political heirs and families, giving little recourse to the Cuban people in confronting this despotic power. . . .
>
> Totalitarianism communism will mutate into a totalitarian state adopting minimal market reforms that will serve only to accentuate the existing social inequality in the midst of an increasingly uncertain future.

These are the people inside of Cuba languishing as they try to create change in their country toward peaceful moves toward democracy.

It is very interesting, as you can see, that despite the talk about the Cuban regime creating greater equality, these pro-democracy movers in this picture who wrote this letter to Congress are all Afro-Cubans. So much for the equality that the regime created and this mysticism or romanticism that some have about the regime.

From an economic perspective, the very concept of trade and investment in Cuba is grounded in a misconception about how business takes place on the island. Right now, the Commerce Secretary of the United States is there talking about business. With whom are you talking business? With the regime.

In most of the world, trade and investment means dealing with privately owned or operated corporations. That is not the case in Cuba. In Cuba, foreign trade and investment is the exclusive domain of the state; for instance, the Castro family. There are no exceptions.

In the last five decades, every single foreign trade transaction with Cuba has been with the Castro regime or an individual acting on behalf of the regime. The regime's exclusivity regarding trade and investment is enshrined in article 18 of Castro's 1976 Constitution. He changed the Constitution and gave exclusivity to the state as it relates to trade and investment. That has not changed.

Moreover, there is no real private sector in Cuba. We often hear the Obama administration and the media refer to Cuba's small ''self-employment'' licenses as private enterprise, which implies private ownership. Yet Cuba's self-employed licensees have no ownership rights whatsoever—be it to their artistic or intellectual outputs, commodity that they produce or personal service that they offer.

Licensees have no legal entity to transfer, sell or leverage. They don't even own the equipment essential to their self-employment. More to the point, licensees have no right to engage in foreign trade, seek or receive foreign investments.

Effectually, licensees continue to work for the state. When the state decides such jobs are no longer needed—and we have seen this experiment before—licensees are shut down without recourse, which has happened several times in the past. Why? Because when you permit somebody to have a little barbershop and people congregate at the barbershop and begin to talk, that is a threat to the regime. When you permit people to assemble legally under the law, even if it is for the purposes of getting, for example, a haircut or eating at a restaurant—although that is normally for foreigners, not for locals—the bottom line is that when that gets out of hand, the regime, as it has in the past, will stop it. So this suggestion that there is this private enterprise is such a huge false fact.

The fact is, we already know what expanded U.S. trade with Cuba would look like. Since the passage of the 2000 Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act, over $5 billion in U.S. agricultural and medical products have been sold to Cuba. It is, however, an unpleasant fact—and facts are stubborn—that all those sales by more than 250 privately owned U.S. companies were made to only one Cuban buyer: the Castro regime.

Don't believe me. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture itself: ''The key difference in exporting to Cuba, compared to other countries in the region, is that all U.S. agricultural exports must be channeled through one Cuban government agency, ALIMPORT.''

Exporting to Cuba is not about trading with small- or mid-sized farmers, private businesses and manufacturers around the island, as some of my colleagues would have Americans believe. So it should be no surprise that U.S. products end up on the shelves of regime-owned stores that accept only what? Hard currencies. Meaning what? The U.S. dollar or a euro—with huge price markups.

Shoppers at these ''dollar stores'' are mainly tourists or those Cubans who happen to have U.S. families who will send them money, but at the end of the day, those stores have these huge markups. And where does the money go to? Not a private enterprise but the regime.

Little imported food or medicine ever makes it into stores where Cubans shop. Neither is it available on ration cards. It requires a tremendous leap of faith or belief in some extreme and unprecedented economic model—call it dictator-down economics, from my perspective—to argue or theorize that current or more U.S. sales to Castro's monopolies have or can ever benefit the Cuban people.

The facts prove otherwise, as has been the case with sales of U.S. food and medicine. So what makes us believe expanded trade with the United States would be any different? As a matter of fact, since December 17 of this past year—when the agreements between the United States and Cuba were announced and despite the Obama administration's efforts to improve relations with the Castro regime, which have included an increase in travel and eased payment terms for agricultural sales—U.S. sales to ALIMPORT, that Cuban regime company which they control, during the same period have plummeted by over 50 percent. So the question is, Why would even more concessions make this manipulation by the Castro regime's monopolies any different?

Let's stop talking about the embargo in vague terms. The embargo, as codified by the U.S. Congress into law, simply requires the fulfillment of some very basic conditions which are consistent with the democratic and human rights standards of 34 out of the 35 nations in the Western Hemisphere—Cuba remaining the sole exception and, of course, ironically Venezuela heading into a downward spiral with a lot of influence by the Castro regime.

When President Obama or some of my colleagues call for lifting the embargo, they are asking Congress to unilaterally discard these conditions. So I want to ask them, which of these conditions—codified in U.S. law—do they disagree with or oppose that they are willing to unilaterally discard them? Which one are they willing to live without?

Is it, for example, the condition that Cuba ''legalizes all political activity'' or the condition that Cuba ''releases all political prisoners and allows for investigations of Cuban prisons by appropriate international human rights organizations''? As I understood part of this agreement, the Red Cross—I think it was the International Red Cross—was going to be able to go into Cuban prisons. The regime said: Not interested in that.

Is it the condition that Cuba ''dissolves the present Department of State Security in the Cuban Ministry of the Interior, including the Committees for

the Defense of the Revolution. . . . ''? What is the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution? It is a block-watch entity in every neighborhood, in every village, in every hamlet inside of Cuba whose only job is to spy on their neighbors, and when their neighbor says something critical of the regime, they get ratted out.

Is it the rapid response brigades? What are those? Those are state security dressed as civilians who go take people such as the Ladies in White—people like these three pro-democracy individuals—and arrest them so it seems as if the populace is the one doing it when it is state security.

Is it the condition that Cuba ''makes a public commitment to organizing free and fair elections for a new government'' or the condition that Cuba ''makes public commitments to and is making demonstrable progress in establishing an independent judiciary; respecting internationally recognized human rights and basic freedoms as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which Cuba is a signatory nation; allows the establishment of independent trade unions as set forth in conventions 87 and 98 of the International Labor Organization'' among others.

Is it the condition that Cuba give ''adequate assurances that it will allow the speedy and efficient distribution of assistance to the Cuban people'' or the condition that Cuba is ''effectively guaranteeing the rights of free speech and freedom of the press, including granting permits to privately owned media and telecommunications companies to operate in Cuba''?

Is it the condition that Cuba is ''assuring the right to private property'' or ''taking appropriate steps to return to United States citizens (and entities which are 50 percent or more beneficially owned by United States citizens) property taken by the Cuban Government from such citizens and entities on or after January 1, 1959, or to provide equitable compensation to such citizens and entities for such property''?

Is it the condition that Cuba has ''extradited or otherwise rendered to the United States all persons sought by the United States Department of Justice for crimes committed in the United States''?

Which one of these conditions do they not agree with? Are they all willing to just throw them all out, require nothing?

If President Obama, as media reports indicate, takes the unprecedented step of abstaining from voting against a Cuban resolution in the United Nations General Assembly criticizing our own Nation's law—which is what the Cuban embargo is—he would be disavowing these basic conditions because these basic conditions are what is written into the law. I know. At the time, I was one of the authors who wrote the law in the House of Representatives.

Think about the horrible message that turning a blind eye to these basic conditions in U.S. law would send to the Cuban people about the priorities of the United States. Think of the horrible message it would send to Cuba's courageous democracy leaders.

Since December 17, scores of foreign dignitaries, businessmen, and Members of the U.S. Congress have descended upon Havana to meet with Raoul Castro and his cronies, while sidelining Cuba's courageous dissenters.

As independent journalist and blogger Yoani Sanchez lamented, ''A true shower of presidents, foreign ministers and deputies has intensified over Cuba without daily life feeling any kind of relief from such illustrious presences.''

Sadly, as the AP reported, ''more than 20 U.S. lawmakers have come to Cuba since February without meeting with opposition groups that once were an obligatory stop for congressional delegations.''

The reason U.S. lawmakers don't meet with human rights activists and political dissidents is because if they do, then they don't get a meeting with Raoul Castro. So I guess the photo op with Raoul Castro is more important than meeting with human rights activists and political dissidents.

Perhaps the biggest affront was during the flag-raising ceremony during the opening ceremony of the U.S. Embassy in Havana—to which no Cuban dissidents were invited. The Secretary of State said publically this was due to ''a lack of space'' and that it was a ''government-to-government'' function. Yet images clearly showed there was plenty of space and lots of nongovernmental figures on the invitee list.

Can you imagine what the world would be like today if this had been the attitude of the United States toward Sakharov, Solzhenitsyn, Vaclav Havel, Lech Walesa, and Nelson Mandela?

Meanwhile, adding insult to injury, Cuba's courageous dissident leaders—now neglected by the administration and congressional supporters of the new policy and even further neglected by foreign dignitaries and unscrupulous businessmen searching for a profit at whatever cost—are facing a dramatic increase in repression. Since December 17, when President Obama announced his new policy, Raoul Castro's dictatorship has exponentially increased the number of political arrests, beatings, and detentions. Just between January and March of this year, politically motivated arrests increased nearly 70 percent, from 178 arrests in the former month to 610 in the latter.

According to the Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation—an internationally recognized human rights watchdog—the total number of political arrests during the first 9 months of this year were 5,146. In just 9 months, these 5,146 political arrests surpassed the year-long tallies recorded for 2010, which was 2,074; 2011, which was 4,123; and 2015 is tragically on pace to become one of the most repressive years in recent history.

The official number of September arrests alone—the month just passed—was 822, the most in 15 months. They include Danilo Maldonado, a 31-year-old artist known as El Sexto who was imprisoned on December 25 of this past year, one week after the new policy was announced. El Sexto was arrested for painting the names Fidel and Raul on two pigs, which was considered an act of ''contempt.'' He remains imprisoned without trial or sentence or any justice. Amnesty International has recognized him as a prisoner of conscience.

They also include Zaqueo Baez Guerrero, Ismael Bonet Rene and Maria Josefa Acon Sardinas, a member of The Ladies in White. These three dissidents sought to approach Pope Francis during his recent mass in Havana to ask for his solidarity with Cuba's political prisoners and democracy movement. They were dragged away and arrested under the eyes of the international media. They have been on a hunger and thirst strike since September 20 and are being held at the infamous secret police center for ''investigations'' at Aldabo and 100th Street in Havana. I am very concerned about their well-being.

They also include the case of Digna Rodriguez Ibanez, an Afro-Cuban member of The Ladies in White in Santa Clara, who was attacked by Castro regime agents and pelted with tar. That is right, with tar. Also included is Eralisis Frometa Polanco, another member of The Ladies in White, who was pregnant and forcefully aborted due to the violent blows to the stomach she received during a beating for her peaceful activism, and Daisy Cuello Basulto, also a member of The Ladies in White, whose daughter was arrested, stripped naked, and forced to urinate in front of male state security officers as a means of tormenting her mother.

For 24 straight Sundays in a row, Cuban dissidents have tried to peacefully demonstrate after Mass under the slogan ''Todos Marchamos''—we all march. And for 24 Sundays in a row they have been intercepted, violently beaten, and arrested.

This image is of Cuban dissident leader Antonio Rodiles, a 43-year-old intellectual, after having his face literally shattered during one of those peaceful Sunday marches. Yet, despite the tremendous indignities at the hands of the Castro regime, they remain undeterred in their struggle for freedom and democracy for all Cubans. Rather than shunning these courageous individuals, the United States should be embracing them.

On the same day the news hit that 882 political arrests were made in September alone by the Castro regime, Secretary Kerry was in Chile talking about some marine life agreement with Cuba. What about the human lives in Cuba suffering under this oppression? The Obama administration's policy seems to be bringing little comfort to the Cuban people generally, as they

continue to flee by land, by air, and the perilous journey by sea across the Florida straits, where countless Cubans have lost their lives in search of freedom.

Nearly 32,000 Cubans entered the United States in the first 9 months of the fiscal year that ended on September 30, up from about 26,000 migrants who entered last fiscal year, according to the Department of Homeland Security. Fewer than 7,500 Cubans came in 2010.

Finally, Mr. President, as one of the authors of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996, known as the Libertad Act, and having served as a manager in the conference committee, I am concerned that the recent regulations and actions being taken by the Treasury and Commerce Departments contravene the purpose and intent of the law. As the final conference committee report of the Libertad Act made clear, ''It is the intent of the committee of conference that all economic sanctions in force are March 1, 1996, shall remain in effect until they are either suspended or terminated pursuant to the authorities provided in section 204 of this (requiring a Presidential determination that a Democratic transition is under way in Cuba).''

Those are the conditions I had previously addressed. The report also states that ''the explicit mandates in this legislation make clear congressional intent that U.S. law be enforced fully and, thereby, provide a basis for strict congressional oversights of executive branch enforcement measures henceforth.''

In furtherance of this intent, the prohibition on U.S. assistance and financing of agricultural sales to Cuba, the prohibition on additional imports from Cuba, and the prohibition of travel relating to tourist activities in the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 are explicit, clear and leave no room for exceptions.

These provisions were precisely written to deny U.S. funds to the Castro regime's repressive machinery and prohibiting them from being funneled through Castro's monopolies. Yet that is the direction—perhaps unintended—the new regulations are headed in, with the tragic, repressive consequences on full display.

Any hope that President Obama's goodwill would elicit a different tone from Raul Castro was further diminished by the Cuban dictator's speech to the U.N. General Assembly last month. Castro dedicated his 17-minute speech almost entirely to bashing the policies of the United States from Latin America to Eastern Europe to the Middle East. He praised Latin American autocrats in the mold of Hugo Chavez, sided with Putin and Assad, criticized representative democracy, and dismissed human rights as a ''utopia.'' While President Obama referred to the concessions he has already made in his remarks to the U.N. General Assembly, Raul Castro audaciously demanded even more.

So let me close by saying we all remember the message President Obama sent to the foes of freedom in his first inaugural speech. He said, ''[W]e will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist.'' I urge the President to follow his own doctrine and reconsider some of the unmerited and unreciprocated generosity in this new policy, for Raul Castro's fist clearly remains clenched, yet the President's hand is still fully extended.

The President claims those who don't agree with his Cuba policy are stuck in the past, but it is the Castro regime that is stuck in the past, still living their misguided Cold War dreams in a world that hasn't insisted they move forward. And when you own everything in the country—which the regime does—why would you be willing to give it up after 50-some-odd years? Instead, we are rewarding them for their intransigence. Unless we challenge them, we will not see change.

The fact is that hope and change do not come easily. They do not just happen. Like any parent with a child, they won't change unless you challenge them and give them a reason. Like Congress, it needs to be challenged to change. And so with Cuba the world needs to challenge the regime or change will never come—not give in and give everything. To do so only strengthens their resolve to hold on to their dictatorship and prolong the day when we can truly say to the world that ''Cuba es Libre''—Cuba is free.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, while he is still on the floor, I want to thank the Senator from New Jersey for his remarks. He is clearly one of the institution's experts on Cuba and the Castro regime, and I think we need to pay attention to what he is saying.

Unfortunately, we seem to be dealing with other countries and other regimes as we hope they will be, not as they are in reality. That was an important set of remarks, so I thank the Senator.

Mr. President, yesterday the United States Senate voted to advance the National Defense Authorization Act—what we call the NDAA. I worry sometimes we talk in Senate-speak, and we don't actually communicate what legislation is, so I want to talk a little about what this defense—or national security—legislation is and why it is so important that it passes.

After passing both the House and the Senate earlier this summer, colleagues worked in a conference committee led by MAC THORNBERRY from Texas, chairman of the House Committee on Armed Services, and Senator JOHN MCCAIN, the chairman of the Senate Committee on Armed Services. I know they had a tough job in reconciling those two different versions of the legislation, but now they have come forward with strong bipartisan legislation that supports our military and our families.

My dad served for 31 years in the United States Air Force. He flew B–17s in World War II in the Army Air Corps. I proudly grew up as an Air Force brat, so this is personal to me, as I know it is to the Presiding Officer, who has served in the Marine Corps for a long time and for whom this is a very personal issue as well.

In my State of Texas we are very proud of our connection with the military. We claim—I am not sure it is exactly true but we make this claim—that one out of every ten persons in uniform calls Texas home. I think that is probably roughly correct, but we want to make sure that through this legislation we do our job to make sure our military gets the equipment and the training they need in order to perform the dangerous missions we ask them to perform here in the United States and around the world. That is what this legislation does.

For example, the bill authorizes funding for the Corpus Christi Army Depot. This installation is a true national treasure because what it does is to refurbish the rotary-wing aircraft that come from overseas. After they are battered and beaten up, they come back and make them like new. So when these army helicopters serve overseas, they come back for a pit stop in Corpus Christi at the depot, and they make sure they are ready for the next challenge our military faces. This legislation we will be voting on at 2 p.m. this afternoon authorizes funding for the construction of a new facility at the depot where helicopter engines and transmissions can continue to be repaired, and we can continue to equip, as we should, our military.

This Defense authorization bill also authorizes critical military construction, such as the barracks at the Air Force basic training program at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, where thousands of airmen start their service to this Nation every year.

That was the first assignment for my dad, at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, TX, when I was a freshman in high school. I have had the privilege of attending some of the graduation ceremonies there, and they are really an inspiration. You see this whole football field full of trainees learning, through their basic training, how to become airmen and to serve our country in the U.S. Air Force.

The real people and real installations are dependent upon this authorization bill becoming law. This defense legislation is integral to ensuring our military is well resourced, well trained, and ready for action when called upon. Importantly, this legislation also helps clarify the United States' long-term defense priorities and authorizes funds to equip our military to handle the multiple evolving conflicts around the world.

I am reminded that in August I visited the Pacific Command with some of

our colleagues here in the Senate, where we asked Admiral Harris, the four-star commander of the Pacific Command, what keeps him up at night. What are you most concerned about? At the top of his list was North Korea, governed by a volatile dictator with nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles. I know General Dunford, the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the former Commandant of the Marine Corps, had a little different ordering. He put Russia at the top, I think, then China, North Korea, and then ISIL, if I am not mistaken. But regardless of the exact order, we know there are numerous threats to world peace and regional security.

We learned the lesson on 9/11 that what happens overseas doesn't stay overseas. It directly affects our security right here at home too. That is why this legislation is so critical.

This Defense authorization bill also includes provisions that fund efforts to counter Russian aggression in Eastern Europe, where Vladimir Putin is trying to intimidate and coerce countries that are part of NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and threatening them with the kind of aggression we have seen in Crimea and Ukraine. This bill helps counter that aggression. It also provides resources to help train and assist our partner nations in the Asia-Pacific, it provides help for Israeli missile defense and anti-tunneling defense, and it supports our partners in Afghanistan and throughout the Middle East to combat rampant terrorist activity.

So what we do here in the Senate and in this Congress and here in Washington, DC, is important to our national security and the safety of our Nation. That is why for over 50 years Congress has made passing the Defense authorization bill—what we sometimes refer to as the NDAA, the National Defense Authorization Act—that is why we have always made that a priority. All of us, regardless of political affiliation or ideology, believe it is fundamentally important to make sure our men and women in uniform, who are fighting on our behalf or standing ready to fight when called upon, faced with unprecedented threats around the world—we need to make sure, as a moral obligation, that they have what they need and that they know we are solidly behind them. That is what signal this legislation sends.

Now we have a chance to send this to the President—after we vote on this legislation—send it to him for his signature. But here is where I am troubled. President Obama has indicated he may well veto this legislation. And what, we might ask, would be his reason? Is there some provision of the legislation that he finds so repugnant or difficult that he wants to veto the legislation? Frankly, what the President and the White House have said is—they claim the funding levels outlined in the Defense authorization bill are ''irresponsible.'' But get this: These same funding levels are reflected in the President's own budget request. So we gave the President what he asked for, and he calls them ''irresponsible.'' What kind of hypocrisy is that?

I hope the President and his counselors at the White House will reconsider playing fast and loose with support for our troops and this important piece of legislation. This bill is bipartisan. We can have our fights over all sorts of things—and Heaven knows we will—in this polarized political environment, but if there is one thing on which we all ought to agree on a bipartisan basis, it is that this legislation needs to pass.

This support for our troops in an ever-dangerous world should be a priority. Fortunately, many of our Democratic friends understand this, and they have worked with us, and that is the way it should be. So I hope they aren't tempted to block this legislation in order to give cover to the President and to prevent him from being held accountable for his own decisions. This is not a time to play games, particularly with our national security and our men and women in uniform at stake.

Today our Armed Forces face a world with growing challenges in almost every corner of the world. As a matter of fact, I think the Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, said he doesn't remember a time in his long career in the Air Force and now in the intelligence community where the world has faced more diverse threats and challenges. And, like it or not, the United States is the point of the spear in addressing those challenges. If the United States doesn't step up and lead, there is a vacuum created which does nothing but encourage these tyrants, these thugs, the dictators and other people who will take advantage of that void.

We can't tie our own hands behind our backs while asking our troops to fly into harm's way to support efforts against ISIS and Syria and Iraq or sail to the edges of the Pacific to keep Chinese ambitions in check or to accompany Afghan soldiers in deadly firefights against a resurgent Taliban. Right now, as I stand in this Chamber, we have Americans—soldiers, sailors, and marines—who are putting their lives at risk to defend this Nation. By definition, when they are deployed overseas, they are far away from home, separated from their loved ones and their families. We ought to always remember that for every man or woman who wears the uniform, there is a family back home who is serving our Nation as well who deserves our gratitude and our support. The last thing our military needs is a reason to question the strength of our convictions, and they need Congress to support them.

Our adversaries watch this sort of thing, too, because what they read into political dysfunction—particularly when it comes to something as important as our national security—is they see encouraging signs that maybe they can push the envelope a little further. Maybe they can challenge the United States and our allies a little more. Maybe they can grab a little more property, real estate. Maybe they can plant a flag someplace they otherwise would not because they see in our actions—particularly on something as important as this—a certain reticence, perhaps not a willingness to lead but, rather, an America retreating from our international responsibilities, and that is dangerous. That is dangerous.

I encourage all of our colleagues to simply vote once more in support of this legislation so we can send it to the President's desk. What he does is his responsibility. This legislation passed last June with more than 70 votes. If we can send this bill to the President with that same sort of overwhelming bipartisan support, the President won't be able to veto this legislation because he knows his veto can be overridden by a two-thirds vote in the House and the Senate.

So let's do our part together to show our men and women in uniform that our support for them will never ever waiver.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I appreciate the words of my friend from Texas. I just want to point out that our military is fully funded and that some of us believe our military is so important that it ought to be funded by real dollars, not make-believe smoke and mirrors.

I have a press release from the ranking member, the top Democrat on the Armed Services Committee, who said he opposes using budget gimmicks to fund the Pentagon, and he declined to sign the NDAA, which is very unusual.

If we really care about our military, and everyone does, we ought to fund with real dollars, not make-believe money—this one called OCO.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this press release be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

REED OPPOSES FUNDAMENTALLY FLAWED NDAA

TOP DEMOCRAT ON ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE OPPOSES USING BUDGET GIMMICKS TO FUND THE PENTAGON & DECLINES TO SIGN NDAA CONFERENCE REPORT

WASHINGTON, DC.—Today, U.S. Senator Jack Reed (D–RI), the Ranking Member of the Armed Services Committee announced that he will not sign the Conference Report for the Fiscal Year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Reed opposes the Conference Report because it uses an inefficient budget gimmick that underfunds the Pentagon's base budget while inflating the emergency war spending account known as the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) fund, which is exempted from Budget Control Act spending caps. As a result, about one out of every six dollars in this year's NDAA, nearly $90 billion, is counted off the books. ''There are many needed reforms in the Conference Committee Report, but the use of

emergency war funds does not realistically provide for the long-term support of our forces,'' said Senator Reed. ''I cannot sign this Conference Report because it fails to responsibly fix the sequester and provide our troops with the support they deserve.'' ''I remain committed to working toward a more balanced, responsible way to fix the sequester so our defense and domestic needs are met. Achieving that goal is essential to the security and financial well-being of the American people. The Department of Defense is critical to national security, but so are the FBI, Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and many other federal agencies that help keep Americans safe,'' Reed concluded.

HIGHWAY BILL

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I came over here because the American people keep hearing: Government shutdown. Government shutdown. What is going to happen?

The opinion of Congress is the lowest of all times because we are not doing our job. We are not doing our work.

We are facing three possible shutdowns.

The first one is the possible shutdown of our entire transportation program, and that has 22 days left. On this one, I want to praise the Senate because we stepped up, Democrats and Republicans together, and we said: We are not going to let this happen; we are going to work together and get a bill. I am going to talk about that in a bit.

The second date we face is in early November, when, if we don't raise the debt ceiling so we can pay for the programs everyone here voted for, the government will shut down and we will become, frankly, the people who have overseen for the first time a bankruptcy. We have to raise the debt ceiling. As Ronald Reagan said very eloquently—I don't have his exact quote, but he said something like this: Even the thought of not paying our bills, even the thought of not raising the debt ceiling should be avoided. But we face that made-up crisis.

The third one is December 11, where all of our budget has to be looked at and we have to come to some agreement on the fair level of spending for both defense and nondefense and all the things we do.

I am here to talk about the first deadline because I am intimately involved with this as the ranking member on the Environment and Public Works Committee. I want to start off by praising my chairman, JIM INHOFE. He and I don't see eye to eye on a lot of things, but we sure do when it comes to transportation.

One hundred days ago—my colleague knows this—the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee unanimously approved the DRIVE Act. It has been 68 days since the Senate passed the bill by a vote of 65 to 34—that is an overwhelming vote in a bipartisan way—and now we are down to 22 days before we shut down. People can say: Why are we going to shut down when the Senate has done its job? Because the House hasn't done its job. It is inexcusable.

If we can find the bipartisan will to work together to pass a long-term transportation bill that increases funding for roads and bridges and transit projects, certainly they can find it in the House, and they should find that consensus there. We are up against this deadline. We keep hearing that the House—or I did—is going to act. Now, as far as we know, they have put off the markup of the bill until the day before we have a shutdown. That is ridiculous.

I call on Republicans and Democrats over there to come together, just as we came together. It is painful here on so many issues, but we found the political will to do the right thing. Where is the House bill?

In September, 68 organizations sent a letter to the House calling on the House to pass the Transportation bill. Look who signed this. I will mention a few: the National Association of Manufacturers, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Associated General Contractors, the Travel Association, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the Laborers International Union, the American Bus Association, the AAA, the American Trucking Association, the Society of Civil Engineers, the American Public Works Association, the National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Association. This is pretty amazing. This goes on and on.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this list be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SEPTEMBER 11, 2015.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The undersigned organizations representing every sector of the U.S. economy urge all members of the House to pass a six-year reauthorization of the federal surface transportation program in 2015 that increases investment in highway and public transportation improvements.

America's transportation infrastructure network is the foundation on which the nation's economy functions. American manufacturers, industries and businesses depend on this complex system to move people, products and services every day of the year. It is also a direct contributor to enhanced personal mobility and quality of life for all Americans.

The Senate passed a multi-year surface transportation bill with substantial bipartisan support in July. It is now incumbent on the House of Representatives to keep the reauthorization process moving forward to ensure a six year bill is enacted before the latest short-term program extension expires October 29.

The U.S. economy and all Americans require a surface transportation infrastructure network that can keep pace with growing demands. A six-year federal commitment to prioritize and invest in our aging infrastructure and safety needs is essential to achieve this goal.

Temporary program extensions and eight years of recurring Highway Trust Fund revenue crises do not provide a path to future economic growth, jobs and increased competitiveness. We urge you to end this cycle of uncertainty by advocating and voting for a six-year surface transportation program reauthorization bill during 2015.

Sincerely,

National Association of Manufacturers, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, American Road & Transportation Builders Association, Associated General Contractors of America, U.S. Travel Association, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, International Union of Operating Engineers, Laborers International Union of North America, Building America's Future, AAA, National Retail Federation, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, American Public Transportation Association, American Trucking Association, American Society of Civil Engineers.

American Public Works Association, American Highway Users Alliance, National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA), Associated Equipment Distributors, American Concrete Pressure Pipe Association, American Association of Port Authorities, Coalition for America's Gateways & Trade Corridors, National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association, Industrial Minerals Association—North America, Auto Care Association, National Recreation and Park Association, National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA), National Tank Truck Carriers, Inc., American Concrete Pavement Association, North American Equipment Dealers Association, American Bus Association.

Transportation Intermediaries Association, Association of Equipment Manufacturers, National Steel Bridge Alliance (NSBA), Metropolitan Planning Council, Chicago, American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC), American Concrete Pipe Association, Institute of Makers of Explosives, National Safety Council, National Precast Concrete Association, The National Industrial Transportation League, Corn Refiners Association, Specialized Carriers & Rigging Association, National Asphalt Pavement Association, Construction & Demolition Recycling Association, American Council of Engineering Companies.

Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute, Governors Highway Safety Association, North America's Building Trades Unions, National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA), International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association, Energy Equipment and Infrastructure Alliance, American Iron and Steel Institute, American Traffic Safety Services Association, The Association of Union Constructors (TAUC), Asphalt Emulsion Manufacturers Association, Asphalt Recycling & Reclaiming Association, International Slurry Surfacing Association, Airports Council International–North America.

American Rental Association, Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute, National Railroad Construction & Maintenance Association (NRCMA), Motorcycle Riders Foundation, Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITS America), Farm Equipment Manufacturers Association, NATSO, Representing America's Travel Plazas and Truckstops, National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA).

Mrs. BOXER. All of these extraordinary organizations are behind the Senate bill—the Governors Highway Safety Association, American Concrete. This is America together. They are calling on us. And this is not a partisan issue.

It is incumbent on the House to keep the reauthorization process moving forward and not wait until October 29 when we are on top of the deadline and we have to do another extension. We

are all sick of it. Let me just say it doesn't work.

If you went to the bank and wanted to buy a house and they said, ''I have great news from you, Mr. and Mrs. America: You have been approved for a loan, but it is only for a year,'' you are not going to buy the house. It is the same way with our State highway people. They are not going to build a new highway or fix a road or invest in a transit program if they only have a few days of an extension that they can rely on. They want us to have a long-term bill. We passed the 6-year bill here with 3 years of pay-fors.

We have seen the organizations. I am saying that our people who drive on roads are Democrats, Republicans, Independents, liberals, conservatives, rightwing, leftwing, ''middlewing.'' It doesn't matter. This is one issue where we can come together, and the Senate proved we can come together. So our words—and I really speak for everyone. I know. I talked to Senator INHOFE, and he knows I am speaking today. The words we have for the House: Just do it. Just do it. If we can do it, you can do it. Short-term extensions don't work.

I gave the example of going for a mortgage. You are not going to invest in a house if you can only get a year's mortgage. The same thing is true if you want to buy a new car. If you go to the bank and they say, ''Great news: You are approved, but it is only for 3 months, or 90 days,'' you are not going to buy the car. It is the same way for our States.

I have a chart—I don't have it with me now—that shows how much the States rely on the Federal Government. I don't have it blown up, but I am going to go through this. It is so interesting. We have States that rely on the Federal Government highway program for anywhere from 30 percent all the way up to 100 percent. Many States rely on the Federal Government for over 70 percent. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this list of the percentages by State be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Federal Share of Each State's Capital Outlays for Highway & Bridge Projects

State	*Percentage*
Rhode Island	102
Alaska	93
Montana	87
Vermont	86
South Carolina	79
Hawaii	79
North Dakota	78
Wyoming	73
South Dakota	71
Connecticut	71
New Mexico	70
Idaho	68
Alabama	68
New Hampshire	68
Missouri	65
Mississippi	65
Colorado	64
Minnesota	64
Oklahoma	63

Federal Share of Each State's Capital Outlays for Highway & Bridge Projects—Continued

State	*Percentage*
Arkansas	62
Georgia	62
Tennessee	62
West Virginia	61
Iowa	59
Ohio	58
Virginia	57
Maine	57
Wisconsin	55
Oregon	54
Indiana	54
New York	54
District of Columbia	52
California	49
Nevada	49
Arizona	49
Nebraska	49
Kansas	49
Louisiana	48
North Carolina	48
Maryland	48
Texas	47
Pennsylvania	46
Washington	45
Kentucky	44
Michigan	41
Delaware	41
Florida	39
Illinois	39
Utah	38
Massachusetts	37
New Jersey	35

We know Delaware is 41 percent reliant on the Federal Government; Rhode Island is 100 percent reliant on the Federal Government; Vermont, 80 percent; Hawaii, 79 percent; Alaska, 93 percent.

This is something that is a partnership. This is a partnership. We work together with the States, but we are so disadvantaging our States. In my State, it is about 50–50. We raise our resources about 50 percent. But do you know what the other 50 percent means to California, because we have almost 40 million people? It is $4 billion a year. We can't do our program on our own.

As my friend JIM INHOFE says, it is a need that he feels as a conservative he can support. When you read the Constitution, we are one Nation; we are connected. We need to build these roads.

There are over 61,000 bridges that are structurally deficient. We know this. We have worked together to fix this problem, because we know, in a way, it is a moral issue. Once you know something is dangerous, you have to fix it. We did with the Senate bill. We call on the House to do the same. Now, 50 percent of our roads are in less than good condition. This is not news to most of our people. They understand it. They drive on these roads. It takes a toll on their cars. I forget the exact amount, but I think it is about $1,000 a year of costs for people who use their cars a lot from roads that are not in good condition.

Every day, there are over 215 million crossings by motorists on structurally deficient bridges in every single State in our great Union. Let's show you a list of some of these bridges that are in need of repair: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California—our Golden Gate Bridge, our famous, incredible bridge. I crossed that bridge when I lived in Marin County every day for work. Seriously, the bottom line is that we need to act. Connecticut, District of Columbia, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa—these are bridges in great need of repair. Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York—the Brooklyn Bridge, that iconic bridge, is dangerous and in need of repair. In North Carolina, there is a Greensboro bridge. Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania—the Benjamin Franklin Bridge—Pennsylvania is the home of the chairman over there. In Oregon—the ranking member—there is the Columbia River Crossing. The Columbia River Crossing and the Benjamin Franklin Bridge are in the homes of the chairman and ranking member of the committee who have the obligation to get this done. There is South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin.

I have rushed this, but I don't want to spend the time naming every bridge. But this is where we are. A multiyear surface transportation bill is going to solve these problems, and we are going to start the work that needs to be done. We know there are still 1.3 million fewer construction workers today than in 2006, when the recession started. According to the Associated General Contractors, 24 States and the District of Columbia lost construction jobs between July and August. No wonder people look at Congress and they don't think we are doing a good job. We know all this.

The Senate has passed a good bill, bipartisan. All we are asking is what construction industry officials want us to do, and that is to stop the uncertainty about future Federal funding levels for highway and transit repairs. We know that the bill we passed in the Senate is a good bill. It is not as big as a lot of us wanted, and it is not as small as other people wanted. We found a sweet spot.

I am going to conclude by saying this. The reports I have heard indicate that the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee may well take action at the end of this month. That is so late. Let's go back to the 22 days chart. We are 22 days away from a transportation shutdown. They are going to mark up on the very day that we lose the authorization to spend funds.

We know the writing is on the wall. They are going to send us some short-term legislation. I want to say I am not going to allow that because I will oppose any short-term extension that pulls pieces out of our bill and takes the pressure off of passing a bill, such as positive train control. We have taken care of positive train control in our bill. I am not going to pull it out and put it on a short-term extension—no. They will get nothing.

They have to do their job. That is why they are here. We know we can do

it. We proved it over here. We have really serious problems over here, but we did it. We did it. When you have 65 votes for something over here and you pull equally from both parties, you have a good product. We have serious issues, and they have to be addressed. We are not going to pull out special favorite pieces out of the highway bill and stick it on a short-term extension or have some stand-alone bill that solves positive train control or any other of the special issues that we have addressed in the bill. Everyone knows we have to act.

I know my friend is waiting patiently to make a few remarks. I simply want to conclude with this. We passed a good bill—over $55 billion for 6 years. There are two new programs, including a formula freight program that provides funds for all States to improve goods movement. We have included the McCaskill-Schumer rental cars bill so rental cars will be safe. We have the first-ever commuter rail fund for positive train control.

These are some of the good things we have done. Let's not throw it all away and get it all glommed up into the other problems we are facing, which are the date on the debt ceiling and the December 11 date on funding the budget. We don't have to do it. This is a special fund. It is the highway trust fund. It should not get enmeshed in the end-of-budget-year issues. We should take that crisis off the plate. We did it in the Senate. They should do it in the House. That is our message today to the House: Please, Republicans, Democrats, liberals, conservatives, moderates, everyone in between, come together for the good of this country and pass a highway bill. Let's get to conference. Let's get the best bill we can get and be done with it and, at least then, send a signal to the people of this country that we are doing our job.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I rise to discuss the legislation before this body, the National Defense Authorization Act. Before doing so, I want to take a minute and address the DRIVE Act. I strongly support the DRIVE Act. It is very important that we have a 6-year highway bill for our country and that we get it in place. It was passed in a bipartisan basis. I think there are many provisions in it that will be very helpful, not only to our country but to each and every one of our States. We have worked on that legislation; we have passed it through regular order. It is vitally important.

When I go home and talk to my constituents in North Dakota, as I know is the case for all Members of this body, they express how important it is that we get not only a highway bill passed but a 6-year highway bill, a long-term highway bill passed so that these multiyear projects can go forward. We do need to get that done and get it done now so that we don't have an interruption in the Federal highway program.

To my esteemed colleague, I want to express my support as well for this important legislation. I appreciate both the work of the chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee and of the ranking member—my colleague who is the ranking member on EPW. This is important legislation. We need to continue to work in a bipartisan way in both Houses—the Senate and House—and get this legislation done.

Mrs. BOXER. Would the Senator yield so I could thank him for a minute?

Mr. HOEVEN. I will.

Mrs. BOXER. Through the Chair, I want to thank the Senator so much because he was one of those people who really helped us. In addition, every member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, on both sides of the aisle, was terrific on this. In addition to the chairman, Senator INHOFE, I also want to single out Senator DURBIN and Senator MCCONNELL, because they stepped up from both sides of the leadership when it really looked as if it would never happen. We proved that we could do it. I am so grateful to my friend for showing his support because we have so many contentious issues. This is not one of them. I want to thank him very much for his comments.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, again, I thank the Senator from California. This is important bipartisan legislation, and we need to continue to work to get it done.

I rise today to discuss the NDAA—the National Defense Authorization Act. It is likewise incredibly important legislation, in this case for our military—for our military and for the defense of this great Nation. I want to begin by commending the members of the Armed Services Committee, and especially Chairman MCCAIN, but all of them for their diligence. That means Members of both the Senate and the House, working together in conference committee after both Houses passed this legislation, passed the legislation through regular order. I emphasize that because it is so important that we follow regular order in this body and in the House, where we bring forward the legislation from the committees, bring it to the floor, have the debate, have the opportunity to offer amendments, debate those amendments, vote on those amendments, and then vote on the legislation. Let these bodies work their will. Send the legislation to the President. He makes his decision and we move forward.

I emphasize this right at the outset because it is so important that we work in this way through regular order so that we get to the important work of this country. I use this legislation as a great example—the National Defense Authorization Act, the defense of our Nation. We are moving forward because we are following regular order. We are working in the way I just described in both the Senate and the House, and that is what we need to do.

It is hard to overstate the importance of this legislation for our men and women in uniform and for the security of our Nation. I am pleased that we are now debating this conference agreement, and I look forward to moving to final passage. In just a few hours, at 2 p.m. eastern time today, we will be voting on final passage on this legislation.

There are several features of this bill that I want to highlight, and I am going to talk about a few of them. There are many important provisions, but I do want to highlight some of them here over the next few minutes. The first is in the area of personnel and benefits, taking care of those who put on the uniform—men and women who wear the uniform and put it all on the line for us and for our country.

This bill represents a continuing commitment to the well-being of our service men and women. It makes significant improvements to the benefits we offer to those who serve, particularly, by allowing military participation in the Thrift Savings Plan, as recommended by the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission.

We recognize that we need to reward those who stay in the military for 20 years with a strong retirement package. We also recognize through this legislation that those who serve less than 20 years deserve something in retirement as well. The Thrift Savings Plan provides a great mechanism to do that. I am very glad that we are able to include that in this legislation.

Let me touch for a minute on international security assistance. We face an incredible array of threats to our security and to the security of our allies. Those threats require immediate and careful attention, and this legislation points us in that direction and provides important tools. Because of the serious concerns many of us have about the efforts to fight ISIL, the National Defense Authorization Act increases congressional oversight of the effort to support the fight against ISIL in Syria.

We should not wait to pass this legislation. There is too much at stake in critical regions of the world, and we need to move forward. We should pass this legislation immediately, and the President should sign it right away so that our military has all of the authorities it needs to address threats such as ISIL as soon as possible.

I will talk for a minute about some of the critical defense programs. Of course the military needs the best tools available in order to meet the security threats of today and tomorrow.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 provides authorization for a number of key weapon systems, including the Air Force's new long-range strike bomber and the aerial refueling tanker programs, missile

defense, and a wide range of other procurement priorities. Delaying these programs now will harm our national security in the future, so it is important to keep them on track by passing this legislation and getting it signed into law.

I am also very pleased that the fiscal year 2016 legislation provides full authority for the Air Force's nuclear forces, including the B–52 bomber and the Minuteman III ICBM as well as the Global Hawk unmanned aircraft. Our Global Hawks provide incredible intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities. In North Dakota, we are proud to host the capabilities that make such vital contributions to the defense of our Nation—two of the legs of the nuclear triad—the intercontinental ballistic missiles and the B–52 bombers, as well as the unmanned Global Hawk.

I also want to say another word about remotely piloted aircraft, RPAs. The Air Force has been squeezed by the demand for the capabilities we have in the Predator and the Reaper, and it has been difficult to meet those demands and still have the capacity to train new pilots for these RPAs, remotely piloted aircraft.

I wish to commend the members of the conference committee for a very strong section in this legislation that requires the Air Force to consider all of its options to train additional RPA pilots. I have been advocating using the private sector to increase our capability to train those pilots. That is a step that can be done in the short term without drawing down our ability to support commanders in theater.

Right now the commanders in theater want those remotely piloted aircraft for the mission. That is a very high operations tempo. That doesn't leave pilots available here at home to train new pilots to fly these aircraft. That is why a private sector solution can be so helpful to our Air Force, and that is the language I worked so hard to include in this legislation.

I also have language in the report that goes along with the fiscal year 2016 Defense appropriations bill. The companion bill to the authorization bill is the appropriations bill. I included language in the appropriations bill that instructs the Air Force to look at private sector-led training. My hope is that between that language and what we are passing in this authorization bill, the Air Force will find a way to leverage the private sector to enhance what the Air Force can do with its RPA fleet, meaning a higher ops tempo, and at the same time train new pilots and bring them into the system to fly unmanned aircraft.

Finally, I will highlight a couple of items that are important to North Dakota specifically. One is an amendment I offered during floor consideration of the NDAA in the Senate. This language directs the Air Force to determine the feasibility of partnering the Air National Guard with the Active-Duty Air Force to operate and maintain the Global Hawk. Similar to what it does in support of the Predator and Reaper missions, I believe the Air National Guard can provide a valuable contribution to the Global Hawk missions. I am very grateful that the conferees retained this amendment in the bill, and I hope that it will prove to be valuable not only in North Dakota but will set an example that can be followed with other aircraft and the Air National Guard units in other States across the country.

I also wish to thank the conferees for including a $7.3 million authorization to construct a new Intelligence Targeting Facility at Hector Field in Fargo. Our Air National Guard is taking on an exciting new targeting mission and this much needed facility will give them the space required and the capability—the facilities and resources necessary—to do that job right. They are already doing an outstanding job, but they need this secure facility as part of this highly specialized and highly important mission.

I worked on this project through the military construction appropriations subcommittee, and I look forward to completing the authorizing and appropriating legislation so we can get construction started on this new facility in Fargo.

The bottom line is that this legislation includes many provisions that are important for our men and women in uniform, that are critical to our national security, and that are vital to each of our States. The bill is well crafted, and it has received bipartisan support. It is absolutely necessary that we move forward and pass it and that it becomes law, so I will touch on that aspect of the legislation for just a minute as well.

The President has indicated that he intends to veto this legislation. So he intends to veto legislation that is passing through this body with very strong bipartisan support. The irony is that he is vetoing this legislation because we included additional funding in the legislation for our military that is incredibly important and is very much needed. But he is saying, nope, that is not what he wants done and has indicated that he will veto the legislation.

It is very important today that we have strong bipartisan support to send a clear message that if this legislation is vetoed, this body and the House will override that veto. We have to stand strong on a bipartisan basis. We have to make sure that we get this legislation passed, not just for our men and women in uniform but for the good and for the security of our country.

This is vitally important legislation. This is about making sure that we join together in a bipartisan way and get it done for our men and women in uniform, and then there is still more to do.

This is the authorizing legislation. Then we have to pass the appropriating bill that goes with this legislation so that we fund the authorizations provided in this legislation, and not until all three things are done have we stepped up and got the job done for our military. We need to pass this authorization. We need to make sure that we override any veto—should the President decide to veto this very important legislation—and then we need to stand strong, come together, and make sure we do not have a filibuster of the companion bill, the Defense appropriations bill, which goes with this authorization. Then, and only then, will we have the job done that we need to do for our men and women in uniform. That is the task before us, and that is what we need to get done. We need to keep our eye on that ball very clearly, and we need to make sure the American people understand that we have to pass this legislation, override any veto, and then pass the companion Defense appropriations bill. Only then have we got the job done for our men and women in uniform who put it all on the line for us.

With that, I yield the floor.

SECTION 1045

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I want to thank Chairman MCCAIN and Ranking Member REED for their efforts to include an anti-torture provision in the conference report on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016, H.R. 1735. As a coauthor of this provision—Section 1045 of the conference report—I am pleased that there will now be clear limits on interrogation techniques so that the United States can never again conduct coercive and abusive interrogations or indefinite secret detentions.

Section 1045 applies the restrictions on interrogations in the Army Field Manual under current law to the entire U.S. Government. The provision therefore extends to the whole of government what Congress did in 2005, by a vote of 90–9, with the Detainee Treatment Act, which banned the Department of Defense from using techniques not authorized by the Army Field Manual. The Detainee Treatment Act also banned across the government the use of cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment or punishment.

Section 1045 also requires prompt access by the International Committee of the Red Cross to any detainee held by the U.S. Government.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Senator MCCAIN, to provide clear legislative history as the coauthors of the amendment.

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I would like to start by asking the distinguished Senator from Arizona, Mr. MCCAIN, a question concerning this anti-torture provision, Section 1045.

Some have raised the concerns about the exemption in this provision for Federal law enforcement agencies. The concern is that this new provision

might supersede other laws, rules, and guidance that apply to Federal law enforcement agencies. The language in the Senate-passed bill made clear that Federal law enforcement agencies could use interrogation techniques outside of the Army Field Manual if those techniques are authorized, noncoercive, and ''designed to elicit voluntary statements and do not involve the use of force, threats, or promises.''

Does the absence of this language in the conference report somehow open the door to the use of coercive interrogation techniques by those agencies? Is that the intent of the law enforcement exception in Section 1045?

Mr. MCCAIN. No. I assure the Senator from California that this is not the case and that I would not have agreed to any such provision if it were. The conferees decided that the requirement that all U.S. interrogations be conducted in accordance with the Army Field Manual on interrogations should not apply to Federal law enforcement officials for two simple, straightforward reasons.

First, Federal law enforcement agencies already have an extensive and well-established set of rules and procedures concerning interrogations because law enforcement interrogations are by definition conducted to produce statements that are voluntary and admissible in court. Those rules and procedures strictly prohibit the use of coercive techniques.

Second, the U.S. Army Field Manual was not written with law enforcement circumstances in mind, and it is unnecessary to ask law enforcement agencies to use or adapt the Army Field Manual when they already have their own rules and procedures for noncoercive interrogations.

Since at least 2004, it has been the policy of the FBI that ''no attempt be made to obtain a statement by force, threats, or promises,'' according to the Legal Handbook for FBI Special Agents, as publicly recounted by the FBI general counsel in July 24, 2004, congressional testimony. This and other such rules and applicable restrictions are unaffected by this provision.

In short, we did not ''open the door'' to coercive techniques by law enforcement in any way. We left the existing law enforcement rules under current law and Executive order in place. Indeed, as the joint explanatory statement of managers in this conference report states: ''The conferees recognize that law enforcement personnel may continue to use authorized non-coercive techniques of interrogation, and that Army Field Manual 2–22.3 is designed to reflect best practices for interrogation to elicit reliable statements.''

Also, it should go without saying that the exemption for ''Federal law enforcement entities'' does not apply to the Central Intelligence Agency, Department of Defense, and the like, but rather includes entities like the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Homeland Security, as specified.

It is false to suggest that the conferees in any way agreed to allow the use of coercive interrogations by law enforcement agencies. We have banned coercive interrogations because they are a stain on our national character, ineffective, and counterproductive to our foreign policy goals.

I did not work for more than a decade to preclude coercive interrogations only to agree to permit them so long as they are carried out by a different set of agencies. I did not, and this provision does no such thing. The rules and strictures on coercive interrogations by Federal law enforcement agencies are completely unaffected by this provision. I say that as the coauthor of the Senate amendment and as the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, who negotiated the agreement on the final language.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I want to thank Chairman MCCAIN for explaining the legislative intent of the provision and for making clear that this legislation does not allow the use of coercive interrogations by Federal law enforcement agencies.

I would also like to ask the Senator for his view on one additional change made to the anti-torture provision in the conference process. The Senate bill required the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with other specified officials, to review the Army Field Manual for update and revision. The Senate bill required this to be completed within a year from the date of enactment and once every 3 years thereafter. The conference report changes the timeline for that review, so that it occurs not sooner than 3 years from the date of enactment, and then every 3 years thereafter. Can the chairman of the committee clarify the reasoning behind that change?

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Senator for the question. There was a concern among the conferees that the Senate provision would not allow adequate time for the mandatory review, especially given the broadening of the application of the Army Field Manual to the rest of government. In light of this change, and the importance of the review, the conferees decided that 3 years was a more appropriate timeline.

I would also like to clarify one point, as there has been some confusion. It has been pointed out that the conference report requires the mandatory review of the Army Field Manual to be completed ''not sooner than'' 3 years from the date of enactment. This should not be read as allowing the review to be done far in excess of 3 years or potentially not at all. This language appears under the heading ''Requirement to Update,'' and it is the conferees' view that this review must be completed on or shortly after 3 years from the date of enactment.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Again, I thank the chairman and congratulate him for his very important legislative achievement.

Madam President, I want to thank Chairman MCCAIN and Ranking Member REED for their efforts to include an anti-torture provision in the conference report on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016, H.R. 1735.

Section 1045 of the conference report establishes clear limits on interrogation techniques so that the United States can never again conduct coercive and abusive interrogations or indefinite secret detentions.

Section 1045 applies the restrictions on interrogations in the Army Field Manual under current law to the entire U.S. Government. The provision therefore extends what Congress did in 2005, by a vote of 90–9, with the Detainee Treatment Act, which banned the Department of Defense from using techniques not authorized by the Army Field Manual, and also banned across the government the use of cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment or punishment.

Section 1045 also requires prompt access by the International Committee of the Red Cross to any detainee held by the U.S. Government.

Both of these provisions are consistent with U.S. policy for the past several years, but Section 1045 will now codify these requirements into law.

President Obama banned the use of coercive and abusive interrogation techniques by Executive order in his first few days in office, on January 22, 2009.

That Executive order, No. 13491, formally prohibits—as a matter of policy—the use of interrogation techniques not specifically authorized by Army Field Manual 2–22.3 on human intelligence collector operations. Section 1045 places that restriction into law, which is long overdue.

What this means is that a future President can't simply rewrite the policy—these limitations are now a matter of law and can't be undone without a future act of Congress.

Section 1045(a)(2) states that an individual in custody or otherwise detained ''shall not be subjected to any interrogation technique or approach, or any treatment related to interrogation, that is not authorized by and listed in the Army Field Manual.''

Section 1045(a)(2)(B)(i) makes clear that the ban on interrogation techniques not authorized by the Army Field Manual applies to all individuals ''in the custody or under the effective control of an officer, employee, or other agent of the United States Government,'' whether during or outside an armed conflict.

This is a very important change. Unlike the Executive order, which only applies to armed conflict, we are saying with this law that coercive interrogations will never again be used, period.

Section 1045(b) codifies a separate section of President Obama's January 2009 Executive order, requiring access by the International Committee of the

Red Cross to all U.S. detainees in U.S. Government custody—which has been historically granted by the United States and other law-abiding nations and is needed to fulfill our obligations under international law, such as in the Geneva Conventions.

I know my colleagues are well aware of the executive summary of the study released by the Intelligence Committee in December 2014 on the deeply flawed detention and interrogation program carried out by the CIA beginning in 2002.

During my floor speech on the study in December 2014, I described how the interrogations of CIA detainees from 2002 onward were absolutely brutal and ineffective.

In August of 2014, President Obama said what many of us have known for years: that the CIA's now-defunct interrogation program amounted to torture.

CIA Director John Brennan has clearly stated he agrees with the ban on interrogation techniques that are not in the Army Field Manual. Director Brennan wrote the following to the Intelligence Committee in 2013 about the President's 2009 Executive Order:

''I want to reaffirm what I said during my confirmation hearing: I agree with the President's decision, and, while I am the Director of the CIA, this program will not under any circumstances be reinitiated. I personally remain firm in my belief that enhanced interrogation techniques are not an appropriate method to obtain intelligence and that their use impairs our ability to continue to play a leadership role in the world.''

More recently, in a September 11, 2015, letter to me, Director Brennan wrote that ''CIA strictly adheres to Executive Order 13491, 3 C.F.R. 199 (2009), and fully supports efforts to codify key provisions of the executive order in the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2016.''

As a result of the anti-torture statute (18 U.S.C. §2340A) and passage of the Detainee Treatment Act in 2005, current law already bans torture, as well as cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.

However, the provision in this bill is still necessary because the CIA was able to employ brutal interrogation techniques based on deeply flawed legal theories that those techniques did not constitute ''torture'' or ''cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment.''

Opinions written by the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel, OLC, which could not withstand scrutiny and have since been withdrawn, managed to twist legal reasoning beyond all recognition and find that waterboarding, sleep deprivation up to 180 hours at a time, stress positions, slamming a detainee into a wall, and other similar techniques were not torture.

OLC reached these erroneous legal judgments by ignoring the inherent brutality of the CIA's so-called enhanced interrogation techniques. While ignoring that fact, OLC claimed CIA's techniques were a necessity to keep Americans safe and OLC mistakenly found the CIA program was managed and implemented with great care, which it was not.

This stood in stark contrast to the clear language of the anti-torture statute in the U.S. Code, and the Convention against Torture, which the U.S. Senate ratified in 1994.

That convention, clearly and absolutely, bans torture. It says: ''No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture.''

And yet so-called enhanced interrogation techniques—not allowed by the Army Field Manual, were approved, used, and abused by the Bush administration.

Section 1045 will serve as an additional bulwark to prevent similar techniques from ever be used again by imposing—on all of the U.S. Government—the same restrictions that apply to the U.S. military today under the Detainee Treatment Act.

In order to make sure that the legislative history is clear, I'd like to describe the minor changes that were made to the language of this anti-torture provision during the conference.

As described in the joint explanatory statement of the committee of the conference, the following two minor changes were made to the amendment.

First, regarding the applicability of this new provision to law enforcement interrogations, Section 1045 makes clear that the new limitations ''shall not apply to officers, employees, or agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security, or other Federal law enforcement entities.''

The version that passed the Senate and this final version both have an exemption for law enforcement because law enforcement agencies do not use the Army Field Manual and are already required to use noncoercive interrogation methods in which officers question suspects in order to elicit voluntary statements.

This exemption is consistent with and reinforces the relevant requirements of Executive Order 13491 on ''Ensuring Lawful Interrogations,'' which allows law enforcement agents to use only ''authorized, non-coercive techniques of interrogation that are designed to elicit voluntary statements and do not involve the use of force, threats, or promises.''

For example, since at least 2004, it has been the policy of the FBI that ''no attempt be made to obtain a statement by force, threats, or promises,'' according to the Legal Handbook for FBI Special Agents which was publicly recounted by the FBI general counsel in July 24, 2004, congressional testimony.

As the conferees to the defense bill wrote in their joint explanatory statement: ''The conferees recognize that law enforcement personnel may continue to use authorized non-coercive techniques of interrogation.'' The absence of this language in the final bill text should not be interpreted as any authorization for law enforcement to use any coercive interrogation techniques.

The second minor change to the anti-torture amendment that was made in the conference committee is that the timing for the completion of the required update to the Army Field Manual—after the specified ''thorough review''—was changed from ''[n]ot later than one year'' to ''[n]ot sooner than three years'' in subsection (a)(6)(A) of Section 1045.

This change does not alter the importance of the required review, the imperative that it be initiated in the immediate future, and that it be completed in 3 years' time.

The language of the provision is clear: the conferees wanted the Secretary of Defense to be thorough and gave him 3 years to complete the review. But the amendment says that he ''shall complete'' a thorough review after 3 years, not that he ''shall initiate'' a thorough review after 3 years.

It is also important to point out that, regardless of the timing of this statutorily required review, this administration or the subsequent administration may at any time revise portions or the entirety of the Army Field Manual.

As Section 1045(a)(6)(A) states, revising the Army Field Manual is not optional; it is a ''requirement to update.'' Moreover, the provision makes clear that this requirement must be undertaken every 3 years. Therefore, it would be inconsistent with the title, structure, and purpose of this subsection to suggest that the initial review following enactment can be postponed indefinitely.

Also, as the amendment notes, revisions to the Army Field Manual may be necessary to ensure that it complies with the legal obligations of the United States, a requirement that the executive branch is obligated to adhere to at all times.

In addition, no matter when the updates to the Army Field Manual are made, the manual ''is designed to reflect best practices for interrogation to elicit reliable statements,'' as the conferees also wrote their joint explanatory statement. America's best and most experienced interrogators have consistently and emphatically stated that best practices for eliciting reliable, actionable intelligence solely involve noncoercive techniques that elicit voluntary statements.

Let me now turn briefly to part (b) of Section 1045, which codifies part of President Obama's Executive order of January 2009 requiring access by the International Committee of the Red Cross, ICRC, to all U.S. detainees in U.S. Government custody.

This requirement—which is based on our obligations under international

law—has had bipartisan support in previous Congresses.

As we know from our own history and from the experiences of detainees around the world, closing the door to the ICRC opens the door to torture and other forms of mistreatment. Providing ICRC access is also necessary for our moral standing and critical to our efforts to defend human rights abroad.

Finally, our troops depend on the promise of ICRC access should they be taken prisoner. Now is the time to ensure that we live up to the values—in practice and in law—that we expect will be accorded to our own members of the military.

I have been opposed to coercive interrogations and the use of so-called enhanced interrogation techniques since I first learned of their use at Abu Ghraib and by the CIA. This bill, at long last, puts the end to them. I am very proud to have been part of the process to author and support this provision and very much thank the bill managers for their insistence that it remain in the final legislation.

Whatever one may think about the CIA's former detention and interrogation program, we should all agree that there can be no turning back to the era of torture. Coercive interrogation techniques do not work, they corrode our moral standing, and ultimately, they undermine counterterrorism policies they are intended to support.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

YOUTUBE KIDS APP

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, a few weeks ago I brought to the attention of the Senate the continuing new challenges that we have with the Internet and the fact that so much material is available to all of us, including our youngest citizens, indeed, our toddlers.

The question is: What is appropriate content for our toddlers? Google has put up a YouTube application for kids. They call it YouTube Kids. I have some pictures here that show some of the content on that application. First of all, I think this picture is self-explanatory. It says: How to open a beer with another beer. Mind you, this is a YouTube Kids application. Toddlers can access this information. It says: How to open a beer, and it goes through the sequence. This is another fairly graphic picture of how to open a beer with a beer.

Is that appropriate for young children? It is readily available and promoted by Google. I doubt that we would conclude that it is. Here is another one.

This one has wine-tasting tips. What is tannin in wine? Identifying acidity in wine.

Here is the cutest baby song in the world, ''Everybody Dance Now.'' That doesn't look too bad. Here is Alvin and the Chipmunks. This has nursery rhymes for babies, but when you play it, there are some unusual words in there, and so forth and so on. You get the picture. This is for children. This is for little ones.

Now here is a picture that shows how to make sulfuric acid two ways. Is that appropriate for toddlers?

I have another example. This shows how to make toxic chlorine gas. Is that appropriate for young children? I don't think so.

I wrote to Google, and fortunately Google responded. I wish to share with the Senate what I believe are steps in the right direction, but not enough. For example, I asked: What policies and procedures govern the inclusion of the videos on this app?

The answer in the Google letter is that Google uses algorithms that govern the automated system. Parents can notify Google of problem videos. Google will be informing parents on how to change its settings to allow parents to be more restrictive with the range of videos their kids can access.

Well, why should parents have to intercede when their algorithms—if you type in a search for beer—come up with what I showed you? It shows us how to open a beer with another beer. That seems contrary to common sense.

Then we ask: What factors determine whether content is suitable for children?

Google's answer is: An automated system and parental complaints.

I ask in my letter: For what age range must content be suitable?

Google did not answer that question.

I additionally ask: What steps, such as filtering, does Google take to ensure unsuitable content does not appear in search results on YouTube Kids? Do these steps apply to new content uploaded to YouTube Kids?

Google's answer was: Google uses algorithms in the automated system. Google will soon be informing parents on how to change settings and restrict the range of videos. That is the same answer that applied to a previous question.

So I ask: How long after content is flagged does Google assess its suitability?

The answer is quite unclear. The statement in this letter was: Google personnel quickly manually review any videos that are flagged.

So I additionally ask: How does Google remove content that is deemed unsuitable for YouTube Kids and ensure that it continues to be inaccessible to YouTube Kids?

The answer from the letter is: The video is manually removed by Google employees. That is the automatic way of what is deemed unsuitable to ensure that it continues to be inaccessible.

So I ask: What policies and procedures govern how Google determines the suitability of advertisements and whether they can appear on this app?

The answer is: Advertising must abide by three core principles which include that ads maintain an appropriate viewing environment, that they not be based on data tracking, and that they are formatted to enable exclusive YouTube Kids control.

That is nice. How do we get those beer advertisements off of there?

Then I ask: What policies and procedures does Google use, if any, to distinguish advertisements and paid content from unpaid content on YouTube Kids?

The answer is: Paid advertisements are clearly labeled.

We have constantly had this tension with any publication as to what is appropriate content. The movie industry years ago went through this with the rating system. But now we are in the age of the Internet and, as such, it is ubiquitous and it is available to very small children who want to know how to use a device that they see everybody else using. On an application that is specifically designed for children, if we allow this kind of stuff to go on, then where are our commonsense values? We don't want to be teaching a toddler about beer and wine and about how to open a beer bottle with your teeth, and we certainly don't want to be throwing out pictures such as these for toddlers to see. Maybe there is a time and place for that under parental discretion and guidance—but not available on an app for children.

I want to thank Google publicly for making a first step, but it is only that. It is a first step. Since this is an app by Google for small children, Google has a responsibility. If there is a privilege of doing an app like this, then there must be accountability, and Google has to accept that responsibility to be accountable.

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. PERDUE. 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. PERDUE. Madam President, I rise today to speak in favor of the National Defense Authorization Act. I strongly urge my colleagues in this body to vote for the NDAA and send it to the President's desk for signature. Let's move to fund our military.

The threats to our Nation have never been greater or more complex in my entire life. As a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I am given daily briefs of what I believe is an emerging global security crisis.

This administration just completed a nuclear deal with Iran that stokes the fears of our friends and allies in the region and releases tens of billions of dollars in sanctions relief to a regime that is the world's worst state sponsor of terrorism. We have had to bolster our support to allies in the region in an attempt to mitigate the impact of further Iranian spending to support Assad in Syria, the Houthi rebels in Yemen, Hezbollah, Hamas, and terrorism worldwide. We have seen the astonishing rise of ISIS as they have taken advantage of the power vacuum we left

behind by prematurely withdrawing our troops from Iraq. I would hate to see history repeat itself in Afghanistan, which is actually being discussed as we speak today.

Meanwhile, traditional rivals are aggressively posturing on two other fronts. China is antagonizing our allies in the Pacific Rim, and Russia is testing the resolve of our NATO alliance, blatantly grabbing sovereign territory in Ukraine, Crimea, and injecting troops and war materiel into Syria.

At the same time we see an increase in symmetric and asymmetric threats, we are headed in a direction where we are about to have the smallest Army since World War II, the smallest Navy since World War I, and the smallest Air Force ever.

Meanwhile, the Chinese alone are rapidly expanding their investment in their military and their forces in the Asian Pacific region and are set to double their defense budget by 2020. As a matter of fact, I was recently briefed at U.S. Pacific Command headquarters on the developments of U.S. forces in the Asia-Pacific in comparison directly to those of China. This is very alarming. In 1999, the U.S. military had a dominant and protective position in the Asia-Pacific and was totally capable of protecting our interests in the region. Today, however, China has reached military parity in the region. What is really troubling are the projections for 2020, however, in which China's relative combat power and presence in the region will be significantly more dominant than that of the United States.

That is why we need to ensure that we continue funding our military at the appropriate level. We need to ensure that our brave service men and women have the tools, training, and technology they need to meet the current threats we face on a daily basis but also to tackle what is coming in the future.

This year's NDAA reinforces the mission against ISIS and Operation Inherent Resolve. It provides assistance and sustainment to the military and national security forces of Ukraine, including the authority for lethal aid to Ukraine for defensive purposes. This NDAA fills critical gaps in readiness, ensuring that our service men and women meet their training requirements and have mission-capable equipment.

The convergence of our fiscal debt crisis and our global security crisis is indeed a sobering reality, and they must be resolved simultaneously. In order to have a strong foreign policy, we have to have a strong military, and to have a strong military, we have to have a strong economy. We have to solve our debt crisis at the same time that we continue to dominate militarily.

As former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Mullen once said, ''The most significant threat to our national security is our [Federal] debt.'' That fact still rings true today.

Having recently visited our troops and military leaders in the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific regions, I can tell you that the very best of America is in uniform around the world in our military, putting their lives in jeopardy every day to protect our freedom here at home. Our military is made up of some of the finest, smartest, and bravest people I have ever met. They are true American heroes committed to defending our freedom. They deserve our unwavering support.

One of the 6 reasons—only 6 reasons—why 13 Colonies came together in the beginning of our country to form this Nation, as enshrined in our Constitution, was to provide for the common defense. As George Washington said, ''To be prepared for war is one of the most effective means of preserving peace.'' Indeed, as we have learned over and over, maintaining a strong national defense can actually deter aggression. We absolutely must maintain a military force so strong that no enemy in its right mind would challenge us and those who dare have no hope in defeating us.

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

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

Under the previous order, the time until 1:30 p.m. will be controlled by the Democratic manager or his designee and the time from 1:30 p.m. until 2 p.m. will be controlled by the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services or his designee.

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Madam President, I rise once again to speak about the fiscal year's national defense authorization conference report. Yesterday I spoke at length about the OCO funding issue, and that, to me, is the most critical issue in the bill and one that has caused me to reluctantly not support the conference report. But this time I will discuss the conference report in its entirety.

Again, I would like to thank Chairman MCCAIN, Chairman THORNBERRY, and Ranking Member SMITH for a very thoughtful and cooperative process which allowed us to reach agreement on some very difficult issues. I also thank in particular the staff of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, who worked tirelessly over several months to resolve differences on over 800 different provisions.

As I stated yesterday, in many respects this is a good conference report which supports our men and women in uniform and establishes many much needed reforms and, with the exception of the OCO position, would be something that would have widespread support.

There are many provisions in the bill that are commendable. This conference report authorizes a 1.3-percent pay raise for servicemembers and reauthorizes a number of expiring bonuses and special pay authorities to encourage enlistment, reenlistment, and continued service by Active-Duty and Reserve component military personnel.

Significantly, it includes much needed reform of the military retirement system and brings the military retirement system into the 21st century for a new generation of recruits.

It also deals with the need to begin to bring into better control personnel costs at the Department of Defense because, as we all recognize, there is a huge trendline of personnel costs that would outstrip at some point the training and equipment that are necessary to the vitality and agility of the force.

One example is the pilot program to test approaches to the commissary and exchange system to see if there are ways in which that can be handled more efficiently without preventing military personnel from enjoying that benefit they have earned.

The report also includes a commitment to seriously consider reforms to military health care in the coming year. All told, these personnel authorities and reforms will serve tomorrow's servicemembers and their families, and they will save the Department of Defense annually in its discretionary budget, allowing that funding to be reapplied to readiness and modernization or even to maintaining a larger force.

The conference report includes roughly 60 provisions on acquisition reform. I commend in particular Chairman MCCAIN for his efforts in this area. It is a long history and a proud history. He worked with Chairman LEVIN. Previously he has worked with so many others. He has made this a personal area of not only concern but of notable action. The provisions will help streamline acquisition processes, allow DOD to access commercial and small businesses, and improve the acquisition workforce. They build on the success of the reforms led by the chairman in the Weapons System Acquisition Reform Act of 2009.

The report also includes a number of provisions that will strengthen DOD's ability to develop next-generation technologies and weapons systems and maintain our technological superiority on the battlefield. The report strengthens the DOD laboratories and increases funding for university research programs and STEM education. It also contains a number of provisions that will make it easier for the Pentagon to work with high-tech small businesses, bringing their innovative ideas into the defense industrial base.

With respect to cyber security, this report includes multiple provisions, some of which I sponsored and all of which I support. These include a requirement for biannual whole-of-nation

exercises on responding to cyber attacks on critical infrastructure, independent assessment of Cyber Command's ability to defend the Nation against cyber attack, comprehensive assessments of the cyber vulnerabilities of major weapons systems, and the provision of limited acquisition authorities to the commander of Cyber Command.

The conference report also has over $400 million in additional readiness funding for the military services—across all branches: Active, Guard, and Reserve. It fully authorizes the programs for modernizing our nuclear triad of sea, ground, and airborne platforms. There are also specific recommendations on many procurement programs that will help the Department improve management and cope with shortfalls. All of these provisions will ensure that our military personnel have the equipment and training they need to succeed in their mission.

For the various overseas challenges facing the United States, and they are considerable, this conference report provides key funding and authority for two major U.S.-led coalition operations: the mission in Afghanistan and the counter-ISIS coalition in Iraq and Syria. It also includes additional funding for initiatives to expand the U.S. military presence and exercises in Eastern Europe, reassuring allies and countering the threat of Russian hybrid warfare tactics, and authorizes additional military assistance, including lethal assistance for Ukraine. I had the privilege of visiting Ukraine recently and being with the paratroopers of the 172nd Airborne Brigade who are training Ukrainian forces. They are doing a commendable job and it represents a tangible commitment by the United States to support friends across the globe.

The conference report also includes, very notably and very importantly, the Senate provisions codifying the current policy that interrogations of detainees in the custody of any U.S. Government agency or department must comply with the Army Field Manual on Interrogation. These provisions, sponsored by Senator MCCAIN, Senator FEINSTEIN, and I, will ensure that detainee interrogations are conducted using noncoercive techniques that do not involve the threat or use of force, consistent with our values as a nation. I know how important this was, particularly to Chairman MCCAIN and Senator FEINSTEIN. It represents our best values and also from the testimony we have heard over many years, the most effective way to obtain information in circumstances as we have witnessed in the last few years.

All of these provisions are commendable. They are the result of significant effort by Chairman MCCAIN, Chairman THORNBERRY, Ranking Member SMITH, and the staff who worked tirelessly. However, there are provisions that do in fact cause some concern. Let me first talk about the issue of Guantanamo Bay. The report continues the restrictions on the President's authorities relating to the Guantanamo detention facility.

In previous Defense authorization bills, we had made progress in giving the President greater flexibility in streamlining the process of making transfers from Guantanamo to other locations, bringing us closer to the goal of closing Guantanamo. The Guantanamo provisions in this year's conference report, however, are in a sense a step backward. They continue to maintain the prohibitions on the transfer of Guantanamo detainees to the United States and on the construction or modification of a facility in the United States to hold such detainees.

This deprives the President of a key tool for fighting terrorism, the ability to prosecute Guantanamo detainees in Federal court. To make matters more complicated, the conference report proposes additional hurdles on the transfer of Guantanamo detainees overseas, requiring the Secretary of Defense to complete a checklist of certifications for overseas transfers and prohibiting such transfers to certain specified countries altogether.

Further, the conference report does not include a provision from the Senate bill that authorized the temporary transfer of Guantanamo detainees to the United States for medical reasons in the event of life-threatening emergencies. As the Guantanamo detainees get older, there is an increasing risk of a detainee suffering serious harm or death because the military is legally prohibited from bringing that person to the United States to receive necessary medical care.

Both President Bush and President Obama have called for closing Guantanamo Bay. Our military leaders have repeatedly said that Guantanamo harms our national security and serves as a propaganda and recruiting tool for terrorists. This is an issue we have been wrestling with for over a decade, and I regret that we are no closer to resolving it with this conference report.

This conference report also does not contain many of the cost-saving proposals that the Department of Defense requested. For example, the retirement of many aging aircraft and ships is prohibited and a BRAC round was not ever considered. Without such authorities, we in Congress are making it even more difficult for the Department of Defense to acquire and maintain the things they need because we are forcing them to keep what they consider no longer cost- or mission-effective.

Finally, as I have said it many times consistently throughout this process, the one item that I find is most objectionable, and indeed reluctantly forced me to argue against the conference report, is the fact that it shifts $38 billion requested by the President in the base military budget, in the routine base budget—it shifts it to the Overseas Contingency Operations account or OCO.

Essentially, it skirts the BCA. This transfer from base to OCO raises several concerns. First, it violates the consensus that was agreed to when we passed the BCA that both defense discretionary spending and domestic discretionary spending would be treated equally. Now, we find a way to avoid that consensus. In fact, that was one of the premises many of us found persuasive enough to support the BCA, but the concerns that are raised are many.

First, adding funds to OCO does not solve—it actually complicates—the Department of Defense's budgetary problems. Defense budgeting needs to be based on our long-term military strategy, which requires DOD to focus at least 5 years into the future. A 1-year plus-up to OCO does not provide DOD with the certainty and stability it needs when building its 5-year budget. This instability undermines the morale of our troops and their families who want to know their futures are planned for more than 1 year at a time and the confidence of our defense industry partners that we rely on to provide the best technology available to our troops.

Second, the transfer does not provide additional funds for many of the domestic agencies which are also critical to our national security. We cannot defend our homeland without the FBI. In fact, we just heard reports today of FBI activities disrupting a potential smuggling of nuclear material in Eastern European, headed—the suggestion is—toward ISIL or other radical elements. We need the FBI. Yet they remain subject to the Budget Control Act.

We need to fund the Justice Department, other aspects of their activities, the TSA, Customs and Border Protection, and the Coast Guard. These later agencies are funded through the Department of Homeland Security. Without adequate support for the State Department, the danger to our troops increases. In addition, failing to provide BCA cap relief to non-DOD departments and agencies would also shortchange veterans who receive employment services, transition assistance, and housing and homeless support.

Third, moving funding from the base budget to OCO has no impact on reducing the deficit. OCO and emergency funding are outside the budget caps for a reason; they are for the costs of ongoing military operations or to respond to unforeseen events, such as the flooding we are witnessing in South Carolina. To transfer funds for known day-to-day operations into war and emergency funding accounts to skirt the law is not fiscally responsible or honest accounting.

The OCO was designed for the contingencies that were non-routine and would not be recurring. In fact, we have seen OCO funds go up dramatically as our commitments both in Afghanistan and Iraq went up and then go down as you would expect. Suddenly that curve is beginning to shift up and go up, not because of the increased

number of military personnel deployed—in fact, there are fewer military personnel deployed in these areas today—but because we have found a way—at least we think we have found a way—to move around the BCA for defense and defense alone.

Many have argued: Well, that might be true, but this is not the place to talk about this issue. I disagree. This is not a debate about which appropriations account we put the money in; it is a fundamental debate about how we intend to fund the workings of the government today and in the future, all parts of the government, because if we can use this technique for defense, it, frankly and honestly, relieves the pressure to take the constraints off other agencies. It sets the whole table, if you will, for our budget for every Federal agency.

So this is not a narrow issue of appropriations, whether it is the committee on housing and urban development or the committee on interior and environment; this is a fundamental issue. The BCA is a statute, not an appropriations bill, per se. It came to us as an independent statute. We have a responsibility to respond to the challenge it poses to the defense budget and to every other budget.

This is just not a 1-year fix. If this were a bridge that we knew would take us from this year to next year, well, we might do these things in a different way. Unfortunately I think this conference report is going to be replicated in the future, because if we rely on this approach this year, there is huge pressure next year to do the same thing, unless we can resolve the underlying problems of the Budget Control Act.

I believe it is essential for us to do this for the best interests of our country, for the best interests of our military personnel. I don't think by standing up and casting a vote in this light we are disrespecting or not recognizing the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States. In fact, it has not been uncommon over the years that because of issues, this bill has been objected to by both sides.

Indeed, since 2005 my colleagues on the Republican side have cast votes against cloture on the NDAA 10 times and successfully blocked cloture 4 times over such issues as Senate rules and procedures, the repeal of don't ask, don't tell, and in one case gasoline prices. So to argue today that the only reason we should vote for this bill is because it is procedurally not appropriate to discuss this, well, was it procedurally appropriate to use the Defense bill to essentially register anguish about gasoline prices?

This goes to the heart not just of this bill but every bill. Therefore, I don't think it is something we have to shy away from. In fact, I think we have to take it on. If we cannot fix this Budget Control Act straightjacket we are in, it will harm our national security. If we don't have the FBI agents out there trying to disrupt smuggling of uranium and other fissile materials, that hurts us. It hurts our national security. If we don't have the Department of Energy laboratories that are capable of doing research, helping us and working with foreign governments about detection of radioactive material, that hurts our national security. This is about national security, and I think we have to consider it in that light.

So we are here today, and we are dealing with an issue of the authorization act in the context of the continuing resolution because we have not resolved the Budget Control Act. These are all roads coming together: the conference report, the continuing resolution, all of them in the context of trying to respond to the Budget Control Act. I think we should step up and deal with the Budget Control Act.

We have had many months to try to find the answer. We haven't. When we considered this legislation previously in the Senate, it was summer time, and it appeared that there might be a coming together on a bipartisan basis and a thoughtful basis, trying to provide the relief so we wouldn't have to rely on OCO when the conference report arrived, but we are here today and OCO is still staring us right in the face.

I think we have to ensure that we stand and say that is not the way we want to go forward for the defense of our country in the broadest context and for the support of our military personnel.

There is one other issue I do wish to raise, too, because it has been brought up; that is, the suggestion that if this bill does not pass today, then our military will not receive their pay raises and bonuses. The provisions in this bill go into effect January 1, 2016. We still have time. I would hope we would use that time not only to make some changes—technical here and there—but also to deal with the central issue which I hope we all agree is driving everything; that is, fixing the Budget Control Act in a way that we can provide across-the-board support for our Federal agencies, particularly our national security agencies which go beyond simply the Department of Defense.

I think the time is now. This is a moment to deal with the issue, not defer it and hope something happens in the future. We have to resolve the Budget Control Act.

I urge, for that reason as much as anything, that my colleagues would vote against this conference report as an important step in the process and a necessary step, in my view, in the process of resolving the great budget crisis we face in terms of the Budget Control Act.

In fact, one of my concerns is that if we do in fact pass this conference report and it subsequently becomes law or just the simple fact that we pass it, it gives some people the excuse of saying: Well, we have fixed the only problem that we think is of some significant concern, the Department of Defense, so we don't have to do anything else.

Again, we have to fund the FBI, we have to fund Homeland Security, and we have to fund a vigorous State Department. All of those agencies, if we do nothing on BCA, will see sequestration arise, diminish their capacity, and in some way diminish our national security.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, today, in about half an hour, the Senate will vote on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016, and I hope that an overwhelming majority of my colleagues will understand the importance of this legislation in these very turbulent and difficult times.

The Constitution gives the Congress the power and the responsibility to provide for the common defense, raise and support armies, provide and maintain a navy, and make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces. For 53 years, Congress has fulfilled its most important constitutional duties by passing the National Defense Authorization Act.

It is precisely because of this legislation's critical importance to our national security that it is still one of the few bills in Congress that enjoys bipartisan support year after year.

Indeed, this year's NDAA has been supported by Senators on both sides of the aisle. The Senate Committee on Armed Services overwhelmingly approved the NDAA in a 22-to-4 vote back in May. The full Senate followed by passing the NDAA in a partisan vote of 71 to 25.

In recent weeks, some of my Democratic colleagues and the President have threatened to block this legislation because of disagreements about broader spending issues that are totally unrelated to defense and totally unrelated to authorizing. Everything to do with their problems has to do with appropriations spending, not authorization.

The President made it clear that he will ''not fix defense without fixing nondefense spending.'' In this day of multiple crises around the world—as these crises and wars and conflicts and refugees unfold—the President's priority seems to be the funding mechanism, which has nothing to do with the defense authorization.

Henry Kissinger, as well as many of our most respected national security leaders, has called it the most diverse and complex array of crises around the world since the end of World War II, and there are more refugees in the world than at any time since World War II.

The President is threatening to veto this legislation, which contains vital authorities—not just authorities but the ability of our men and women who are serving in uniform to defend this Nation—so he can prove a political point. The President is threatening to veto this bill to defend the Nation in order to prove a political point.

As I mentioned, the threats we confront today are far more serious than they were a year ago and significantly more so than when the Congress passed the Budget Control Act in 2011. That legislation arbitrarily capped defense spending and established the mindless mechanism of sequestration. As a result, with worldwide threats rising, we as a nation are on a course to cut nearly $1 trillion of defense spending over 10 years with no strategic or military rationale whatsoever for doing so.

Every single military and national security leader who has testified before the Committee on Armed Services this year has denounced sequestration and urged its repeal as soon as possible. Indeed, each of our military service chiefs testified that continued defense spending at sequestration levels would put American lives at risk—I repeat: would put American lives at risk.

Unfortunately, the Defense bill does not end sequestration. Believe me, if the Defense bill were capable of that, I would have done all in my power to make it happen. But the simple reality is that this legislation cannot end sequestration and it cannot fix the Budget Control Act.

This legislation does not spend a dollar. It is not an appropriations bill; it is a policy bill. It provides the Department of Defense and our men and women in uniform with the authorities and support they need to defend the Nation.

This legislation fully supports Presidents Obama's request of $612 billion for national defense. Let me repeat that. The legislation gives the President every dollar of budget authority he requested. Yet the President and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are threatening to oppose this bill because it authorizes—not spends—$38 billion in funding for readiness and training of our troops in the overseas contingency operations, known as the OCO account.

Democrats believe that by placing these funds in the OCO account, the legislation would minimize the harm sequestration would do to our military but fail to do the same for domestic spending programs. This complaint fails to understand a basic fact: The only legislation that can stop sequestration, whether for defense or nondefense, is an appropriations bill. In fact, Republicans and Democrats are engaged right now in negotiations to find a bipartisan budget deal that would provide sequestration relief. I hope they succeed. But the idea that the precise location in the NDAA of certain funds for our troops will have any impact on the substance or outcome of these negotiations is ludicrous.

The choice we faced was between OCO money and no money. When I have asked senior military leaders before the Armed Services Committee which of those options they would choose, they have said they would take the OCO. So do I.

With global threats rising, it simply makes no sense to oppose a defense policy bill—legislation that spends no money but is full of vital authorities that our troops need and need badly—for a reason that has nothing to do with national defense spending, and it certainly makes no sense when the negotiations that matter to fixing sequestration are happening right now. That is where the President and Senate Democrats should be focusing their energy, not on blocking the Defense bill and denying our men and women in uniform the authorities and support they need to defend the Nation. Unfortunately, that has not been the case. In fact, the White House has doubled down and vowed that the President will veto this legislation.

So let's be clear. The President isn't threatening to veto because of the existence of an overseas contingency account, which the Pentagon has been using for years—for years—to fund everything from readiness and training for our troops to Israeli missile defense, all without a word of protest from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle or a veto threat from the President. This veto threat is about one thing and one thing only, and that is one word: politics.

The President wants to take a stand for greater domestic spending, and he wants to use the vital authorities and support the men and women in uniform need to defend the Nation as leverage. At a time of increasing threats to our Nation, this is foolish, misguided, cynical, and dangerous. Vetoing this legislation will not solve the spending debate happening right now in Washington. That is something which can only be done through the appropriations process—not a defense authorization bill, not a defense policy bill. Vetoing the NDAA will not solve sequestration. Vetoing the NDAA will not solve the Budget Control Act. Rather than fixing the Budget Control Act, vetoing the NDAA would repeat its original sin by continuing the disturbing trend of holding our military men and women hostage to the whims of our dysfunctional politics.

So let's be absolutely clear on what a vote against or a veto of this legislation really means. This is what it really means, my friends. If you say no, you will be saying no to urgent steps to address critical shortfalls in fighter aircraft across our military. You will block 12 F–18 Super Hornets for the Navy and 6 F–35Bs for the Marine Corps.

If you say no, you will be saying no to $1 billion in accelerated Navy shipbuilding, including an additional Arleigh Burke-class destroyer.

If you say no, you will be saying no to upgrades to Army combat vehicles deploying to Europe to deter Russian aggression against our allies.

If you say no to this legislation, you will be saying no to $200 million to strengthen our cyber defenses as China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea attack our government and our companies relentlessly and with impunity.

If you say no to the NDAA, you will be saying no to significant steps to improve the quality of life of the men and women serving in the All-Volunteer Force and the needs of our wounded, ill, and injured servicemembers.

If you say no to the NDAA, you will be saying no to over 30 special pays and bonuses that are vital to recruiting and retaining military doctors, nurses, nuclear engineers, and language experts.

If you say no to the NDAA, you will be saying no to greater access to urgent care facilities for military families and steps taken in the bill to make military health care plans more portable.

If you say no to the NDAA, you will be saying no to making it easier for our veterans to get the medicines they need. You will be saying no to the provision in this legislation that would ensure that servicemembers are able to get the same medicines for pain and other conditions when they transition from the Department of Defense to the Veterans' Administration.

If you say no to the NDAA, you will be saying no to new steps to improve sexual assault prevention and response. You will be saying no to additional tools to enhance support of victims of sexual assault, including needed protections to end retaliation against those who report sex-related offenses or who intervene to support victims. You will be saying no to provisions that strengthen and protect the authority and independence of the special victims' counsel for sexual abuse.

If you say no to the NDAA, you will be saying no to some of the most significant reforms to the Department of Defense in a generation. You will be saying no to the modernization of an outdated, 70-year-old military retirement system—a system that excludes 83 percent of all those who serve in the military from receiving any retirement assets whatsoever, including veterans of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, some of whom have served two, three, four tours of duty but left the military with nothing because they retired before reaching 20 years of service.

If you say no to the NDAA, you will be saying no to a modern military retirement system that would extend better, more flexible retirement benefits to more than 80 percent of servicemembers; a system that would give servicemembers the choice to use a portion of their retirement benefits when they leave the military to help them transition to a new career, start a business, buy a home, or send their kids to college; a new system that not only improves life for our servicemembers and future retirees but does so while also saving the taxpayers $12 billion once it is fully implemented.

If you say no to the NDAA, you will also be saying no to the most sweeping reforms to our defense acquisition system in 30 years. You will be saying no to reforms that are essential to preserving our military technological superiority as our adversaries develop and field more advanced weapons. You will be saying no to reforms that would hold Pentagon leaders more accountable for the decisions they make. You will be saying no to reforms that would improve the relationship between the Pentagon and our Nation's innovators, helping to ensure that our military can gain access to the most cutting-edge technologies.

If you say no to the NDAA, you will be saying no to significant reforms to defense management. A ''no'' vote is a vote to stand in the way of important steps to reduce the amount of money the Department of Defense spends on bureaucracy and overhead, even as it cuts Army soldiers, Air Force fighter aircraft, and Navy ships. A ''no'' vote is also a vote to continue a backwards personnel system that judges our Pentagon's civilians not based on their talent but their time served.

If you say no to the NDAA, you will squander a historic opportunity to ban torture once and for all, to achieve a reform that many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle—especially the Senator from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN—have sought for a decade or more: making the Army Field Manual the uniform interrogation standard for the entire U.S. Government. Voting no will squander an opportunity to stand up for the values that Americans have embraced for generations, while still enabling our interrogators to extract critical intelligence from our enemies. By vetoing legislation that bans torture forever, the President would be vetoing his own legacy. Worst of all, if you say no to the NDAA, you are saying no to vital authorities in support that our Armed Forces need to defend our Nation as we confront the most diverse and complex array of crises in over 70 years.

As we speak, there are nearly 10,000 American troops in Afghanistan helping a new Afghan Government to secure the country and defeat our common terrorist enemies. But since President Obama hailed the end of combat operations in Afghanistan last year, ISIL has arrived on the battlefield and Taliban fighters have launched a major offensive to take territory across the country.

So what message would it send if the President and some of my colleagues say no to $3.8 billion for the Afghan Security Forces to fight back against terrorists that wish to destroy the progress achieved at so costly a sacrifice?

In the Asia-Pacific region, China's military buildup continues with a focus on countering and thwarting U.S. power projection. At the same time, China is asserting vast territorial claims in the East and South China Seas. Most recently, China has reclaimed nearly 3,000 acres of land in the South China Sea and is rapidly militarizing these features, building at least three airstrips to support military aircraft. With the addition of surface-to-air missiles and radars, these new land features could enable China to declare and enforce an air defense identification zone in the South China Sea and to hold that vital region at greater risk. Our allies and partners throughout the region are alarmed by China's behavior and are looking to the United States for leadership.

So what message would it send if the President and some of my colleagues say no to $50 million to assist and train our allies in the region to increase maritime security in the maritime domain awareness in the South China Sea?

Last year, Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea forced us to recognize that we are confronting a challenge that many had assumed was resigned to the history books—a strong, militarily-capable Russia that is hostile to our interests and our values and seeks to challenge the international order that American leaders of both parties have sought to maintain since the end of World War II. Russia continues to destabilize Ukraine and menace our NATO allies in Europe with aggressive military behavior. And now, in a profound echo of the Cold War, Mr. Putin has deployed troops and tanks and combat aircraft to Syria, and they are conducting operations as we speak to shore up the Assad regime—the Assad regime—which has slaughtered 240,000 of its citizens and driven millions into refugee status. And who are Mr. Putin's forces bombing most of all? ISIL? No. Moderate opposition groups backed, trained, and equipped by the United States of America.

So what message would it send if the President and some of my colleagues say no to $300 million in security assistance for Ukraine to defend its sovereign territory, say no to $400 million in lethality upgrades to U.S. Army combat vehicles deploying to Europe to deter Russian aggression, and say no to $800 million for the President's own European Reassurance Initiative, which seeks to reassure allies of America's commitment to their security and the integrity of the NATO Alliance?

In the Middle East, a terrorist army with tens of thousands of fighters has taken over a vast swath of territory and declared an Islamic State in the heart of one of the most strategically important parts of the world. Yet more than a year after the President declared that we would degrade and destroy ISIL, it appears that nothing we are currently doing is proving sufficient to achieve that strategic objective. The United States and our partners do not have the initiative. ISIL does, and it is capitalizing on our inadequate policy to maintain and enhance our initiative, as they have for the past 4 years. Indeed, the situation on the ground is now taking yet another dramatic turn for the worse, as several recent events have made clear.

So what message would it send if the President and some of my colleagues say no to $1.1 billion of security assistance and cooperation for our allies in the region to help us fight ISIL? What message would it send to our ally Israel to say no to hundreds of millions of dollars of vital support for our common efforts in missile defense and countering terrorist tunnels? These capabilities are more important than ever for Israel and the United States in the wake of the President's nuclear agreement with Iran, and this legislation fully authorizes those programs. Saying no to the NDAA means saying no to this vital security cooperation with Israel.

For 4 years, Bashar al-Assad has waged war on the Syrian people. The United States has stood idly by as well over 230,000 have been killed, 1 million injured, 8 million displaced, and 4 million forced to seek refuge abroad. The Syrian conflict has now created the largest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. Now Russia has stepped in to prop up the murderous regime and kill more Syrians. With Syria descending deeper into chaos, and the world more unstable than ever, what message would it send if the Commander in Chief and some of my colleagues see this as a good time to say no to the National Defense Authorization Act?

This is the same conclusion that some of the major military service organizations have also reached, and they have written open letters to the President urging him not to veto the NDAA. Their message should be heeded by all of my colleagues as we prepare to cast our votes. The Military Officers Association of America wrote:

> [T]he fact is that we are still a nation at war, and this legislation is vital to fulfilling wartime requirements. With multiple contentious issues remaining for Congress to tackle this year, and very little legislative time to complete those crucial actions, this is not the time to add the already extremely daunting burden of legislative challenges by vetoing the defense authorization bill.

The Reserve Officers Association wrote:

> [The NDAA] contains crucial provisions for the military, nation's security, and the welfare of those who serve. [The Reserve Officers Association] has a membership of 50,000 former and currently serving officers and noncommissioned officers [and] represents all the uniformed services of the United States who would be favorably affected by your signing this bill into law.

I also want to read from a recent Washington Post editorial:

> American Presidents rarely veto national defense authorization bills, since they are, well, vital to national security. . . . Refusing to sign this bill would make history, but not in a good way. Mr. Obama should let it become law and seek other sources of leverage in pursuing his legitimate goals for domestic sequestration relief.

Time and again, President Obama has failed to do the right thing when it

could matter most—in Afghanistan, in the Pacific, in Ukraine, in Iraq, and in Syria. Vetoing the NDAA would be yet another of these failures, and it would be reminiscent of a bygone day, when the fecklessness of those days were so accurately described by Winston Churchill. On the floor of the House of Commons, he said:

> When the situation was manageable it was neglected, and now that it is thoroughly out of hand we apply too late the remedies which then might have effected a cure. There is nothing new in the story. It is as old as the sibylline books. It falls into that long, dismal catalogue of the fruitlessness of experience and the confirmed unteachability of mankind. Want of foresight, unwillingness to act when action would be simple and effective, lack of clear thinking, confusion of counsel until the emergency comes, until self-preservation strikes its jarring gong—these are the features which constitute the endless repetition of history.

My colleagues, for 53 years Congress has passed a National Defense Authorization Act, and at perhaps no time in the past half century has this legislation been more important. Everywhere we look around the world there are reminders of exactly why we need this National Defense Authorization Act. I understand the deeply held beliefs of many of my colleagues about the spending issues that have divided the Congress for the last 4 years. But this is not a spending bill. It is a policy bill. It is a reform bill. It is a bill that accomplishes what the Constitution demands of us and what the American people expect of us. It is a bill that gives our men and women in uniform, many of whom are still in harm's way around the world today, the vital authorities and support they need to defend our Nation. And it is a bill that deserves the support of the Senate.

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

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the bill before us is not fiscally responsible. Our troops deserve real funding, not budget gimmickry. This bill does not do the job. My Republican friends like to talk about the deficit and the debt and the need to get our fiscal house in order, but their actions speak louder than their words. Now they are supporting legislation that increases deficit spending and increases the burden on our children and grandchildren. As a result, this bill violates the budget law.

Mr. President, I raise a point of order that the pending measure violates section 3101 of S. Con. Res. 11, the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2016.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, pursuant to section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and the waiver provisions of applicable budget resolutions, I move to waive all applicable sections of that act and applicable budget resolutions for purposes of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1735, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

The question is on agreeing to the motion to waive.

The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 71, nays 26, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 276 Leg.]

YEAS—71

Alexander	Feinstein	Murkowski
Ayotte	Fischer	Murphy
Barrasso	Flake	Murray
Bennet	Gardner	Perdue
Blumenthal	Grassley	Peters
Blunt	Hatch	Portman
Boozman	Heinrich	Risch
Burr	Heitkamp	Rounds
Cantwell	Heller	Sasse
Capito	Hoeven	Scott
Casey	Inhofe	Sessions
Cassidy	Isakson	Shaheen
Coats	Johnson	Shelby
Cochran	Kaine	Stabenow
Collins	King	Sullivan
Corker	Kirk	Tester
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Thune
Cotton	Lankford	Tillis
Crapo	Lee	Toomey
Cruz	McCain	Udall
Daines	McCaskill	Vitter
Donnelly	McConnell	Warner
Enzi	Menendez	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	

NAYS—26

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Reid
Boxer	Leahy	Sanders
Brown	Manchin	Schatz
Cardin	Markey	Schumer
Carper	Merkley	Warren
Coons	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Durbin	Nelson	Wyden
Franken	Paul	

NOT VOTING—3

Graham	Roberts	Rubio

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 71, the nays are 26.

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

The question occurs on adoption of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1735.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

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

The result was announced—yeas 70, nays 27, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 277 Leg.]

YEAS—70

Alexander	Fischer	Murphy
Ayotte	Flake	Murray
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Bennet	Grassley	Peters
Blumenthal	Hatch	Portman
Blunt	Heinrich	Risch
Boozman	Heitkamp	Rounds
Burr	Heller	Sasse
Cantwell	Hoeven	Scott
Capito	Inhofe	Sessions
Casey	Isakson	Shaheen
Cassidy	Johnson	Shelby
Coats	Kaine	Stabenow
Cochran	King	Sullivan
Collins	Kirk	Tester
Corker	Klobuchar	Thune
Cornyn	Lankford	Tillis
Cotton	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	McCain	Udall
Daines	McCaskill	Vitter
Donnelly	McConnell	Warner
Enzi	Menendez	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	
Feinstein	Murkowski	

NAYS—27

Baldwin	Franken	Paul
Booker	Gillibrand	Reed
Boxer	Hirono	Reid
Brown	Leahy	Sanders
Cardin	Manchin	Schatz
Carper	Markey	Schumer
Coons	Merkley	Warren
Cruz	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Durbin	Nelson	Wyden

NOT VOTING—3

Graham	Roberts	Rubio

The conference report was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 96, H.R. 2028.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

> Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 96, H.R. 2028, a bill making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

The Senator from Utah.

TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the recent developments in U.S. trade policy and their implications for the future. Over this past weekend, officials from the Obama administration, along with 11 other countries, reached what they believed will be the final agreement on the terms of the Trans-Pacific Partnership or TPP.

If enacted, the TPP would be the largest trade agreement in history, encompassing approximately and roughly 40 percent of the world economy and setting standards for one of the most dynamic parts of the world, the Asia-Pacific.

I will repeat what I have said many times before. I believe a strong TPP agreement is essential for advancing our Nation's economic and strategic interests in the Asia-Pacific region. However, while I have often touted the potential benefits of the TPP, I have also been very clear that I will not support just any TPP agreement. The United States has only one chance to negotiate, consider, and implement the TPP. We have to get it right. Under our system of government, both the executive and legislative branches play essential roles in developing and implementing our trade policy.

While the administration has the power to reach agreements with other countries, no such agreement can go into force without Congress's approval. Congress is not just a rubberstamp in this process. We have an obligation to evaluate every trade agreement and determine if it advances our Nation's interests and serves the needs of our constituents. Toward that end, as I continue to review the deal that was struck in Atlanta, three important considerations will determine whether I can support this agreement.

First, the deal must be balanced to meet the U.S. negotiating objectives established under our trade promotion authority or TPA statute which Congress passed earlier this year with strong bipartisan majorities in both the House and the Senate. Second, I must have confidence that our trading partners will actually live up to the commitments they have made under the agreement by implementing the terms and obligations included in the deal. Third, the agreement must be subjected to a thorough and rigorous congressional review, including in-depth consultation with the administration.

Before I talk about these factors in more detail, I want to acknowledge the many years of hard work officials in the administration, particularly those at the office of the U.S. Trade Representative, have put in to get the agreement this far. I particularly want to acknowledge the hard work of the lead negotiators at USTR who have sacrificed for years to bring this agreement to conclusion. I also want to acknowledge that over time they made a great deal of progress on a variety of fronts, but now that the administration says it has reached an agreement, it is time for Congress to intensify its review of TPP.

The primary standards by which I—and I would hope all of my colleagues—will judge this trade agreement are set forth clearly in our TPA statute. As one of the original authors of the current TPA law, I worked hard to ensure that it did not just represent my priorities for trade agreements but those of a bipartisan majority in both the House and the Senate.

The congressional negotiating objectives that we included in the statute spell out in detail what must be included in a trade agreement in order for it to get Congress's approval. The negotiating objectives we included in our TPA law are not just pro forma, they are not suggestions or mere statements of Members' preferences. They represent the view of the bipartisan majority in Congress as to the rights and obligations a trade agreement must contain when it is finalized and submitted for our consideration.

I have to say no one in Congress worked harder and longer than I did to get that TPA bill across the finish line. I was joined by many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who put in significant time and effort as we drafted the bill, got it through the committee, and passed it on the floor. In fact, if you will recall, in the Senate we ended up having to pass it twice.

Since the day we passed the bill, I, as well as many of my colleagues in both the House and Senate, have been urging officials and the administration to do all they can to conclude a TPP agreement that a majority in Congress can support. Unfortunately, when we look at some of the outcomes of the final round of negotiations, it is not clear if the administration achieved that goal.

For example, it is not immediately apparent whether the agreement contains administrable and enforceable provisions to protect intellectual property rights similar to those found in U.S. law. As you will recall, this was a key negotiating objective that we included in our TPA law and a necessary component if we want our trade agreements to advance our Nation's interests in the 21st century economy.

I have serious concerns as to whether the administration did enough to accomplish this objective. This is particularly true with the provisions that govern data exclusivity for biologics. As you know, biologics are formulas that are on the cutting edge of medicine and have transformed major elements of the health care landscape, thanks in large part to the effort and investment of American companies. I might add, it is one of the principal industries where we might not only be able to find treatments but also cures. It is one of the three or four things that I think can bring down health care costs immeasurably.

I am not one to argue that parties to a negotiation should refuse to compromise. In fact, I have come to the floor many times over the years and espoused, sometimes at great lengths, the merits of being able to find a compromise. But—and this is an important point—a good compromise usually results in something of greater overall value for all the parties involved, and, at least according to the information now available, it is unclear whether this administration achieved that kind of an outcome for American innovators.

Aside from biologics, there are other elements that, according to initial reports, may have fallen short of Congress's negotiating standards. For example, there are issues with some of the market-access provisions on agriculture, the inclusion of product—and sector-specific carveouts from some of the obligations, as well as some potential of overreaching on labor commitments. While we can't make final determinations on any of these issues without seeing the final text of the agreement, initial indications are that these items could be problematic when the agreement is submitted to Congress for approval.

In the end, Congress will need to take a good look at the entire agreement and judge whether the agreement satisfies the standards we have put forward in our TPA law.

Beyond the negotiating objectives, we need to have confidence that key elements of a TPP agreement will be implemented and respected by our trading partners. There are a number of important elements to consider when we talk about enforcement and implementation but, for now, I will speak once again about the intellectual property rights.

For too long—indeed, for decades now—American innovators and investors haven't been able to take full advantage of our trade agreements because, quite simply, many of our trading partners either refuse to enforce intellectual property obligations or fail to implement them all together. All too often, this administration has looked the other way as other countries steal U.S. innovation and intellectual property.

If countries want to trade with the United States, we should demand that they respect and enforce the intellectual property rights of American businesses and individuals. That means including strong provisions protecting intellectual property in our trade agreements and a requirement that intellectual property rights commitments be implemented before allowing the agreement to enter into force for our trading partners.

Unfortunately, implementation of these types of commitments is one area where this administration has come up short in the past. Before Congress can approve an agreement as vast as the TPP, we need to be sure this has changed. We need to have detailed assurances that our trading partners will live up to all of their commitments and a clear roadmap as to how the administration intends to hold them accountable.

Finally, I expect that pursuant to both the letter and the spirit of TPA, the administration will communicate and work closely with Congress over the coming weeks and months. In the short term, that means deep and meaningful consultations before the President signs the agreement.

Under our TPA law, the President must inform Congress of his intent to sign an agreement at least 90 days before doing so. This period is an essential part of congressional consideration of the deal. Congress reserved this time in the statute to ensure that we would have ample opportunity to review the content of a trade agreement before it is signed by the President.

In order for that review to take place, Congress must have access to the full text of the agreement, including annexes and any side agreements, before the President provides his 90-day notice. This is a vital element of TPA. The law was designed specifically to give Congress all the necessary tools to conduct an exhaustive evaluation of any and all trade agreements and to ensure that the administration is fully accountable both to Congress and to the public.

There are a number of provisions and timelines in the law that help us achieve these goals. I will not list them all on the floor today. Instead, I will just say that I expect the full cooperation of the administration in meeting all of these mandates.

The American people demand no less. There are no shortcuts. Let's be clear. Our Nation could clearly benefit from a strong TPP agreement, and I hope that in the end that is what we get—and these other nations can too. In the end, I hope this agreement meets all of these challenges that we have thrown out.

Unfortunately, I have real reservations as to whether the agreement reached over the past weekend meets the high standards set by Congress. I will not make a definitive statement on the overall merits of the agreement until I have a chance to review it in its entirety. For now, I will just say that I am worried. I am worried that we didn't get as good a deal as we could have. I am worried that the administration didn't achieve a balanced outcome covering the congressional negotiating objectives set out in TPA. And, ultimately, I am worried there won't be enough support in Congress for this agreement and that our country will end up missing out on important opportunities.

I hope I am wrong. I will continually scrutinize this agreement as details emerge. Before I can support the TPP deal struck in Atlanta, I must be convinced that the TPP is a balanced agreement that complies with the TPA law and that it has clear, implementable rules that our trading partners will follow.

The TPP is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to define high-standard rules for the Asia-Pacific and to gain real access to overseas markets that our businesses and our workers need. I intend to do all I can to ensure that the agreement meets these goals.

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

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I am pleased to come to the floor today to express my support for the final conference report on the National Defense Authorization Act, what we need to do as a Congress to authorize the work that can be done to defend the country. I urge the President to sign this bill.

For 54 straight years the Senate has done its job in authorizing the things that need to be done to defend the country. We have passed the bill. This fulfills part of that responsibility to defend the country. It is the first responsibility of the Federal Government to defend the country. This is something that can't be better done somewhere else. It is something that has to be done by us, and two things have to happen for that to be done. We have to authorize the spending in the way this bill does and then we have to appropriate the money once that spending has been authorized.

The majority voted several weeks ago to debate the appropriating bill, but we couldn't get even six Democrats to join us to debate that bill. Well, now this bill has passed. So maybe the next move is to pass the bill that funds what has just been authorized. It has passed the House, it has passed the Senate, and the Commander in Chief of the United States is saying he would veto the National Defense Authorization Act?

The President apparently believes the defense of the country is a legitimate bargaining chip in how we spend all other money. The President somehow has latched onto this idea that he proposed a few years ago that all spending be equal, that you take all of the discretionary spending in the country and half of that would be for defense and half of that would be for everything else that is discretionary—an increasingly small part of the budget, because mandatory spending is what continues to grow. The discretionary spending, the spending that people think about when they think about the Federal Government, gets smaller every year.

But even with that challenge in front of us, the President apparently has the position that no matter how dangerous the world is, no matter what is happening in Ukraine or no matter what is happening in Crimea, no matter what is happening in Syria, no matter what is happening in response to the Iranian agreement, you have to have more money for everything else if you are going to have more money for defense. Somehow more money for the EPA and more money for the IRS are equal to the responsibility that the Federal Government has to defend the country.

We saw a little of that, again, just a few weeks ago when the appropriators brought the Defense appropriations bill to the floor with a vote of 23 to 7. That means many Democrats and many Republicans voted for that bill, but when we got it to the floor, we couldn't get the number it took to bring it up.

This bill, the authorizing bill, just passed the Senate with 70 votes. It passed the House with 270 votes. This bill fully supports the number the President said we needed to defend the country. This is like not taking yes for an answer. When the President says this is how much money we need to defend the country, the Congress appropriates the money the President says we need to defend the country, and then the President says: Well, but we need a lot of money for a lot of other things too, and I am only going to be for what I was for—this is the President's number—the amount of money I was for to defend the country if I get the amount of money I want to do everything else.

That is not a very good formula for either democracy or making the system work. This has the base funding for the Department of Defense. It has the defense funding and the national security funding for the Department of Energy. It has money involved for the overseas contingency fund that was created for when things are happening outside of the country that we didn't anticipate. And surely that is the case.

The President was just saying 3 years ago that the Russians weren't a problem. That was a Cold War idea that the Russians could be a problem. He was saying 3 years or 4 years ago that Assad must go.

Clearly, things are not working out as we thought. So it is probably time to use the overseas contingency fund, as this does. This provides money for the intelligence-related programs. I am on the Senate committee that the CIA, the Director of National Intelligence, and others report to. They are publicly not at all shy about saying that more things are coming at the country from more different directions with more potential danger than ever before and so they need to be funded. The activities have stressed those agencies in a lot of ways, but another way you can stress them is not to let them know whether they are going to have the money necessary to do their job.

Our allies are constantly confused by the lack of resolve on our part. In fact, when you are looking at this from some other country and you say that the President got the amount of money he wanted in a defense bill that met the needs that the President proposed, but he doesn't want to sign the authorization bill now because he is not happy with all the other spending, that is a pretty confusing message.

It is like the confusing message when the President draws a redline in Syria but it doesn't mean anything. But when you don't enforce the redline, then not just Assad is emboldened but all of our adversaries are determined at that point that there may be new ways

to test the United States and its allies they hadn't thought of before. So, before you know it, the Russians are in Crimea, the Russians are in Ukraine, and now the Russians are in Syria. What we are watching unfold in Syria—and I would want to emphasize ''watching unfold'' as if we were spectators in an area of the world that since World War II the United States of America has done what was necessary to see that there wasn't a Russian presence there—is clearly the result of a strategy that is confusing, but it is also pretty darn confusing when the President says he is going to veto the Defense authorization bill.

We see China moving in the South China Sea in ways that we wouldn't have anticipated, taking a 5-acre island and turning it into a 3,000-acre military base.

We see Iran spreading its bad influence with the new resources that it now has.

When the United States leaves a leadership vacuum in the world today, bad things rush to fill that vacuum. And when that happens—when there is less U.S. leadership, when there is less U.S. presence, when there is less positive U.S. encouragement in the world—that almost always produces the wrong kinds of results, and it almost always produces hasty decisions that cost America more in lives and international respect than we would have had otherwise.

The President can take a positive step here by just saying: OK. I am going to sign this bill because 70 Senators and 270 House Members voted for this bill. If the President wants to have a fight, there is still a fight to be had. We shouldn't be having a fight about authorizing the money that would then be appropriated, but there is still a fight to be had because, remember, this bill doesn't spend one dime. It just creates the authorization to spend money if that money is appropriated.

This is a good bill. It is a responsible bill. It eliminates waste and unnecessary spending. It trims down bloated headquarters and administrative overhead at the highest levels of the military so that more money goes to the places where the fight is and more money goes to the families and the troops that defend us. It contains the most sweeping defense acquisition reforms in a generation. It helps sustain the quality of life for the people who serve and their families.

By the way, yesterday I introduced a bill along with Senator GILLIBRAND—a bill that focuses on family stability. When we were doing that, I was able to quote the recently retired Chief of Staff of the Army, General Odierno, who said the strength of the military is in the families of the military.

This bill does things that move in the right direction. It authorizes a pay raise for those people serving below the grade of colonel. It requires the Department of Defense and the Veterans' Administration to establish a joint uniform formulary to ensure our troops have timely access to the medicines they need.

The bill authorizes commonsense reforms in a 70-year-old, outdated retirement system. Currently, 83 percent of the people who serve in the military don't benefit from the retirement system. If this bill would pass, servicemembers exiting the military have more choices, resulting in about 80 percent of the people who leave the military getting a retirement benefit instead of 80 percent not getting a retirement benefit.

The bill keeps in place restrictions that bring detainees to Guantanamo and keep them there. It prohibits the transfer of Guantanamo detainees to places such as Yemen, Libya, Syria and Somalia. Six and a half years after taking office, the President has never produced a plan to close Guantanamo. The Congress and the chairman of the Senate Committee on Armed Services are still waiting to hear what his plan might be. As terrorism spreads across the globe, we also don't appear to have a plan to do what needs to be done with the law of war detainees that are brought under our control and the control of our allies around the country.

The challenges faced by the intelligence community are unlike any past challenges we have seen—cyber security, maybe it is more cyber insecurity than cyber security—from defending the critical infrastructure of the country to too much information on too many people in too many places. Previously, people who wanted to get our information had to be pretty close and were likely to be detectable. Now our adversaries can be in the middle of the desert, somewhere in Syria or anywhere around the world, using satellite technology to hack into us—as it turned out recently our U.S. Government personnel records. One has to hope the military, the dot-mil, is more secure than the dot-gov, but that doesn't happen if we don't provide the money.

There are a number of priorities in my State that are reflected in this. We have a great training base at St. Joseph, MO, where C–130 aircraft pilots from all over our country and from 16 of our allied countries trained last year. This bill would provide the aircraft upgrades for that C–130 training.

It provides the necessary resources for geospatial intelligence activities in the country.

The bill includes military construction funding for a new consolidated nuclear stealth and deterrence facility at Whiteman Air Force Base. Missouri is proud to have Whiteman Air Force Base as the home of the B–2 bomber, the stealth bomber system, where dedicated airmen stand by at a moment's notice to let our allies know we can reach anywhere, anytime from that base, and they are unlikely to know we are there until we get there.

Finally, this bill includes critical funding to keep the Army ready, equipped, and trained. At Fort Leonard Wood the Army trains approximately 80,000 soldiers every year. While I was disappointed with the announced reductions at Fort Leonard Wood, which are scheduled to occur in 2017, the number of uniformed positions at that installation will still be higher than they were in 2001. The Army's decision to minimize reductions at Fort Leonard Wood was a decision that I think anybody who understands the Fort would agree with.

In summary, I want to say to the President of the United States that this bill provides for our common defense. That is his No. 1 responsibility as Commander in Chief. Blocking this bill will keep us less safe and less secure. So Mr. President, sign this bill.

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. LANKFORD. 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. LANKFORD. Mr. President, it is not uncommon for me when I am at home in Oklahoma to have a mom approach me at a townhall meeting or in conversations or even at a store or restaurant. What she will want to talk to me about is very interesting. Almost always the moms who approach me lately want to talk to me about national security. They want to talk to me about the fear they have that the world is spinning out of control, and they are very concerned about their kids. They are concerned about terrorism coming to the United States. With a lot of moms in Oklahoma, there is a sense of a loss of trust that this is a safe world and a safe place.

I can't say that is isolated. As I have talked to other Members in this body, I seem to find the same theme coming up over and over again. As I talk to people at home, they want to know: Is the American government performing its primary responsibility of maintaining security and protecting American citizens around the world?

I would love to be able to tell them yes, but quite frankly this has become a very chaotic world, and the challenges we face need clear messaging about what we plan to do and our intent to actually follow up on that plan. We need to have a national policy plan for defense, and then we need to follow through on that.

That seems straightforward and simple. Well, the national defense authorization is one of those areas where Congress and the President have for decades agreed on a national policy for defense. They have laid out that perspective, and then it is the President's responsibility as Commander in Chief to fulfill. That is the primary responsibility of the U.S. Government. The

challenge is, our world is in utter turmoil and that primary responsibility is not being fulfilled.

Passage today of the National Defense Authorization Act by 70 to 27—which is a rare vote in the Senate, to have that much bipartisan agreement on something—is a significant next step. It has passed the House already, it has now passed the Senate with a veto-proof majority, and it is headed to the President's desk, and he has threatened a veto, of all things, for a national plan for defense.

There is a sentiment, an emotion from Americans: Please get a clear national policy. We feel like the world is on fire, and somebody needs to provide a clear path. That is what this is, and I am astounded by the conversation about a possible veto threat from the President of the United States, even when it passes the Senate by a veto-proof majority.

Where are we and what is really going on right now? Let's take a look at the world and what is happening in real time. The Middle East is absolutely rocked to its core with violence, and there is this perception that the United States is disconnected from it. I would say that is untrue. We are just not providing clarity in the plan.

At a time when we have men and women in harm's way across the entire Middle East, I am astounded that the President is talking about a veto, which will provide even more instability. Let me give an example. When I talk about men and women in harm's way, there are many Americans who don't hear about the ongoing battle happening now in Iraq and Syria and how our sons and daughters are already very engaged in what is happening there. There is this belief—I believe fostered by the President—that we are really not there because we never talk about it.

So let's talk about yesterday. This is yesterday over Iraq and Syria and what happened. Near Abu Kamal, there were three strikes from the Americans on two separate ISIL crude oil collection points. That was in Syria yesterday. In Iraq, one strike destroyed two ISIL rocket rails. Near Kirkuk, two strikes struck two separate ISIL tactical units and destroyed two ISIL heavy machine guns and an ISIL fighting position. Near Kisik, three strikes suppressed two ISIL rocket positions, an ISIL mortar position, and an ISIL sniper position. Near Makhmur, one strike suppressed an ISIL heavy machine gun position. Near Mosul, three strikes struck an ISIL tactical unit and destroyed three ISIL heavy machine guns and three ISIL fighting positions and suppressed an ISIL rocket position and an ISIL mortar position. Near Ramadi, five strikes struck four separate ISIL tactical units and destroyed three ISIL fighting positions, three ISIL weapons caches, two ISIL buildings, an ISIL bunker, and denied ISIL access to terrain they were pursuing. Near Sinjar, one strike struck an ISIL tactical unit and destroyed an ISIL heavy machine gun and two ISIL fighting positions. Near Sultan Abdallah, one strike suppressed an ISIL rocket position. Near Tal Afar, two strikes destroyed an ISIL fighting position, an ISIL trench, and an ISIL berm, and suppressed an ISIL mortar position. Near Tikrit, one strike destroyed four ISIL obstacles. That was yesterday.

Americans have this belief that we are disconnected. We are a nation that is engaged, but the challenge is that there is no clear plan, there is no end game that is being laid out. In a moment when we have this many strikes that are happening in Syria and in Iraq—and I can go on and on about what is happening with our Special Forces in Afghanistan and across the rest of the region, as I will describe in a moment, but at this moment, with this going on, the President is going to veto a national defense authorization with this kind of bipartisan support, when the whole Nation is saying: Give us a plan because we feel insecure.

Currently, we are trying and failing to train and equip moderate opposition forces against ISIL in Syria. Currently, we are trying to give Kurds all the equipment they need to hold the line against ISIL. There are millions of displaced people who are fleeing across Europe, who are trying to find some place of respite.

In Yemen, we are supporting the Saudi-led coalition as the Iranians are causing a coup to become a reality in Yemen by the Houthi rebels.

In Libya, there is still an unbelievable vacuum left by the incomplete campaign, which resulted in ISIS getting a foothold in Libya and a bloody civil war in a very divided Libya. They have not been able to form a central government in several years now.

Egypt is facing a growing terrorist threat in Sinai. There are all kinds of tit-for-tat violence happening right now in Israel between the Palestinians and Israelis.

In Africa, we are still hunting Joseph Kony—a despicable madman—but with no success. AFRICOM is also trying to assist forces working to kick al-Shabaab out of Somalia. Bloody sectarian violence is breaking out in the Central African Republic. South Sudan has an extremely fragile peace agreement. Boko Haram continues to rapidly grow in West Africa.

In Mexico and other parts of Latin America, drug thugs are running rampant, and they are pushing drugs into the United States in record amounts, destabilizing many of our cities.

In Afghanistan, a new offensive by the Taliban threatens to roll back the progress we have made.

DNI Clapper testified that the world is still facing an emerging and rapidly growing cyber threat. It is not just a cyber threat to the American Government, it is a threat to every American citizen, as many American citizens have personally experienced in recent days.

Let's look to the future and some of the plans that are ongoing.

Iran. We heard from Secretary Kerry and this administration that a nuclear deal with Iran would lead to a more peaceful Middle East. Since the agreement was announced, we have seen Iran continue to arm the Houthi rebels in Yemen, continue to support Hezbollah and their expansion, and continue to aggressively prop up the Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad. Some of us have stated quite blatantly our suspicion that this deal would make the region less stable. Indeed, in just 5 years Iran could begin importing large amounts of conventional weapons under this deal. So an Iran that is already supporting large amounts of terrorism will only become better equipped in the days to come.

China. They had a state visit here recently with lots of broad promises about cooperation. Meanwhile, we know that much of the cyber threat emanates from China. They are building islands in disputed waters—airfields capable of hosting military assets there. They are beginning to build a world-class navy that could threaten our closest allies in the region. China continues to be one of the world's leaders in human rights violations.

Russia. We have heard several of our top military commanders say there is a long list of threats, but the threat they are most concerned about is a growing Russia. Putin walked into Crimea, and the world watched. He continues to threaten eastern Ukraine, and the world watches. He is now expanding Russian adventures into the Middle East, supporting Iranian-backed Bashar al-Assad in Syria, and attacking the moderate opposition forces attempting to defend their own families. This is not a new vanguard against terrorism; this is an expansion of the ''Russian Bear.''

So what are we doing about it? We are trying to actually put out a clear plan. Where are we going in national defense? What are we going to do to stop terrorism and the expansion of terrorists around the world? Instead of the White House cooperating with us, they are threatening to veto the NDAA. It is unbelievable. It is astounding that the White House is spending more time trying to make a deal with Iran than they are trying to actually support our own military. What does this do? What does this agreement really accomplish?

For those who aren't familiar with the national defense authorization, let me share a few things that are in this national defense authorization that the President is now saying he is going to veto.

Here is one: personal carry of firearms. Post commanders are empowered to permit a member of the Armed Forces to carry appropriate firearms on our posts or bases. After the attack that happened in Chattanooga, this is something the American people have called out for. It is included in this bill, to allow it.

It provides for stronger cyber operations capabilities and looks to safeguard our technological superiority.

It ensures that military intelligence analysis remains a priority at the national level.

The NDAA extends vital authorities for our forces in Afghanistan as we try to deal with what is happening on the ground there. It authorizes the Iran military power report for 10 additional years, reflecting Congress's view that Iran's illicit pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability and its malign military activities constitute a grave threat to regional stability and U.S. national security interests. The NDAA reinforces the mission against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, ISIL.

Congress authorizes through this the European Reassurance Initiative to address Russia's employment of conventional and unconventional warfare methods to counter U.S. and Western interests, whether it be in the Ukraine or across the area—bicameral, bipartisan efforts to provide assistance and sustainment for the military forces in Ukraine.

The NDAA allocates $30 million for DOD-unique capabilities to address the threatening levels of violence, instability, illicit trafficking of drugs, and transnational organized crime in Central America.

Dealing with the Pacific region, this conference remains concerned about America's strategy in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, and the NDAA requires the President to make a clear strategy for this ''pivot to Asia.''

The Defense Department has also placed greater emphasis—under this agreement, the NDAA—on security cooperation with all parts of the world to make sure we have a consistent strategy.

If we want to talk about individual members of the military, this NDAA changes how retirement is done. Now, 83 percent of the individuals who serve in our military don't receive any kind of retirement at the end. This allows those individuals to actually be able to participate in retirement benefits, in their retirement from the military, even if they don't make it all the way to 20 years. This is a dramatic shift not only in supporting the warfighter but in actually setting a strategy for where we need to go to provide some clarity to individuals at home and to our troops in the field.

The President's statement that he is going to veto this has come under two areas. He said he is going to veto this because the funding mechanism comes from the Overseas Contingency Operations Fund, OCO. Because the funding is coming from OCO, he is going to veto it. The second thing he said: I am going to veto it because I don't like what it says about Gitmo—about Guantanamo—and keeping those individuals who are terrorists who have attacked our Nation at Guantanamo.

The ironic part is that when I started to pull this to be able to look at the figures—let me just give the last several years. In 2013, the OCO funding was $89 billion. The President signed that. In 2014, OCO funding was $81 billion. The President signed that. In 2015, OCO funding was $64 billion. The President signed that. This year's OCO funding is $89 billion, which is right there in the same range as the previous 4 years, but this year he is saying: I can't sign it; it has OCO funding. Can somebody tell me the difference on this? This is very similar to what has been done the last 4 years.

His statement about Guantanamo Bay and preventing funding—moving the terrorists from Guantanamo Bay to the United States—I can tell you that in my State people are adamantly opposed to moving the terrorists from Guantanamo Bay to the United States. Going all the way back, let's say, to 2011, that NDAA prevented moving prisoners from Guantanamo; 2012, prevented it; 2013, prevented it; 2014, prevented it; 2015, prevented it. All of those, the President signed, but for some strange reason, this year the President has said: It has OCO funds and it deals with Guantanamo—just like every other year in the past.

This is the season when we need to bring clear voices and a clear mission, not politics. This is the primary mission we have as a federal government: Take care of our national defense and provide a clear messaging.

I am proud of this Senate for finishing the conference report on the NDAA and sending it to the President's desk. Now I would ask the Commander in Chief to stand with the troops, to sign this, and let's get on to providing some clarity in the days ahead.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, first, I want to commend my colleague, my partner on the Senate Intelligence Committee, for his recent remarks delivered here on the floor.

It was our Director of National Intelligence, Admiral Clapper, who said that in all of his 50-plus years of serving in intelligence functions—first in the military and now as the Director of National Intelligence—he has never seen a world so troubled, he has never seen such a proliferation of threats, threats to our way of life, threats to our country, threats to our allies, threats to world order. And my colleague from Oklahoma, Senator LANKFORD, just laid out in specific detail the multitude of threats, the multitude of dysfunction and chaos that exists not just in the Middle East but throughout the world. I won't repeat any of it, but I thank him for bringing attention to the fact that we live in very uncertain times, times which require decisive leadership, and that leadership—over the years and over the centuries, world nations have pointed to the United States as the democratic leadership absolutely necessary to deal with these types of issues and provide directional leadership to our allies and to the world, as well as show strength to our adversaries that has restrained some of their actions. That is missing.

There is a huge void being left by the lack of any kind of sensible policy—if there is a policy at all—coming out of this particular White House and from this President. This vacuum that has been created has allowed the opportunity for those who seek to do us harm, to do others harm, and those who seek to use power to achieve their means—literally, a blank check and a free hand, knowing there is no order here in terms of addressing this in a successful way.

So I thank my colleague for defining this on the floor, and I certainly want to support—and hopefully my colleagues will pay attention to this serious challenge that America faces with the lack of a coherent strategy and lack of decisive leadership that is coming to us from the White House.

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. President, today we face something far less consequential but still consequential from the standpoint that it is a contributor to another major threat that Americans face.

I have been engaged in everything from major programs—done in a bipartisan way, with support from the President, all of which have failed—to address this and bring us to the small, sometimes almost ridiculous and embarrassing, spending that has taken place here for those who are looking at it from bottom up instead of from top down. It is something I have tried to identify every week—now for 23 weeks—called the waste of the week, hopefully it will provide the kind of embarrassment to my colleagues and knowledge of the fact that we simply cannot keep spending money that we do not have.

These waste of the week sums are substantial, into the tens of billions of dollars. Some are there to show the American people or describe to the American people the fact that there is a significant amount of unneeded spending, of waste, fraud, and abuse that occurs on an almost daily basis throughout all of our agencies and throughout Federal spending. People are saying: Given the kind of debt crisis we are looking at, why are we spending hard-earned tax dollars to address this or that or whatever?

Today I want to address one small but yet another example of unnecessary Federal spending, and it involves the role of robots replacing humans for certain functions. Those who have watched ''The Jetsons''—I don't really tune in, but my grandkids do—perhaps wish that they, too, could have a Rosie the maid, the robot that cooks, cleans, and tells jokes to the Jetson family. This obviously is a cartoon presentation, but it reflects a role for robots that provides us interesting entertainment or perhaps the robot from ''Lost in Space'' that played the electric guitar and exhibited human emotion or

Michael Knight's trusted robot sidekick KITT on ''Knight Rider.''

This is a little bit beyond my generation, but I am told robots are now part of the entertainment scene. While this makes for good television and draws viewers, we all know robots can never replace the care of a human being, the care of a parent, the efforts of a teacher, those who are reaching out to provide support and encouragement for young people. Yet the National Science Foundation is currently spending $440,855 trying to do that with robots. The agency recently awarded a taxpayer-funded grant to develop the use of ''autonomous, personalized social robots'' in the classroom.

The first thing that came to my mind was what in the world does a personalized social robot look like and how do you personalize a robot to provide social interaction with children? The purpose of this grant, which began last month and continues until August 2017, is to create robots that can tell stories to children.

This might be a cute thing to do. I don't know. Is this something the Federal Government, at a time when we are in the middle of deficit spending, evermore borrowing, should ask the taxpayer to send out their hard-earned tax dollars for—this kind of thing? If private industry wants to do this and can sell the product to schools, more power to them, but why do we have to go to the Federal Government to do a test case to see if this works? We know we do basic research here. We support that through NIH and the National Science Foundation. This is not basic research. I am questioning this.

Let me quote from the grant description. This will ''offer unique opportunities of guided, personalized and controlled social interaction, whatever that means, during the delivery of a desired curriculum. They can play, learn and engage with children in the real world—physically, socially, and emotively.''

Maybe the effort here is to build a robot that can physically, socially, and emotively connect with children. That might work on ''The Jetsons.'' That might work on television. I can't believe how that works in real life.

What parent wants a preschooler to be read to by a so-called social robot instead of a teacher or a parent? And why are we spending taxpayer dollars on reading robots? Actual human teachers provide what robots cannot. They relate to our children. They understand their individual needs, and they tailor their instruction to bring out the very best in our children and on a personalized basis. I don't think a robot can adjust emotively and socially to different children in the classroom. Yet obviously the teacher is trained to do that.

Even the most advanced robot can't sense when a child is going through a rough time or provide the right touch to ensure a child's learning. Should the Federal Government, which is over $18 trillion in debt, be spending any money, let alone $440,000, on this research? Is this something the private sector could be conducting instead? Certainly, if that is what the goal is.

My purpose throughout the Waste of the Week Initiative is to drive home the point that the Federal Government should be stewarding taxpayers' dollars for essential functions and in a way that truly helps people.

Let me be clear. I am not criticizing all Federal research spending or the National Science Foundation. The government does play an important role, as I have said, in promoting basic science research that cannot be done elsewhere, but there are many private companies that offer products that use technology to help children learn. Is it the role of the government to also perform this sort of research? Just because something is interesting to do doesn't mean it rises to the level of priority, particularly at a time when we are continuing to spend more money and go deeper into debt each and every day.

Families and small businesses have to prioritize all the time. The Federal Government needs to do the same. So let's pull the plug or take out the battery and short circuit this funding for this grant.

Today I am marking more money on our ever-increasing amount of waste, fraud, and abuse. We are adding $440,855 to the nearly $117 billion that over the last 22 weeks we have brought to this floor.

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF CRISPUS ATTUCKS CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. President, while I am here, let me switch and for a couple of minutes speak to something that I think speaks well of our State; that is, celebrating an important anniversary.

In Indiana, few things better personify the Hoosier spirit of hard work and overcoming adversity, persistence, and sportsmanship more than high school basketball. It is rabid in our State, and it always has been. It defines our State.

Every year the high school basketball season culminates in February and March with what we call Hoosier Hysteria—the postseason tournament. Half a century ago, the height of Hoosier Hysteria was before school consolidation and before the advent of class basketball. At that time we had one single athletic class and crowned one high school basketball team State champion each year. For the final game of the tournament, fans would fill Butler University's historic Hinkle Fieldhouse to standing-room-only capacity. Throughout those weeks of tournament, as the small, medium, and large-sized schools worked their way through the system to that championship game, it captured the hearts and minds of Hoosiers in a way that nothing else does.

This phenomena was immortalized by the award-winning 1986 movie ''Hoosiers''—one of my personal favorites—and based on an improbable but true story. Back in the 1950s, hundreds of small high schools existed across our small State, but no small school had ever won the basketball State championship. In 1954, Mylan High School—a rural school with an enrollment of only 161 students in all four grades—faced a much larger school, Muncie Central High School, whose enrollment was 2,200 students in the State championship game. The Mylan Indians defeated the Muncie Central Bearcats to win the State title. It has been immortalized through the movie ''Hoosiers,'' which any Hoosier, and hopefully people outside the State, watched more than once. I watch it on a regular basis. It is a great story.

Even today, Mylan's incredible accomplishment is widely admired and discussed by Hoosier basketball fans. Indiana high school basketball in this era produced not only this ''David and Goliath'' episode but also another truly inspirational team. This is their 60th anniversary.

En route to winning the 1954 State championship, Milan defeated the Crispus Attucks Tigers in the semi-State. That is no small accomplishment. That was a large school with an exceptional team. At that time, Crispus Attucks was an all-Black high school in Indianapolis. Despite their loss to Milan in 1954, the Tigers were back the next year. On March 19, 1955—60 years ago—Crispus Attucks won the State title by defeating Gary Roosevelt High School 97 to 74 in that championship game.

The next year Crispus Attucks went undefeated, riding a 45-winning streak to State title. The Tigers finished the 1950s with a third championship in 1959.

Crispus Attucks High School's 1955 State title was one of several firsts. Not only were they the first team from Indianapolis to win the State title, they were the first African-American school in the Nation to win an open State tournament.

Through the perseverance and leadership of their coach, Ray Crowe, the players learned not just the game of basketball but also valuable lessons about discipline, patience, and perseverance. These lessons resulted in back-to-back State titles, as I have said.

On the court, the Crispus Attucks teams of the mid-1950s were led by a future professional all-star, champion, and Hall of Famer named Oscar Robertson. Oscar Robertson said of those Crispus Attucks teams: ''The way we played and won, we did it with a lot of class.''

The Tigers' success on the basketball court helped tear down many lingering racial barriers of that time. This team inspired the State of Indiana with their hard work, graciousness, and sportsmanship. Today I join my fellow Hoosiers in marking the 60th anniversary of this milestone and honoring this team of champions.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for up to 10 minutes; that following my remarks, Senator SCHATZ be recognized for up to 10 minutes; and that following his remarks, Senator WHITEHOUSE be recognized for up to 10 minutes.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, the evidence and impacts of climate change are clear and they are undeniable. Scientists can measure the increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. They can measure the rising temperatures. They can measure the increasing level of the sea. They can measure the increase in extreme rainfall. All of this increases the risk for extreme weather events that threaten people and the economy. While addressing the challenges of climate change will take a comprehensive approach, we have many of the policies, the workforce, and the technologies we need to address the problem already.

To illustrate that point, I want to tell you a tale of two tax policies—one for wind and solar and one for oil, gas, and coal. Let's look at the last decade of our tale of two tax policies.

In 2005, we, the United States, installed 79 total megawatts of solar in the United States. Seventy-nine megawatts was a teeny amount back in 2005. Last year we deployed nearly 100 times that amount—7,000 new megawatts in the year 2014. Look at that. We have nearly 100 times more solar.

Well, what happened? First, technology costs plummeted. Everybody has heard of a Moore's law for semiconductors. It told us that today's iPhones would be more powerful than last generation's supercomputers. We all know Moore's Law. We knew we would move from this pocket phone to an iPhone because the technology keeps getting more powerful.

There is a Moore's law for solar as well. Every time solar panel deployment doubles globally, the cost of solar falls by 18 percent. It is predictable. It is why we are seeing the cost of a solar panel drop 70 percent since the year 2010, and it is why costs will continue to fall.

Next, 30 States enacted renewable electricity standards. Yes, now more than half of the States in our country have a standard to get a sizable portion of their electricity from renewable sources, and finally, and most importantly from a national policy perspective, we passed an 8-year extension of the Solar Investment Tax Credit in 2008. We gave this industry and these companies certainty. We now have more than 20,000 megawatts of installed solar capacity in the United States. More than 60 percent of it was added in just the last 2 years, and we are projected to double that installed solar capacity over the next 2 years. We are forecast to add 8,000 megawatts this year and 12,000 megawatts next year, and that is because we put smart tax policies on the books 7 years ago.

Look what happened. If we go from the beginning of the American Revolution until 2005, we were still only installing 79 megawatts—just a teeny, tiny amount of solar energy. But when we started putting State renewable electricity standards on the books and a new tax policy, it started to explode 100 times—1,000 times more solar in America, by the way, with all the experts saying: This can't happen. Solar isn't real. Wind isn't real. You Senators, you House Members, you have to get real. Well, this is the proof that bad policies had stopped this explosion of these technologies.

By the way, the same thing is true for wind power. We are projected to add 9,000 new megawatts of wind power in our country this year, and we are projected to add another 8,000 megawatts of wind power next year. We can see what is happening with the combined totals of wind and solar once we put the new policies on the books. It was basically an era where almost no electricity in the United States was generated by wind and solar to the next year having 5 to 6 percent of all the electricity in America coming from wind and solar. It is like the explosion of cellphones that turned into smartphones. People didn't have anything in their pockets just 20 years ago—it was like the wind and solar industry—but we changed policies in the United States. We said: We can do it. We can untether ourselves from a telephone line in our living rooms. We can let people walk around with their phone, and we began to make the same decisions on wind and solar. We can untether ourselves in the United States from coal-generated electricity that emits greenhouse gases that dangerously warm our planet, and we are now doing it. It is accelerating, and that is the beautiful part of the story.

By the end of next year, there are going to be 300,000 people employed in the wind and solar industry in the United States. Right now, there are 73,000 people building these wind turbines. Steel and iron workers are out there doing this work right now, and it generates clean, renewable, nonpolluting energy. We can do this. We are the United States of America. We are the innovation giant on the planet. We can solve this problem.

What has happened with the wind industry? Well, their tax break has now expired. Has the tax break for the oil industry expired? Oh, no. Has the tax break for the coal industry expired? Oh, no.

Those tax breaks have been on the books for 100 years. They will never expire—never. There are too many people who want to help the fossil fuel industry here in the Senate and over in the House of Representatives, but the tax breaks for the wind and solar industry—the ones that are showing the tremendous growth, innovation, and capacity to develop new technologies that we can export around the planet—are expiring.

If we look at the green generation—young people within our society—which technology do they want us to invest in? Do they want black rotary dial phones and coal-burning powerplants or do they want the new technologies of the 21st Century, their generation? Do they want the past dirty carbon pollution or do they want future clean energy? It is not even close. This is a choice that has to be made by this generation. The green generation expects us to be the leaders on this issue.

The oil and gas industry get $7.5 billion a year in tax breaks. The oil industry doesn't need a subsidy to drill for oil any more than a bird needs a subsidy to fly or a fish needs a subsidy to swim. They are going to do it anyway. What they do though is lobby to take away the tax breaks for solar and wind because they know that will displace them. Our goal, of course, should be to have a massive ramping up of these energy technologies.

Do you want to hear an incredible number? The Chinese government, while the Pope was in town here in Washington, announced that China was going to deploy wind and solar and other renewable technologies by the year 2030 that would equal the total of all electrical generation capacity in the United States of America. They are going to deploy all their coal, natural gas, hydropower, wind, and solar. Again, I said earlier that every time there is a global doubling of the deployment of solar on the planet, the price of solar drops by 18 percent. China is going to be doing that.

Last week India announced that they are going to have a massive increase in their renewable energy resources as well.

Unfortunately, the tax breaks in our own country have already expired or are going to expire for the wind and solar industries. Our country is supposed to be the leader. We are supposed to be the technological giant on this planet.

All I can say is, if we want the jobs, this is the sector where the jobs are being created. There will be 300,000 jobs in this sector by the end of next year. If we want to reduce greenhouse gases, this is the sector that can make it possible for the United States to be the leader.

If we want to be the leaders to ensure that we are acted on the message that Pope Francis delivered to the Congress just 2 weeks ago, we have to move toward these technologies. The Pope asked us to use our technological capacity in order to solve this problem. The Pope pretty much said three things. No. 1, the planet is warming dangerously, and the science is clear. No. 2, the cause of the warming is

largely by human beings, and the science is clear. No. 3, we have a moral responsibility.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is a huge day because we have Members coming out to the floor to talk about this revolution and how we can find a solution so we can deal with this issue in a positive, affirmative job-creating way. We can engage in massive job creation in order to save all of God's creation. We can do it, but we have to decide that we are going to be the leaders in this sector, and all I can say is that in the end we are going to win because technology always triumphs—always. You can hold it back for a while, but in the end it is going to ultimately change our world. By the year 2100 people will look back and wonder why we ever did generate electricity by the use of fossil fuels on our planet.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I see that Senator SCHATZ and Senator WHITEHOUSE have arrived.

With that, I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Massachusetts for explaining to the public and this body what we are all becoming increasingly aware of. The technology is there. This is no longer pie in the sky. This is not hopeful ecological utopia thinking. This is real stuff. These are real jobs that are being financed by banks and financial institutions. This is already upon us.

I wish to tell the story of Hawaii's clean energy transformation. Of course the clean energy transformation is taking place across the country, but it is especially true in Hawaii. For decades—since the demise of the sugar plantation—Hawaii relied on imports of fossil fuel for our energy needs. As recently as 2010, we derived nearly 90 percent of our electrons from burning oil. In just 4 years we have driven this number down to around 80 percent, and we are on our way to a 100 percent clean energy target.

Hawaii's reliance on imported fuels isn't just bad for the climate, it is also bad economics. We have the highest electricity rates in the country. Our rates are three times higher than the national average. For the privilege of burning LSFO, low sulfur fuel oil, we are paying higher prices than anywhere in the Nation, and so something had to give.

In order to bolster our own energy security and economic prospects, we made the decision to transition away from fossil fuels to solar, wind, and geothermal. Clean energy is Hawaii's future, but it is important to point out that in the beginning we had naysayers on the left, right, and center, much like the current debate in the Congress. There are those who think that what we do in the clean power plan or with the carbon fee will not be nearly enough, and there are those who think that we are doing too much too fast.

I remember having this exact conversation in Hawaii in 2001. In 2001, we started small and passed a voluntary renewable portfolio goal that encouraged utilities—didn't mandate—to generate 9 percent of their electricity from clean energy by the year 2010. The target, frankly, was unambitious. It was voluntary and it was unenforceable, but it was important because it was a start. For some it was little and for others it was too radical, but it was a start. So we kept pushing.

In 2004, we replaced the original goal with a requirement of 20 percent clean energy by 2020. Two years later, we added incentives for compliance and established penalties for noncompliance.

In 2008, Hawaii partnered with the USDOE to identify the technical, regulatory, and financial barriers preventing the State from reaching its clean energy potential. This partnership, the Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative, was crucial to helping Hawaii realize that a 100 percent clean energy goal was actually realistic.

A year after starting this partnership, the State increased its Clean Energy Standard to 40 percent by 2030, establishing an energy efficiency standard of 30 percent and enshrining into law the requirement to reduce emissions from the power sector by 70 percent by the year 2030.

I want to give context here. People thought this was totally unrealistic and that we would even at the first 2- or 3-year increment already miss our goals, but what happened was the opposite. We started exceeding our interim targets, and then we ratcheted up our goals. Progress toward these goals demonstrated that an even more ambitious, audacious goal of 100-percent clean energy was a real possibility.

So this year Governor Ige in Hawaii signed the law requiring utilities to generate all of their electricity from renewable sources by 2045. We are currently meeting or exceeding our interim targets, thanks in large part to big increases in wind power and in distributed generation, especially solar rooftops.

It is important to say that progress towards our clean energy goals hasn't impeded economic growth. Hawaii's unemployment rate is among the lowest in the Nation and 1.5 percent below the national average.

Strengthening this law required consistent efforts by advocacy groups, businesses, and government agencies to bring about the change. It also showed the importance of taking those first steps down the road to a low-carbon economy. Whether they seem too small to make a difference or too large to be possible, we have to start. Once we do, ambitious goals are more within reach than they may have originally seemed.

Now, Hawaii is blessed in a number of ways, including with ample sunlight, steady winds, and volcanic energy. But Hawaii is not unique in its ability to generate substantial quantities of electricity from clean renewable resources.

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory analyzed clean energy potential across the country and found that ''[r]enewable electricity generation from technologies that are commercially available today . . . is more than adequate to supply 80 percent of the total U.S. electricity generation by the year 2050.''

That is with technologies available today. As these technologies improve and the cost of clean energy continues to fall, wind and solar power will be increasingly competitive with electricity generated from fossil fuels in States across the country. As my home State of Hawaii illustrates, we just have to start.

This is a lesson that we must take to the international context as well. As the world meets in Paris later this year, I urge representatives from all countries to think of Hawaii's experience moving towards a zero carbon energy system. The climate negotiations in Paris are shaping up to be at least a moderate success. But whatever agreement emerges from Paris will likely be a political Rorschach test, which is to say that some will say that we are promising too much and others will say that we should be offering more. Whatever one's predisposition about climate, Paris will prove it to the world.

But what truly matters is not exactly what the particulars of each agreement in Paris are but what happens next. It is doing the work. It is power purchase agreements. It is public policy. It is tax incentives. It is permits. It is public utilities commissions. It is actually getting the work done across the country and across the planet.

When something as consequential as climate change is on the table, it is going to require global capital, technological breakthroughs, and political will. That political will will only occur if people understand that, yes, this is a problem. It is real. Yes, it is urgent, and yes, it is caused by humans. But, most importantly, we can, in fact, fix it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I wish to join my colleagues from Massachusetts and Hawaii to talk about the tax credits for wind.

We have had a remarkably exciting new thing happen in Rhode Island this summer. From time to time, I am able to get out on Narragansett Bay and, over and over, whether driving on the bridges over Narragansett Bay or actually out on Narragansett Bay, we saw the sites of these enormous barges traveling down the bay, bringing these huge structures that were carried out, located off of Block Island, and sunk to the ocean floor to provide the platforms for the first steel-in-water offshore wind energy in the country.

Now, we can go over to Europe and see wind energy all over the place. We are behind them in developing it, but

Rhode Island is the start. And whether we saw these enormous structures that were the legs—the frames for the pylon and the turbine—or whether we saw enormous pilings that get carried out there and in the same way that you drive a nail through the hole for a hanger and put it through wall, they take these enormous pilings that reach way up into the sky and drive them through the hollow legs of the framework and down to anchor them in the ocean floor.

So this is under construction right now. It is big. We see these barges coming by and they are enormous. The structures run hundreds of feet in the air. It is exciting to see this happening, and it is part of the wind revolution that Senator MARKEY and Senator SCHATZ talked about.

So there is a conflict in my mind between this exciting sight in Rhode Island—these big yellow structures coming down the bay in the bright light—and then coming to the darker Halls of Congress and moving from that exciting sight to the tedious fight that we have over and over to protect the wind production tax credit. Over and over we have to go through this fight. Why? I will tell my colleagues why. It is because opposition to the wind tax credit is one more little wriggling tentacle of the fossil fuel industry. They have huge tax subsidies, tax credits, and tax advantages baked permanently into the Tax Code, and they sit on those and they defend them and they are merciless about anybody who tries to take those away. But let a little wind come along and try to get a competing tax credit of its own, and they try to crush it, over and over and over.

Nobody runs for office to come to the Senate and says: The thing that drives me, the thing that motivates my candidacy is to make sure that our wind energy in the United States gets knocked down; let's take their little tax credit away. Nobody runs on that. In fact, if I recall correctly, the Presiding Officer ran for office with a picture of a wind turbine in Colorado. So it is not as if there aren't friends to wind in this Chamber.

But once someone gets here, the oil and fossil guys are very powerful. They are very remorseless. They have made immense threats to squash any action on climate change. And as a little sidebar, they always try to beat the little wind energy subsidy. They will never give up their own, and their own are much bigger. We have probably $50 billion over 10 years in cash tax benefits going to these companies, which are the most profitable companies in the history of the planet. They are the last companies that need any help.

If we look at people such as the International Monetary Fund—not exactly a liberal, green group—the International Monetary Fund estimates that if we put in all of the subsidies that fossil fuel gets around the world, it adds up to more than $5 trillion—trillion. I am from Rhode Island. I think $1 million is a lot of money. I am starting to get used to talking about billions of dollars being here. Trillions is what the fossil fuel subsidy, in effect, is around the world, and just in the U.S. it is $700 billion in a year. Yet, greedy, big corporations that sit and defend that benefit to the last trench also want to crush the poor little wind benefit. It is just not fair and it is just wrong.

But I think we are going to be able to prevail. We have seen some real progress here. Bloomberg just published an article that wind power is now the cheapest electricity to produce—cheaper than anything else—in both Germany and in the United Kingdom. It is a powerful industry in States such as Colorado and in Wyoming, where they have so much wind that they export wind energy to other States. Iowa is probably our leader. Iowa generates nearly 30 percent of its electricity from wind. TPI Composites is a Rhode Island company. It builds composite materials in Warren, RI. They have a facility in Iowa where they manufacture wind turbine blades and, in the last decade, they have manufactured 10,000—10,000—wind turbine blades. There had been a Maytag factory in a town called Newton, IA, and the Maytag factory went bust because, of course, we are offshoring jobs to China. But guess what. They came in and started building these wind turbines. They are really too big to ship from China, so it has been a boom industry. It has put little Newton back on its feet.

If we don't pass the wind production tax credit, then States such as Wyoming and Colorado and Iowa that depend on this are really going to be hurt. This is bipartisan in these States. I don't know why the fossil fuel industry primarily runs its mischief through the Republican Party here in Congress, but it doesn't work in Iowa. In Iowa, a year ago, the Iowa State Senate unanimously passed a resolution supporting extension of the production tax credit—unanimously.

So we have a really strong case to make that this is the technology of the future. We have a fairness case to make that the great big brutal fossil fuel lobbyist organization shouldn't be allowed to hold on to all of its subsidies—depending on how we measure, they are measuring into the hundreds of billions of dollars—and, at the same time, try to squash poor little wind when it wants to get some subsidies in order to compete with this massive and malevolent incumbent.

Then I think we have the practical politics of this, which is that in State after State after State, wind has become real enough that it is going to be very hard for some of our colleagues on the Republican side to go home and say to their home State industry: Sorry, we put you under the bus. We put you under the bus. We protected your competitors in oil and gas; we absolutely would never touch them. We protected them. They are sacrosanct on our side. But we put you under the bus. That is going to be a little hard to explain.

So I very much hope that as we come together and pull together the continuing resolution or the omnibus—that avoids, I pray, another shutdown and that puts our country on a sensible budgetary footing going forward—this tax credit is a part of it, because we need these jobs. People are working in Rhode Island, and I will tell my colleagues this: When you are building a giant, enormous, big frame offshore, you are paying good wages. You are paying good wages to the people who operate the barges. You are paying good wages to the ironworkers, the steelworkers, and the electrical workers. You are paying good wages to the stevedores who are helping to load it up. These are really strong economic businesses, and we want to support them.

With that, 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. HOEVEN. 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. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise to speak on the issue of the fiscal year 2016 Energy and Water Development appropriations bill—the bill that, in fact, is now before the Senate.

We just voted at 2 o'clock this afternoon on the NDAA, the National Defense Authorization Act. That is very important because we need to pass that legislation for our military. In fact, we did, and we passed it with 70 votes. That is incredibly important because the President has threatened a veto on the National Defense Authorization Act.

This is legislation that has passed the House, and now it has passed the Senate and it is going to the President. If he vetoes it, we have to have the votes to override because we have to get that legislation done for our men and women in uniform. Not only, as I spoke earlier on the floor, is it about making sure we are doing our job on behalf of our military but also on behalf of our Nation's defense.

The other thing I mentioned in regard to that legislation is we also need to pass the companion bill, which is the Defense appropriations bill. So very soon we will be taking up the Defense appropriations bill, which is the funding that goes with the National Defense Authorization Act. We authorize those military programs and then we have to fund them. That is why the Department of the Defense appropriations bill has to be passed along with the Defense Authorization Act in order to get the job done for our military. I make that point because until we have done both of those things, we have not funded the military the way we need

to. I make that point as part of a bigger point and that is this: The Appropriations Committee, of which I am a member, has passed all 12 appropriations bills out of committee, and they are awaiting action on the floor of the Senate. Those bills have been passed with strong bipartisan votes. Instead of having each and every one of those bills filibustered, we need to take those bills up and debate those bills. People should offer the amendments they have, we can debate those amendments, and then we can vote. That is our job. That is how the Senate works. That is what the people of this great country send us to do. That is the work of the Senate. That is regular order.

As we talk about authorizing programs for men and women in uniform, we also have to pass the Defense appropriations bill. That will be coming before this Senate. I make that point because what we have been facing is a filibuster of all these appropriations bills. We will have another test. We will have another test now this week, and this is on the Energy and Water Development appropriations bill. This is energy, Corps of Engineers, vital fundamental infrastructure for this great country. So we will see if our colleagues will join us. Can we join together in a bipartisan way and advance through this appropriations bill, have the debate, offer the amendments, and get this work done? I hope the answer to that is yes. We will find out over the course of today and tomorrow if our colleagues would join together and get this work done for the American people and then on we go.

We may have to deal with a Presidential veto on the National Defense Authorization Act. If so, let's do so. Let's do so in a bipartisan way. Then let's take up the appropriations bill that goes with that Defense authorization. Let's make sure all 12 of these bills, all of these appropriations bills are brought to this floor, people have their opportunity for the debate, people can offer their amendments, and we will have our votes. If something can get 60 votes, it passes. That is the work of the Senate. That is the work of the Senate. If it is not done, the reason it will not be done is because there will be an ongoing filibuster. It is very important that the American people understand that because this is the work of the Senate, this is the work of the Congress, and we need to be clear about whether we are getting that work done or whether we continue to face a filibuster that does not allow us to bring this legislation forward to debate it in an open, transparent debate. Put it out there in front of the American people, make the argument, offer the amendments, and vote. That is how it is done. That is how it is done in this democracy. That is how it is done in this Senate.

So I rise to talk about the merits of the Energy and Water Development appropriations bill. This measure appropriates funding for the U.S. Department of Energy, including national nuclear security and energy research and development, as well as critical infrastructure projects administered by the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. The Senate Appropriations Committee approved this bill in May. I am a member not only of this Appropriations Committee but this subcommittee, and we voted out of committee 26 to 4. So there are 30 members on the full Appropriations Committee, Republicans and Democrats, and by a vote of 26 to 4 we voted in favor of this legislation. That is about as bipartisan as it gets. It was supported by all of the Republican members of the committee and 10 of the Democratic members.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, I thank Chairman ALEXANDER and Ranking Member FEINSTEIN. They have crafted a bipartisan bill within our budget framework that balances our energy priorities and our national security preparedness.

I also commend Senate Appropriations Chairman COCHRAN and Ranking Member MIKULSKI. They brought the measure up in regular order, allowing amendments and debate, and they advanced this bill, as I said, with a very strong bipartisan 26-to-4 vote. The fact is, this is the first time in 6 years the Appropriations Committee has passed all 12 appropriations bills. All 12 have been passed in a bipartisan manner, awaiting action on the floor.

As I said, this legislation is within the budget guidelines. The Senate Energy and Water bill includes $35.4 billion in overall funding, which is $1.2 billion more than last year's funding level.

The Energy Department's nuclear security program is funded at $12.3 billion, which is $856 million more than last year. The Department of Energy programs receive an additional $270 million. This is important because our Nation has significant infrastructure needs, and that is what we are addressing, basic infrastructure needs of this kind. The longer we wait to improve America's infrastructure, particularly our waterways, the higher the cost will be. So it is very important that we get this legislation moving.

One of the ways we can cost-effectively improve the Nation's infrastructure is by using public-private partnerships, P3s, to fund water projects. I worked closely with Senator ALEXANDER, the chairman of the Energy and Water Development Subcommittee to include support for P3-style projects in this legislation.

I see that our chairman has joined us. Again, I commend him for not only the overall legislation but for his support for the P3s, public-private partnerships. By leveraging the resources of the private sector, we can accelerate construction and reduce overall project costs. This creates a win for citizens who benefit from the project and a win for taxpayers who save money on projects that are constructed on a more cost-effective basis. I look forward to passing this legislation so we can advance this P3 concept.

In fact, we have a project in Fargo, ND, that is perfectly suited for this type of approach. A P3 project can save the government hundreds of millions of dollars in construction costs, but we need to get this legislation passed so the Corps has the ability to start these types of projects and get them constructed for our country.

I am also pleased the legislation permits the Army Corps of Engineers to get a handful of new feasibility studies. Mother Nature doesn't wait on the Senate or Congress, so we have to keep looking at areas where we need to upgrade infrastructure and respond to things as they occur; for example, some of the recent events, as the Presiding Officer knows, which occurred in Colorado, the Animas River. One area I am very familiar with that needs better protection is Minot, ND, where we had a devastating flood in 2011. We need to do a feasibility study to determine how best to make sure that flood protection is put in place.

Finally, I am strongly supporting funding included in the legislation for improvements to water infrastructure across this country. Whether it is our ports or whether it is large or small, this is basic infrastructure we need for quality of life in this country. This is a long-term investment for the future of our country, the quality of life, the welfare of our people, and the ability to grow our economy.

Let me touch on a couple of areas before I turn over the floor to our chairman. In addition to the Corps of Engineers, this legislation provides funding for the National Nuclear Security Administration, the agency that develops and maintains the Nation's nuclear warheads. NNSA relies on the funding provided every year in the Energy and Water bill to preserve the Nation's nuclear deterrents. It is critical that this legislation moves forward. I am particularly pleased the legislation meets the fiscal year 2016 budget request for funds needed to refurbish the W80 warhead, which is the warhead that goes on our nuclear cruise missiles.

The W80 warhead is aging and needs to be refurbished so it can move to the new cruise missile being developed by the Air Force. The W80 is critical to the air leg of the Nation's nuclear triad. I am glad this legislation provides the funding to help keep our triad intact and in fact modernized.

The bill also makes advances in our energy security priorities. It increases funding for the Energy Department's energy research and development, which will help provide the research for technologies that will advance coal, natural gas, oil, and other fossil energy resources and innovations. This is important in order to pursue a true ''all of the above'' energy policy that enables our country to produce both traditional and renewable energy with better environmental stewardship.

The bill also provides support for the coal Advanced Energy Systems Program to research the efficiency of coal-based power systems and enabling affordable, commercially viable CO_2 capture technologies.

It continues funding for many other research and development programs that will strengthen our energy future, not only by enabling us to produce energy more cost-effectively and more dependably but also with better environmental stewardship.

I will start to wrap up and turn the floor over to our esteemed colleague from the other side of the aisle and the outstanding Senators who are members of the committee who are here and looking to speak in support of this very important legislation, but I want to finish on the aspect I started on earlier.

We have passed all 12 appropriations bills out of committee. This is the fundamental work of the Senate, making sure we fund the government, we fund the enterprise we are talking about, and we do so within the budget that was duly and properly passed by this Senate and by this House—by the Congress. This is the work we need to do. That means we have to proceed to these bills, that we have to offer the opportunity for debate, the opportunity for amendments, debate those amendments, and vote. That is our job. That is our responsibility. That is how we get the work done for the American people who sent us to do just that.

This is good legislation. These bills were passed with bipartisan support. As I said in the case of this bill, 26 in favor, only 4 opposed. Let's get going. Let's get the work done we were sent to do.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The Senator from Michigan.

WISCONSIN-LAKE MICHIGAN NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, this week I was pleased to hear some good news about a very special place in the Great Lakes. On the bottom of Lake Michigan, right off the shores of Wisconsin, lies an incredible collection of shipwrecks. People across the Great Lakes region, especially in Wisconsin but also in my home State of Michigan and elsewhere, recognize that this stretch of Lake Michigan is a national treasure because of its historical significance and its great beauty.

Through a bottom-up community-driven process, many people teamed up to put together a proposal to protect this area as a National Marine Sanctuary. The Obama administration listened, and this week they announced they will be moving forward to establish a Wisconsin-Lake Michigan National Marine Sanctuary.

A National Marine Sanctuary designation, as Michiganders know from firsthand experience, helps to improve access and resources for special maritime places in order to enhance visitor access and preserve irreplaceable resources for future generations.

The Wisconsin-Lake Michigan sanctuary proposal would preserve an 875-square-mile area of Lake Michigan with waters extending from Port Washington to Two Rivers. As Michiganders watch a pure Michigan sunset over Lake Michigan on beaches from Ludington south to Muskegon, the Sun would set over the new sanctuary directly across the lake. The new sanctuary has 29 known shipwrecks, 15 of which are listed in the National Registry of Historic Places, with many of those wrecks almost completely intact—a very rare occurrence. Research shows the proposed sanctuary includes 123 reported vessel losses, so there are many more wrecks to discover in these waters.

Local community leaders in Wisconsin deserve much of the credit for building the support needed to move this proposal forward, but it would not have made it to this point without the tireless work of my friend and colleague Senator BALDWIN of Wisconsin.

In 2013, Senator BALDWIN urged the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA, to reopen the public nomination process for the first time in 20 years, and she continues to advocate for additional funding for national marine sanctuaries through her role on the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Earlier this year, I was pleased to introduce a bill with Senator BALDWIN and my good friend Senator STABENOW called the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Assessment Act, which would require NOAA to review maritime heritage resources in the Great Lakes and suggest areas worthy of designation.

In addition, I teamed up with Senator BALDWIN to introduce the Waterfront Community Revitalization and Resiliency Act, which can work hand in hand with marine sanctuaries to boost the local economies of waterfront communities across the Great Lakes and the country. The bill would improve areas along the water to increase access to public space, grow business development, and create a new vision for waterfronts that can boost tourism, recreation, and small business.

The administration also identified another new potential sanctuary, the Mallows Bay—Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary, which is a 14-square-mile stretch of the tidal Potomac River with the largest ''ghost fleet'' of World War I wooden steamship wrecks and one of the most ecologically valuable waterscapes and landscapes in Maryland.

These two sanctuary proposals, if finalized, would be the first sanctuaries established since 2000 and would be just the 15th and 16th additions to the national marine sanctuaries network. The last addition to the network was in 2000, and that was Michigan's very own Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve, located in Lake Huron, with the main NOAA office based in the great city of Alpena. The Thunder Bay sanctuary is a remarkable maritime treasure. It is known as Shipwreck Alley. Throughout history, it has been one of the most highly traveled and dangerous parts of the Great Lakes system. Nearly 100 shipwrecks have been discovered within the sanctuary, with a wide range of vessel types that makes the collection nationally significant.

The cold, clean, fresh water of the Great Lakes keeps shipwrecks in excellent condition, and the archaeological research that is conducted at Thunder Bay is world class.

Pictured here is the helm of the F.T. Barney, a two-masted schooner located at a depth of 160 feet near Rogers City. On October 23, 1868, the F.T. Barney was en route from Cleveland to Milwaukee with a cargo of coal when it was run into by the schooner T.J. Bronson. The ship sank in less than 2 minutes in very deep water. The wreck is one of the most complete you will find anywhere, with masts and deck equipment still in place.

Another impressive wreck, lying at a depth of only 18 feet near Alpena, is the wooden steam barge Monohansett. On November 23 of 1907, the ship burned at the water's edge at Thunder Bay Island. Today, the Monohansett's wreck lies in three sections. The stern portion has hull features, propeller, and shaft all in place, and the boiler is nearby.

You can still go up to Alpena and take a glass-bottom boat to tour these wrecks and see the crystal waters of Lake Huron, and you can even snorkel or scuba dive amongst some of the most well-preserved ships. It is truly a one-of-a-kind and once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Not only is Thunder Bay the only freshwater marine sanctuary among the 14 marine-protected areas—at least until these two new proposals—but it is unique in that it is also a State underwater preserve. It is jointly managed by NOAA and the State of Michigan. A joint management committee makes major policy, budget, and management decisions, and an advisory council represents the community's interests. It is part of the local community up north, and it is refreshing to see local, State, and Federal officials all working together to protect a national treasure.

The Thunder Bay sanctuary is a major tourist draw and economic driver for the area, and the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center in Alpena attracts out-of-State visitors and educates school groups.

Over the last decade or so, the benefits of preserving Thunder Bay were widely recognized, and a process was set in motion to expand the boundaries of the sanctuary. In September of 2014, after holding many meetings and completing a thorough environmental impact statement, Thunder Bay was expanded from 448 square miles to 4,300 square miles, driven by strong public and congressional support. This map shows the original boundaries and the

new expanded boundaries. The process was successful in part because of the work of Senator STABENOW, and, of course, my predecessor, Senator Carl Levin, who was a champion for the Great Lakes every day of his long service here in the Senate.

As we move forward to protect the Great Lakes and other valuable marine resources in the Great Lakes and across the country, we must devote robust resources to these deserving places. Many agencies, including NOAA, are operating on shoestring budgets. While their work is impressive as they stretch their funding, the benefits these designations bring to communities such as Alpena and the surrounding area are sustainable and provide a foundation for the local economy.

As a member of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, with jurisdiction over NOAA and the National Marine Sanctuary System, I am committed to working every day on protecting the Great Lakes and the fantastic waters and marine places within the boundaries of the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

EB–5 REGIONAL CENTER INVESTMENT PROGRAM

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, there is an immigration program that is out of control and not conforming to the reason the program was put into effect in the first place. It needs to be reformed or it needs to be eliminated. So I come to the floor to talk about this immigration program known as the EB–5 regional center investment program and the serious concerns I have about continuing this program without reforms. The program was just extended in the continuing resolution to keep the government funded, but I want to talk about changes that need to be made before and if it is extended again.

The EB–5 program was created in 1990. A foreign national under this program can invest $1 million in a new commercial enterprise that creates 10 full-time jobs, and then, in turn, that person receives lawful permanent residence and then, if they want to, citizenship. The required investment amount is only $500,000 if the investment is made in what is called a targeted employment area, defined to be a rural area or an area with high unemployment. The EB–5 program allows investors to pool their investments for a project, and they can meet the job-creation requirements by providing evidence of not direct jobs but evidence of indirect jobs.

In previous speeches on the floor, I have talked about the national security and integrity issues associated with the program. I have detailed the risks, and I have expressed concern about the lack of oversight by the administration. Today, I will focus on one particular abuse of the program and how this program does not fulfill the intent of the law passed in 1990.

Perhaps the greatest violation of congressional intent that has evolved over the years is the manner in which so much of the investment money coming into targeted employment areas has been directed toward lavish—and I mean lavish—building projects in well-to-do urban areas, not in the areas of high unemployment and not in rural areas, as the 1990 law implied. Four-star hotels and commercial office buildings are being built with foreign investment dollars in very affluent urban neighborhoods rather than the high-unemployment and rural areas which Congress intended to benefit. This has been done by gerrymandering the boundaries of the targeted employment areas to include at one end the affluent census tract in which the building project is located and at the other end, perhaps many miles away, a census tract with high unemployment.

In other words, the word ''gerrymandering'' is the word that is used in forming some congressional districts that are very strangely arranged so somebody can be reelected to office. The same approach is being used here to form a targeted employment area to get all of this money into urban areas that are very affluent.

One of the most notorious examples of this gerrymandering, to push the boundaries, is the Hudson Yards project, a group of luxury apartment buildings and office towers in Midtown Manhattan—in midtown Manhattan, meaning New York.

Even the Wall Street Journal, which never met a business project it did not like, reported on how this program has been abused. The Wall Street Journal explained how the Hudson Yards project qualifies for the lower investment threshold despite the affluent Midtown location of the project because the boundaries of the targeted employment area were manipulated—or let me say gerrymandered—to include a public housing project in Upper Manhattan.

Another project that flies in the face of congressional intent—meaning the intent of the 1990 law—is located in Lower Manhattan near Wall Street. As the New York Times reported, the Battery Maritime Building has been classified as being located in a targeted employment area based on a gerrymandered area that ''snakes up through the Lower East Side, skirting the wealthy enclaves of Battery Park City and TriBeCa, and then jumps across the East River to annex the Farragut Houses project in Brooklyn.'' In other words, the developers did everything they could to include the Farragut Houses project, which is a public housing community, to come in at the lower investment level. The New York Times went on to say that ''the small census tract that contains the Farragut Houses has become a go-to-area for developers seeking to use the visa program: its unemployed residents have been counted towards three projects already.'' That is the New York Times.

Watchdog.org, a national watchdog group that has followed abuses of the program closely over many years, has also identified another problematic, gerrymandered targeted employment area. They reported that a 21-story residential building project, which included trendy restaurants and shops, was built with foreign investments despite its location in an upscale neighborhood with only 0.8 percent unemployment.

These are just a few examples, yet they point to a clear problem with this program.

When it was created by Congress, we set two different investment levels and clearly tried to steer foreign capital to high-unemployment and rural areas. Obviously, I am showing you that has not been fulfilled by the way this program has finally evolved.

The Wall Street Journal reports that at least 80 percent of program money is going to projects that wouldn't qualify as being in targeted employment areas without ''some form of gerrymandering.'' Meanwhile, the article adds, people wanting to raise money for projects in rural areas and low-income parts of cities say they find it increasingly hard to compete.

Even the Washington Post has become fed up with the way in which the intent of Congress has been violated. In a September 6 editorial, after discussing the program's numerous economic and integrity failings and suggesting that the program lapse, the Post writes: ''The EB–5 program is supposed to favor distressed economic areas, but the definition of a needy zone has been stretched to include nearly the whole country, including hot downtown real estate markets.''

I wish to end by saying, again, that the program is in need of reform. In June, Senator LEAHY and I introduced S. 1501, a bill that would substantially reform the program by improving program oversight, addressing national security vulnerabilities and restoring the program to its original intent. I hope my colleagues will look at this very bipartisan bill and will take an opportunity to understand how this program is being used and abused and review the proposal that Senator LEAHY and I have put out there.

Mr. President, I refer my colleagues to the Wall Street Journal article ''U.S. Visa For Cash Plan Funds Luxury Towers—Program to spur jobs in poor areas supports projects in well-off neighborhoods,'' dated September 10, 2015, by Eliot Brown; the Watchdog.org article ''Upscale Dallas project cashes in on EB–5 visa program,'' dated September 24, 2015, by Kenric Ward; an article from the Washington Post ''It's time for the corporate visa giveaway to go away,'' dated September 6, 2015; and the New York Times article ''Rules Stretched as Green Cards Go to Investors,'' dated December 18, 2011, by Patrick McGeehan.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

ARKANSAS AND 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL RICE MONTH

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, the rare blend of soil type, environment, and availability of water make Arkansas an ideal location for rice to thrive and grow, making Arkansas the Nation's largest producer of rice.

Last year, production in the Natural State accounted for more than 50 percent of rice produced in the country. Farmers in more than half of Arkansas' counties grow rice; 96 percent of those are family owned and operated.

As the No. 1 producer of this crop, Arkansas has a unique role in the industry. That is why I am proud to recognize the 25th anniversary of National Rice Month. I am also proud to promote policies that enable our farmers to manage risk and ensure that high-quality U.S. rice remains a staple on tables throughout the globe.

This industry is not only contributing to a nutritious and balanced diet, it is also an economic engine. Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Missouri, California, and Texas all produce rice. Nationwide, this industry accounts for 125,000 jobs and contributes more than $34 billion to the economy. In Arkansas, it accounts for more than 25,000 jobs. The rice industry stands to benefit from a change in policies toward Cuba because it is a staple of the Cuban diet.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that U.S. rice exports could increase up to $365 million per year if financing and travel restrictions were lifted. Arkansas's agriculture secretary recently said that the economic impact on the Natural State's rice industry could be about $30 million. Rice production is efficient. More rice is being produced on less land, using less water and energy than 20 years ago. As great stewards of the land, rice farmers are committed to protecting and preserving our natural resources.

Arkansas' location on the Mississippi Flyway makes it a duck-hunting capital of the world and draws hunters from around the globe.

I am proud to support our rice industry and celebrate 25 years of recognizing National Rice Month.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank the Democratic Senators for their courtesy. We are running a little behind, and they have allowed me to go on and make my remarks.

I ask the Chair to let me know when 12 minutes have expired of my 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will be so notified.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, tomorrow we will be voting on the Energy and Water Development appropriations bill. I come to the floor to make two points about that very important legislation.

No. 1: if our Democratic friends would allow us to vote on it, allow us to debate it, amend it, pass it, send it to the President, and do the same with the other 11 appropriations bills that our Appropriations Committee has reported, we could easily say that this year in the Senate is one of the most productive years in a long, long time.

No. 2: the other point I wish to make is the importance of this bill. Ben Bernanke, the retired Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board wrote an article in the Wall Street Journal this week in which he said that you cannot rely on the Federal Reserve Board to create jobs in a growth economy in the United States, and that what you need to do is have better educational opportunities, more research, and you need supercomputing. I would add to this that you need to have infrastructure. This bill, the Energy and Water bill, has all of those things. It is a pro-growth bill for the United States of America.

Let me take the first point first. This is the first time in 6 years that the Appropriations Committee has reported all 12 appropriations bills. You might find that unusual because that is the Appropriations Committee's basic job. As much as it is for the Grand Ole Opry to sing, our job is to pass appropriations bills. That is article I of the Constitution. It is the first time in 6 years. The bills are all sitting there waiting. Most of them passed in a bipartisan way.

The one that we are bringing to the floor tomorrow passed 26 to 4 on May 2. Senator FEINSTEIN and I worked on it with most of the Members of this body. It is a very good bill, passed in a bipartisan way.

What would usually happen in a properly functioning Senate is that we would spend the two months of June and July dealing with those 12 appropriations bills. That would mean that not just the members of the Appropriations Committee would have a chance to vote on them. It would mean that the Senator from Utah, who is not on the Appropriations Committee, would have a chance to make his points about the appropriations bills, which is part of his job here, yet he is shut out of that.

Why? Because Democrats say: We won't even let you bring them to the floor.

It is an extraordinary thing to do.

But despite that, I want you to know what this body has accomplished. In the last 7 months or 8 months we passed the Keystone Pipeline. The President vetoed it. We overruled the ambush elections rule from the NLRB, and the President vetoed it.

But listen to all the things we accomplished with the cooperation of Democrats on the other side of the aisle. Then, as I said, if we could add the appropriations bills, we would have the most productive Senate in many, many years. There is the trade authority law. It passed, and it is law.

We fixed No Child Left Behind, and we ended the common core mandate.

We reversed the trend of the national school board, and we did it with 81 votes in the Senate. It was a bipartisan bill.

We passed a long-term highway bill after we had 34 short-term highway bills.

There was a permanent fix of what we call the doc fix—the way we pay doctors for Medicare payments. A long-term permanent solution passed this body. It is now the law after 17 short-term fixes. This law changed the way we pay for doctors so that we pay them more for quality rather than fee-for-service.

We have dealt with what happens when a terrorist calls from Afghanistan to Nashville on the phone. That is the USA FREEDOM Act. It is now the law.

We passed the Defense authorization bill, terrorism risk insurance, and the Iran review act. Waiting in the wings is the chemical safety bill, which has bipartisan support, and—believe this—it is 39 years since it has last been touched. And there is a cybersecurity bill right after that.

That is an impressive list of accomplishments for this Senate. Think of what we could say if we had spent June and July, as we should have, debating the appropriations bills.

Now let's move to the Energy and Water appropriations bill. On May 21, it was approved by the Appropriations Committee. The Senator from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and I recommended it, and 26 Senators voted for it and 4 voted against it. It stays within the law. The law that we passed and the President signed tells us what we have to spend.

Yet Democrats said: Well, we are not going to let you bring it to the floor because we think you should spend more than that.

Well, maybe we should, but the law says we should spend what we spent. So we followed the law.

When you block our bill and don't allow it to be brought to the floor, what do you do? You cut 70 Senators out of having a say on the Energy and Water appropriations bill. And what does that mean? They don't have a say over it. They don't have a say over nuclear weapons.

Half of our bill is about national defense. Are we properly funding nuclear weapons? They don't have a say over National Laboratories, the laboratories where we are inventing new ways to manufacture that will help grow jobs. They don't have a say over how much money we are going to spend on the Missouri River floods. They don't have a say over how much money we are going to spend on the locks and the dams that we have. The Panama Canal is widening, and if we don't deepen our harbors, the ships are going to go to Cuba. So we want them to go to Savannah, Mobile, and to other places like that.

They don't have a say over nuclear waste. Where do we put nuclear waste? So the Democrats, by blocking the bill from coming to the floor, have cut

their own Members out of having a say about this. Half of the Energy and Water bill funds national defense activities, and the other half of it funds other essential non-defense items. And all the Democrats asked for was 3 percent more funding than what we're already spending in the bill.

What I said in the Appropriations Committee was this: You know, this is really a pretty good way to budget. Let's appropriate it as if we had 97 percent of what you want, and if we get 3 percent more in the discussion at the end of the year, then we will add it. That shouldn't be hard to do. We could do it in 24 hours.

The way the Senate is supposed to work is the Energy and Water bill is supposed to come to the floor. We are supposed to debate it, we are supposed to amend it, and we are supposed to send it to the President. If he doesn't like it, he can veto it and send it back. That is what should happen.

If Senators don't like the bill now, they can block it. They can vote against it after we amend it. They can vote against it after we conference with the House. That takes 60 votes too. If the President vetoes it, it takes 67 votes to override the President's veto.

My friends on the other side said: Well, that takes too much time.

What do you mean it takes too much time? That is what we are here to do. We are elected to have a say on these issues. This is $1 trillion in funding for the national defense of the United States of America and for its essential services—locks, dams, national laboratories, and where we put the nuclear waste—and the Democrats are saying: We don't even want to vote on the appropriations bills. We don't even want to have a say about them. We don't even want to send them to the President for him to consider.

Let's take an example. The bill includes funding for inland waterways. Those are the avenues that carry the commerce that creates the jobs in America. They need to be in good shape. We have agreed on that in a bipartisan way. We have even asked the barge owners to pay more to go through the locks, to which they have agreed, and our bill matches what the barge owners are paying and increases the funding for inland waterways in Kentucky—Olmsted Locks and Dams, and Kentucky Lock—and Chickamauga Lock in Tennessee.

It also provides $1.254 billion from the harbor maintenance trust fund. That means we will be spending more to deepen harbors in Savannah, Charleston, Texas, Memphis, Jacksonville, Mobile, and Louisiana, in Pascagoula, Big Sandy Harbor, Cleveland Harbor, Anchorage Harbor, and Wilmington Harbor. Do Senators not want to have a say about that? Do you not want to support that or oppose that if you think it is too much?

What about the National Laboratories? The National Laboratories are the source of the research that produces the jobs that gives us our family incomes. One of them is in Tennessee, the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. I was there the other day. They have a new thing called additive manufacturing, where they are 3–D printing automobiles. Let me say that again: 3–D printing automobiles or parts of automobiles. It may revolutionize manufacturing in America and the world as much as unconventional gas and oil has revolutionized our national energy policy.

Do other Senators—the other 70 who are not on the Appropriations Committee—not want to have a say about how much we spend on our National Laboratories?

What about how much we spend for nuclear weapons? We had a big debate in this body over the proper level of spending for nuclear weapons. We had a big debate over something called the START treaty, which regulated the weapons that we were getting rid of. We agreed at the time that we would spend a certain amount of money to make sure we could defend the country. Do Senators not want to have a say about that?

So why do we not pass appropriations bills that were ready in May, debate them in a day or two, and send them to the President? If the President doesn't like them, under the Constitution he can veto them and send them back.

If we are spending 97 percent of what he thinks he should spend and he wants to veto it for that reason and then send it back to us and if we decide after negotiations to spend 3 percent more, we can add 3 percent in 24 hours, send it back to him, and that is the end of the result.

This is not the way the Senate is supposed to operate.

I hope that my friends on the Democratic side will recognize that they would like to have a say in our nuclear weapons policy, and that they would like to have a say in how much we spend on our National Laboratories.

This bill has a record level of funding for the Office of Science—as written, the highest ever in this bill. You don't want to vote on that? You don't want to support that? You want to cut that? You want to stop that?

I don't want to stop it. I want us to support research. I want to support our national laboratories. I want to support national defense. I want deeper harbors all around our coast. I want inland waterways that aren't broken down. I want us to move ahead in this country.

This bill is a pro-growth national defense bill. It came out of the Committee on Appropriations with 26 votes for it, 4 votes against it. Senator FEINSTEIN and I worked with almost every Senator in this body for it. Why should we not consider an appropriations bill that has that kind of support?

Now, if we get on that path every time we change majorities here—let's say the Democrats win the next election and Republicans say: Well, look at what you did to us in the last election. We are going to block all your appropriations bills because we would like to spend less. We won't ever do any appropriations bills again in the Senate because one body or the other blocks the amount of money. We are supposed to vote on that.

In the last Congress the Democrats were in control, and they wouldn't bring the appropriations bills to the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has consumed 12 minutes.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thank the Chair. I will conclude within the next 3 minutes, and I thank my Democratic friends for their courtesy.

In the last Congress, when Democrats had the majority and Republicans had the minority, the Committee on Appropriations completed its work in a bipartisan way on most bills, but the majority wouldn't bring the bills to the floor last year. Or when it did, it wouldn't let the Republicans offer amendments to it. They were afraid Senators might have their say.

This year we are in the majority for the first time in 6 years. In a bipartisan way we produced 12 appropriations bills out of 12. We would like to bring them to the floor, but they are saying no. We are not even going to vote on them. We are not even going to amend them. We are not even going to debate, even though if they do not like the bill at the end of that process, they can kill it with 60 votes. They can kill it after it comes out of conference with 60 votes. And if the President vetoes it, it can take 60 votes to override.

We don't have time to do appropriations bills here? Traditionally, we have always consumed June and July for the 12 appropriations bills. Previous Congresses have had time to do it. We should have time to do it.

Let me conclude where I started. This has been a very productive Senate. Most of that work has been because of bipartisan cooperation, whether it was the trade bill, the bill to fix No Child Left Behind, the highway bill, the doc fix—paying doctors for quality instead of fees—the USA Freedom Act, the Defense Authorization Act, the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act, or the Iran review act. And we have chemical safety and cybersecurity waiting. That is all the result of cooperation between Democrats and Republicans. Why can we not do that on appropriations bills, which is our most basic responsibility?

We did it in committee. I couldn't have a better person to work with than Senator FEINSTEIN. That vote was 26 to 4. It involves our national defense, it involves our growth, and it involves our security. I would hope every Senator would want to have a say on those issues tomorrow when we vote. So I hope they will vote yes on the Energy and Water bill tomorrow—yes to considering it; and then after we have considered it and debated it, we can send it

over to the House, come up with a conference, and we can see what they think.

That is the way the Senate ought to work. I am eager to see the Senate get back to that, and I think the American people are as well.

I thank the Chair and my colleagues for their courtesy, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor tonight to talk about something I would like to see done in the United States Senate—passage of reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Definitely the Senate and Congress have disappointed us in not passing the Export-Import Bank reauthorization—which is something I am a big proponent of. And now, here we are with the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

For the first time in 51 years since this program was created, it has expired.

My colleagues are here on the floor to join me—I thank the Senator from Montana and the Senator from New Mexico—to talk about why this is such a vital program to all of our States and why we should have it reauthorized immediately.

The bill creating the Land and Water Conservation Fund was championed by Senator Scoop Jackson at the request of then President Kennedy. Why? Because the American population was growing and there was a need for outdoor recreation, open space, and public lands.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund was created to help protect some of our most popular national parks, forests, public lands, and iconic places.

For me, this is an incredibly important program because it has provided opportunities for hunting, fishing, hiking and other recreational uses that so many people use when traveling to the Pacific Northwest for vacation or for their livelihood.

Those of us who are from States with large amounts of public lands recognize the importance of outdoor recreation.

Nationwide outdoor recreation supports more than 6 million jobs. This is an economy in and of itself. In the State of Washington, outdoor recreation contributes more than $11.7 billion annually to Washington's economy. It is clear that protecting our public lands is good for both our environment and our economy.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund has been credited each year with funds from outer continental shelf oil and gas revenues. The success of that program has helped us authorize and make these investments for the American people, as I said, for more than 50 years.

We are here to remind our colleagues that we are going to put up a fight until we get the conservation fund reauthorized. And to make sure that people in our states and all across the Nation that enjoy public lands have access to them.

The issue is important to us, and in the energy bill we passed out of the Senate Energy Committee, I worked with my colleague, Senator MURKOWSKI, on a bipartisan basis to include a permanent reauthorization of the LWCF.

And I was joined by 31 Senators to introduce the American Energy Innovation Act that also permanently reauthorized and fully funded the LWCF.

So you can see from these two pieces of legislation that there was a lot of support from our colleagues for maintaining this vital program that is used by cities, counties, and jurisdictions in my State and in my colleagues' states and many others across the nation and that it is a vital tool for helping us to thrive in our outdoor economy. We want to see this legislation reauthorized as soon as possible.

I thank my colleagues again from New Mexico and Montana again for being here and for their leadership on this issue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I want to thank Senators CANTWELL and HEINRICH for not giving up on the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and I need to point out that while there are three of us Democrats standing here, we speak for our entire caucus. We believe that the LWCF is something that needs to be reauthorized and, quite frankly, needs to be fully funded.

We are not going to play games with this issue. We are working to get this bill passed—not for show, not for politics, but because it is good for our economy. And I will get into that in a second.

There was a Republican gentleman who served in the Presidency of this great country some time ago—Teddy Roosevelt—who called on Americans to cherish our Nation's vast natural resources and to ensure that we safely pass them on to future generations. After all, they are the birthright of every American. That is what the Land and Water Conservation Fund is all about.

We take special pride in our public lands in Montana. They are a part of our way of life. We have just over 1 million people in our great State, but we lead the Nation in the percentage of residents who hunt, fish, hike, and enjoy our public lands. And the Land and Water Conservation Fund is a big reason for that.

Montana's outdoor economy brings in nearly $6 billion a year. Let me say that again. The outdoor economy, supported by the Land and Water Conservation Fund, brings in nearly $6 billion a year.

Last week, when I flew out of Montana, there were several fishermen who were flying out with me. They didn't live in Montana. All the money they brought into the State while they were fishing was outside dollars that wouldn't have been there otherwise. They probably used some of the fishing access—some of the 150-plus fishing access the Land and Water Conservation Fund has helped developed—when they enjoyed the great outdoors in Montana.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund also supports over 60,000 jobs. We talk about economic development all the time. We talk about how if we tweak our Tax Code or if we build this piece of infrastructure or if we make this education program more affordable, it can have an incredible impact on our economy. But the fact is, if you want to talk about economic development, if you want to talk about dollars invested for a return, the Land and Water Conservation Fund is an incredible investment.

To help preserve these lands and create these accesses, Montana has received some $540 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund—money that has been very well spent. Montanans used this Land and Water Conservation Fund to preserve more than 8,000 acres of elk habitat in Meagher County, known as the Tenderfoot.

Montanans used the Land and Water Conservation Fund to protect some of the most pristine habitat in the lower 48, from conservation easements in the Rocky Mountain Front to acquisitions in the Crown of the Continent.

While Montanans certainly benefit from the fund, there are Land and Water Conservation Fund projects in nearly every county of the United States. Yes, this fund is responsible for protecting prime hunting and fishing, but it is also responsible for building trails and improving parks, playgrounds, and ball fields in every State in the country. That is why Congress must reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund—to protect our best outdoor places and to reestablish this critical tool to build our communities in a way that will make future generations proud.

With that, Mr. President, if it is appropriate, I would like to ask my good friend from New Mexico a question.

I thank Senator HEINRICH for being here today. My question is, As he comes from New Mexico, is the Land and Water Conservation Fund something Senator HEINRICH hears about from his residents?

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, let me thank my colleague from Montana. I think one of the great things about New Mexico and Montana is that we are both from States that absolutely cherish the outdoors, and we have a lot of constituents who care about the activities that generate so much income from the outdoors.

Obviously, I hear from an enormous number of my constituents asking us to reauthorize and permanently authorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund—to fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In fact, recently there was a letter which was sent to me but was also sent to the chair of the

Energy and Natural Resources Committee—to the chair and to the ranking member, the good Senator from Washington. It was signed by dozens of businesses saying: Hey, this is important to our bottom line. Please extend the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Please continue to support this bipartisan legacy of standing up for our natural resources in this country.

My good friend from Montana mentioned the scale of what that means in his State, and it is not a dissimilar story in New Mexico. In fact, over $6 billion annually comes from outdoor recreation activities, and 68,000 jobs in our State are directly related to outdoor recreation.

In fact, when I go home this weekend, we are going to be celebrating the Valles Caldera National Preserve and its management by the National Park Service. That was a property that for decades my constituents could not access. They could not hunt; they could not fish. It was private property. It was because of the Land and Water Conservation Fund that this place, which had really been on the radar screen of the National Park Service since the early part of the last century—probably since the 1930s—could come into public ownership and now be one of the true gems in the entire Nation of our public lands.

We are going to be celebrating that with our constituents on Saturday. The Secretary of Interior is coming. There are literally 100,000 acres of some of the most spectacular high-elevation grasslands and conifer forests and trout streams and elk habitat that we have ever seen, and there are businesses that rely on that. Tourism is an enormous part of our economy in New Mexico. So this is something which has been absolutely crucial to our State's economy, especially in the midst of the last decade and the challenges we have had economically. I know one of the groups who will be there on Saturday are the sportsmen, who care about utilizing the outdoors.

I would ask my colleague from Montana if in Montana he hears from people who hunt and fish, as I do in New Mexico, about the importance this particular legislation has had in protecting habitat and protecting access to the places that regular, blue-collar folks can go to hunt and fish.

Mr. TESTER. Absolutely. We hear from sports men and women nearly every day, if not every day.

Here is where the problem is, and this is why we need to get the Land and Water Conservation Fund authorized and funded—and funded at $900 million, I might add. If you want to go hunting and fishing today in this country, things have changed from the way they were 30 or 40 years ago. You used to be able to access private lands and go hunting and fishing, and you still can, but there are many fewer acres. So the real opportunity to go hunting and fishing in this country is on our public lands, whether those are State or Federal, and this Land and Water Conservation Fund allows access to those public lands.

There are some in this body and there are some in this country who don't think the Federal Government should own one stitch of land. Well, without those opportunities and our outdoor economy, No. 1, our way of life would change forever in States such as Montana, and No. 2, our economy would be severely distressed.

So, you bet, I hear from sports men and women, because when they want to go hunting and fishing, they go to those Federal public lands. That is where the good habitat is that they can access, and that is where the good fisheries are that they can access.

So this is very important. For those in this body who want to see this program go away, they are literally driving a nail in the coffin of rural America's economy.

Mr. HEINRICH. I would ask my colleague from Montana—we have heard a lot about reform. When we had the hearing in front of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, we heard people on both sides of the aisle talking about how well this program works.

Does the Senator think the opposition that is holding this up, that is holding back the majority of this body—a bipartisan majority, I would add—does the Senator from Montana think that reform is really what this is about or is it about a more basic, more ideological opposition to public lands and the current efforts to either sell off or transfer those public lands that our constituents rely on for access to go camping, to go hunting, to go rock climbing, to recreate, to spend time with their families?

Mr. TESTER. It is hard to say what the agenda is. I do know that earlier this year there was a proposal put out to use the Land and Water Conservation Fund for fighting forest fires. Now there is a proposal put out to use the Land and Water Conservation Fund to manage forests.

The fact is, the Land and Water Conservation Fund works. It works to create habitat, and it works to access that habitat. It also works for playgrounds and parks and ball fields all across this country.

If we take a look at our overall budget and what we spend on a lot of stuff around here, $900 million for a nationwide program that impacts so many people, that impacts our economy in such a very positive way—there must be some agenda out there that I cannot see to do away with this fund. It makes no sense to me. And it is particularly frustrating to see folks on the other side of the aisle come down here to the floor and bring their friends in and say: I am going to make this glorious speech about this Land and Water Conservation Fund, and then I want you to stop the unanimous consent.

The bottom line is that things get done in here when we work in the middle. As I told some folks the other day in Montana, we need to bring these folks around who think this is just excess government spending because, quite frankly, there are a lot of places where there is excess government spending in our budget. This is not one of them. This is a good program that helps promote a great way of outdoor life and also helps promote our economy.

Mr. HEINRICH. Ironically, the money in the Land and Water Conservation Fund is not tax dollars. It is literally a deal that goes back five decades now where we opened up large swaths of our natural resources, our oil and gas offshore, and took a percentage of that and invested it back into protecting our natural resources. Obviously, those are natural resources that are one-time. You only get to drill for oil and produce natural gas one time. So the idea was that we would invest that in something to protect our environment, to protect our conservation lands, and to make a permanent contribution to that level of conservation.

Mr. TESTER. That is absolutely correct.

One of the things that makes this moment in time so important when it comes to the Land and Water Conservation Fund is that we are losing habitat, we are losing fisheries every day. There will be limited opportunities to keep these pristine lands available for hunting and fishing in the future, but the habitat will be gone if we don't deal with it. That is why it is very important not only to reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund but to fully fund it so we can take care of these landscapes that help support incredibly great elk and deer and trout fisheries. It is very important. Plus, there are a lot more opportunities in our great outdoors, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund really helps people enjoy life and have quality of life. And I am not just talking about the folks who have incredibly thick wallets; I am talking about everyday, average Americans who work for a living and work darned hard for a living and want to be able to enjoy some of the great things this country has to offer.

Mr. HEINRICH. That is absolutely right. I hear from constituents all the time who will never be able to afford one of those $5 or $10,000 elk hunts on private land but who can enter the lottery every year and who do and oftentimes rely on that to get their family through the winter and to also just pull their family together in a tradition they have had as a part of who they are for years and years.

On Saturday, when we go to celebrate the Valles Caldera National Preserve, I am going to be taking my fly rod, and I am looking forward to spending the dollars that will go back into our State's game and fish coffers to make sure that resource is there again and again and again. That is what this Land and Water Conservation Fund is all about.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, a few weeks ago I inaugurated a series of speeches about religious freedom. In the first speech, I said that the rights of conscience and religious exercise go to the very heart of who we are as human beings and how we make sense out of this world. No decisions are more fundamental to human existence than those regarding our relationship to the Divine, and no act of government is more invasive of individual liberty than compelling a person to violate his or her sincerely chosen religious beliefs. This is why religious freedom in and of itself is so important and must be specially protected.

Last week I spoke about religious freedom in practice here in America. At no time in world history has religious freedom been such an integral part of a nation's origin and character. As Congress said when we unanimously enacted the International Religious Freedom Act in 1998, the right to freedom of religion undergirds the very origin and existence of the United States.

Professor Michael McConnell, director of the Constitutional Law Center at Stanford, describes how, by the time the Bill of Rights was ratified, America had ''already experienced 150 years of a higher degree of religious diversity than had existed anywhere in the world.''

Together, those two speeches told some of the story of religious freedom in America. Today I will build on that foundation and examine the status and the substance of religious freedom. More fully understanding these three aspects of religious freedom—its story, its status, and its substance—will help us better evaluate where we are today and inform where we should go in the future.

The status of religious freedom can be summarized as inalienable and preeminent. James Madison repeatedly identified the free exercise of religion according to conviction and conscience as an inalienable right. To America's Founders, as they expressed in the Declaration of Independence, inalienable rights have two dimensions. They come from God, not from government, and these rights are endowed—that is, they are inseparable from us and part of our very humanity. Government did not provide them, and government cannot take them away.

When Virginia developed its Constitution in 1776, George Mason's draft of a declaration of rights said that the exercise of religion should receive the fullest toleration by government. Madison objected and offered language that became section 16 of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, setting what one scholar calls a new standard for freedom of conscience. Here is Madison's language. He said:

> That religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience.

This understanding of religious freedom did not end with America's founding generation. In 1853 the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved a resolution asserting that in treaties with foreign nations, the United States should secure for our citizens residing abroad ''the right of worshipping God, freely and openly, according to the dictates of their own conscience.'' The committee report on this resolution described religious freedom as fundamental, allowing the ''utmost latitude and freedom of conscience'' so that each individual ''is absolutely free to act in conformity to his own convictions.''

The fact that religious freedom is inalienable leads to another aspect of its status. In his 1785 ''Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments,'' Madison explained that religious exercise ''is precedent, both in order of time and in degree of obligation, to the claims of civil society.'' Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg once wrote that to America's Founders, religious freedom was preeminent among fundamental rights.

Presidents and Congress have similarly identified the status of religious freedom as preeminent among rights. In his 1941 State of the Union Address, for example, President Franklin Roosevelt included religious freedom as one of four essential human freedoms. Just 4 years later, the United States signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which asserts that religious freedom is an inalienable right universal to all members of the human family.

The last several Presidents have issued annual proclamations declaring January 16 to be Religious Freedom Day. Those proclamations, by Presidents of both parties, have said that religious freedom is a core value of our democracy, that it is essential to our dignity as human beings, and that no freedom is more fundamental than the right to practice one's religious beliefs.

Turning to Congress, the House Foreign Affairs Committee in 1955 approved a resolution ''reaffirming the rights of the people of the world to freedom of religion.'' The committee said that this resolution ''recognizes that the basic strength of the United States is spiritual and that all races, people, and nations of the world share with us a dependence on such strength.''

I mentioned earlier that Congress in 1998 unanimously enacted the International Religious Freedom Act. This body passed it by a vote of 98 to 0. Twenty-one Senators serving today—12 Republicans and 9 Democrats—voted for this legislation. So did Vice President JOE BIDEN and Secretary of State John Kerry when they served here. That law declares religious freedom to be a universal human right, a pillar of our Nation, and a fundamental freedom.

In subsequent speeches, I will explore the responsibility of government regarding an inalienable and preeminent right such as religious freedom, but I want to note two things at this point. First, as the Declaration of Independence asserts, government exists to secure inalienable rights. Second, if a right is preeminent, it must be properly accommodated when government takes actions such as enacting legislation and issuing regulations.

The status of religious freedom is that it is inalienable and preeminent. Let me turn now to exploring the substance of religious freedom in terms of both its depth, or what religion freedom is, and its breadth, or those to whom religious freedom belongs.

First, depth. Starting in the early 17th century, religious freedom in America has been understood to be grounded in the individual right of conscience. Roger Williams established a settlement in 1636 for those he described as the distressed of conscience, and subsequent town agreements and ordinances restricted government to civil things and protected the liberty of conscience.

This liberty of conscience encompasses not only what an individual believes but also how an individual acts on that belief. The Maryland Toleration Act of 1649, for example, provided that no person shall be troubled ''in respect of his or her religion nor in the free exercise thereof.''

The Virginia Declaration of Rights was the model for the Bill of Rights in the U.S. Constitution. The free exercise of religion is the first individual right listed in the First Amendment. That phrase, the ''free exercise of religion,'' is very important—extremely important. The First Amendment protects not simply certain exercises of religion or the exercise of religion by certain parties but the free exercise of religion itself.

Religious freedom is more than religious speech, which would be otherwise protected by the First Amendment, or attending a worship service on the Sabbath. It is, as Madison put it, the freely chosen manner of discharging the duty an individual believes he or she owes to God.

This robust substance of religious freedom is described in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which the United States signed in 1948. Article 18 states: ''Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.''

That is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The United States signed the Helsinki Accords in 1975. Section VII declares the signatories ''will recognize

and respect the right of the individual to profess and practice, alone or in community with others, religion or belief in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience.'' Such rights derive from ''the inherent dignity of the human person and are essential for his full and free development.''

In 1992, the United States ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Article 18 echoes the same robust definition of religious freedom as the right, individually or in community with others, in public or in private, to believe and to practice one's religion. This robust description expresses the depth of religious freedom.

The second dimension to the substance of religious freedom is its breadth or its application across society. Earlier I mentioned the Maryland Toleration Act of 1649, which protected the free exercise of religion. It did so, however, only for Trinitarian Christians. The Puritans of Massachusetts Bay Colony outlawed the Quakers and punished heretics. In fact, Roger Williams went to what would become Rhode Island after being banished from Massachusetts because of his religious beliefs.

In those days, religious freedom had depth but not much breadth. Yet seeds were being planted. In 1657, residents of a community known today as Flushing, NY, signed a petition called the ''Flushing Remonstrance.'' This petition protested a ban on certain religious practices that prevented the Quakers from worshipping, and the signers stated they would let everyone decide for themselves how to worship.

America's Founders were the ones who asserted most directly that religious freedom is inalienable and, accordingly, established its breadth in the First Amendment. Rather than being limited to adherents of a particular faith, this protection applies to anyone acting according to the dictates of conscience.

The status and substance of religious freedom became concretely reflected in Supreme Court decisions in the 20th century. In Sherbert v. Verner, a woman was fired from a State government job for refusing to work on Saturday as required by her Seventh-Day Adventist faith. The Supreme Court affirmed that the door to government regulation of religious belief was ''tightly shut'' and set a standard that only barely opened the door to government regulation of religious behavior.

The Court said that government limitations on religiously motivated conduct could be justified only by ''the gravest abuses, endangering interests.'' Therefore, the Court said, Government must have more than a mere rational reason for restricting religious practice. In 1981, the Supreme Court reaffirmed the Sherbert standard by holding that government may ''justify an inroad on religious liberty by showing that it is the least restrictive means of achieving some compelling state interest.''

This holding was consistent with the path of American history regarding religious freedom. The protection of something, after all, goes hand in hand with that thing's value. If religious freedom is inalienable and preeminent, then it must be properly protected by law.

All of that changed in 1990. In a case titled ''Employment Division v. Smith,'' two Oregon State employees were fired for using peyote, a controlled substance, in their Native American religious ceremonies. The law did not single out religious use of this drug, but its application to these individuals seriously inhibited the practice of their religion. The Court should have applied the Sherbert standard and required the State to show a compelling justification for applying this law against religious adherents.

Instead, the Court turned the Sherbert standard on its head. The Court did exactly what it had rejected in Sherbert less than 30 years earlier, holding that the government needs nothing more than a rational reason for a general law or regulation that restricts the practice of religion. In other words, so long as the government is not explicitly targeting religion, the First Amendment provides no protection at all for the free exercise of religion, as that case held. The Court effectively demoted religious freedom from a fundamental right to little more than an optional fringe benefit.

In my opening statement at the Senate Judiciary Committee's hearing in September 1992 on a legislative response to this decision, I said the Smith standard is ''the lowest level of protection the Court could have afforded religious conduct.''

In Smith, the Court made it sound as if the Sherbert decision had spawned an epidemic of people using religious objections to obeying laws. The truth is that Courts had not applied the Sherbert standard strictly at all but with what the Congressional Research Service has described as a light hand. In the years between the Court's decision and Sherbert establishing the compelling interest standard and its decision in Smith abandoning that standard, Federal courts rejected more than 85 percent of religious exercise claims.

Government today compromises, burdens, and even prohibits the exercise of religion not by overt assault but by covert impact. Zoning ordinances can restrict where churches may meet, whether they may expand their meeting places, and what services they may offer; religious institutions may be forced to hire individuals who do not share their faith; and regulations may prohibit individuals from wearing items required by their faith or require employees to work on their Sabbath.

If government exists to secure inalienable rights such as religious freedom, it must properly respect and accommodate that right even as it becomes more and more intrusive. In fact, it is the increasing reach of government that makes vigilance about protecting religious freedom more, not less, important. Requiring a compelling reason to restrict religious practice identifies religious practice as important. Requiring only a rational reason to restrict religious practice identifies it as worth very little.

It is hard to overstate the impact of the Smith decision. It stopped dead in its tracks the long and steady progress toward real protection for religious freedom. Government has its greatest impact on religion today not by direct suppression but by indirect restriction. If the status of religious freedom as inalienable and preeminent compels its protection, then reducing that status, as the Court did in Smith, opens religious freedom to restriction and prohibition.

Congress responded to the Smith decision by enacting the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, or RFRA. We were motivated by the very understanding of religious freedom that the Supreme Court had abandoned; namely, that religious freedom is inalienable and preeminent. RFRA does by statute what the First Amendment is supposed to do. Under RFRA, government may substantially burden the exercise of religion only if doing so is the least restrictive means of achieving a compelling governmental purpose.

Congress enacted RFRA for one simple reason. While the First Amendment protected the free exercise of religion itself, by changing what First Amendment means, the Supreme Court in Smith put the free exercise of religion itself at risk. The Court made every exercise of religion by everyone vulnerable to governmental restriction, interference, and even prohibition. RFRA restored religious freedom by setting a standard of protection that reflects the true value of what it protects and applies that standard across the board.

This principle is so powerful that RFRA not only passed Congress almost unanimously, but it was supported by a coalition of unprecedented ideological breadth. That consensus existed because we rejected numerous requests to go beyond setting the standard and dictate how it should be applied in certain cases. We refused to do that in RFRA because the First Amendment does not do that. We set the right standard and left its application to the courts in individual cases.

In a 1994 religious exercise case, Justice David Souter urged the Court to reconsider its decision in Smith and described what is truly at stake. He wrote: ''The extent to which the Free Exercise Clause requires government to refrain from impeding religious exercise defines nothing less than the respective relationships in our constitutional democracy of the individual to government and to God.''

Properly understanding the status and substance of religious freedom naturally puts those relationships in

order. Misunderstanding or distorting those principles interferes with these relationships and imperils this fundamental human right.

In 1997, the Supreme Court held that RFRA applies only to the Federal Government because the Congress did not have authority to extend its protection to State and local government. As Smith had done, this decision made every religious practice by everyone vulnerable to government restriction. By these two decisions, the Supreme Court ensured that no one in America had either constitutional or statutory protection to practice their faith.

I introduced the Religious Liberty Protection Act in June 1998 to reestablish the religious freedom that the Supreme Court had again taken away, having been an author of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Like RFRA did, this legislation set a tough legal standard reflecting the true status and substance of religious freedom and left it to the courts to apply this standard to individual cases. Unfortunately, although it had bipartisan support, consideration of this bill stalled in the 105th Congress.

I next introduced a Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act to protect religious freedom for as many and as completely as possible. It set the same rigorous standard for government interference in the practice of religion, requiring that such actions be the least restrictive means of achieving a compelling government purpose. Within 2 weeks both the Senate and House had passed this legislation without objection. As he had done with RFRA, President Bill Clinton signed this legislation into law.

It is shocking how little it took—just two Supreme Court decisions—to stall America's centuries-long journey of religious freedom. As a result, the law today does not adequately protect religious freedom. You and I can claim the First Amendment's protection only if the Federal Government explicitly targets our religious practice. The First Amendment is not available at all when State and local governments restrict or even prohibit religious practice altogether. Even the legislation passed unanimously by Congress is unavailable when State and local governments restrict religious freedom.

We live in troubled times, and many things we once took for granted are being challenged and even attacked. Today the rhetoric about religious freedom does not match the reality.

In his 1810 State of the Union Address, President James Madison said that a well-instructed people can alone be a free people. The more we understand how religious freedom is inalienable and preeminent, how it is deep in substance and broad in application, the better equipped we are to promote and defend it. Only then will government not only pay lipservice to the fundamental right to religious freedom but will provide for and properly accommodate it so that it will be a reality for all of us.

These remarks are very important because a lot of people don't realize that religious freedom is not as free as the original Founding Fathers expected it to be. Even though we have had some very interesting cases, not the least of which was the Religious Freedom Restoration Act case, we are not there as far as true and noble protection of religious freedom throughout this country.

Fortunately, most States do respect this, and fortunately, hopefully, most governmental people respect this as well. But that is not enough. We need to change these things and get religious freedom the preeminent position it really holds as the first clause of the First Amendment.

I yield the floor.

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

INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS ON CARBON EMISSIONS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, we are a little more than a month away from the United Nations climate conference in Paris. The countries continue to roll out their international pledges to reduce carbon emissions in an attempt to control global warming. I can't believe it, but this is the 21st year they have done this.

I wrote a book once about this, and the last chapter is the longest chapter. It talks about the motivation and why the United Nations wants to get into this thing and what is in it for them.

I think we all know that every time the United Nations does something, it is contrary to the interest of the United States. We write a letter, which is usually a threat to withhold funding, and that really gets them upset. Of course, what they really want is to have something there that they can draw on so that they don't have to be obligated to any of the countries that are participating.

Anyway, this is not the time to get into that, but I am just saying that this is the 21st year they have had this conference, and every year the same thing happens: The 192 countries get in there and they follow the lead of the United States by saying that they are going to be reducing their emissions, and of course it doesn't happen.

In 2009, Copenhagen hosted such a meeting. I remember going over there, and some of the people who attended at that time were Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, and John Kerry—Clinton and Kerry were in the Senate at that time—BARBARA BOXER, and NANCY PELOSI. They all went over to assure everyone in Copenhagen that the United States was going to pass cap-and-trade legislation.

So I waited until they had all finished their business, and I went over. It was the shortest trip to Europe I had ever taken. I was there 3 hours. I was the one-man truth squad. I said: You have been hearing from all of these leaders, but it is not going to happen. We are not going to pass it. And of course we didn't.

We are going through the same thing now. While the verbal commitments are creating positive press coverage for a lot of people who want to believe this stuff—and the President is seeking to solidify his legacy—most of these pledges are empty and only place the United States in a position of economic hardship, while other countries continue on their current trajectory with CO_2 emissions.

Let's start with India. On Friday we received a report from India. I didn't see it personally until 2 days ago. It was the most recent country to submit its domestic global warming plan. India's plan will cost—and I am stating what they have in the plan they have presented—$2.5 trillion over the next 15 years. Do the math. That is approximately $160 billion a year in costs in order for them to do what is expected of them as a developing country. Their pledge is based on a premise that developed countries—that is us, the United States, always picking up the bills—will pick up these costs by financing the Green Climate Fund.

President Obama has pledged $3 billion to go to the Green Climate Fund, but the Senate and House appropriators have pledged zero, nothing, no money. If you stop and look at one country, such as India, with an estimated cost of $2.5 trillion, $3 billion is such a minuscule fraction, it is not even measurable. That isn't going to happen, and so the President cannot deliver on that promise.

India's approach to addressing its carbon emissions is a continuation of the rich-poor country divide that has plagued the United Nations process in achieving climate agreement from the very start. That is what prompted the Byrd-Hagel resolution of 1997. I remember it so well. I was sitting in this Chamber. I had only been here for 3 years at that time. We all agreed to it. It passed 95 to 0. It was unanimous. Everyone who was in the Chamber at the time voted for it. It said: We are not going to come back. They were really addressing this to Clinton and Gore during their administration. Gore had gone down to see his friends in Central America, I guess it was—I am not sure—to put this thing together. He said: We are going to join you in this commitment to reduce CO_2 emissions.

Well, that sounded good until they came back and they had the Kyoto Convention. They never submitted it to this body because no treaty can be ratified unless it is ratified by the Senate. We never even saw it. What is the reason for that? The reason is they knew it wouldn't pass because the Byrd-Hagel amendment—and several of us were cosponsors of that—said that we won't agree and ratify any convention that comes to us and doesn't treat the developing countries like the developed countries. Unless it does one of two things, we will reject it: one, if it hurts us economically—of course they all do—and two, if China doesn't have to do the same thing we have to do. Well, that is what happened, and of course none of these things have passed.

Now the President is trying to do with regulations what he failed to be able to do through legislation, and we are seeing that every day in the committee that I am fortunate enough to chair, the Environment and Public Works Committee. All of these rules are coming before us, and these rules are a result of things they tried to do legislatively, but they couldn't do—the WOTUS rule.

If you talk to farmers and ranchers in America, they will say that of all the regulations that come from the EPA that are the most damaging to farmers and ranchers, it is the WOTUS rule, and that is the waters of the United States. The Chair is certainly very familiar with this. That means that while we have had State jurisdiction over our water for many years, it had one exception, and that is for navigable waters.

I think all of us who are conservatives would agree that the Federal Government should have jurisdiction over navigable waters because that affects a lot more than just States. So they tried to do that with legislation. That legislation was offered 6 years ago by Senator Feingold of the Senate, who is from Wisconsin, and Congressman Oberstar, who is from Minnesota. Not only did we overwhelmingly defeat their legislation, but we defeated them at the polls in the next election, so it gives you an idea of the unpopularity of this. Since the President was not able to do it with legislation, he tried to do it with regulation. Well, that is the way it is with CO_2 emissions.

So India sent their plan over. They are the third largest CO_2 emitter, only behind China and the United States. Its demand for coal is expected to surpass U.S. consumption by the end of the decade unless the United States helps front India the cash it needs to execute its trillion-dollar climate plan, but that is not happening. As a Member of this body, we will do everything we can to stop it, and we will be successful. We know for a fact that is not what America wants to do.

Now we have China. It has pledged to peak its carbon emissions around 2030 and increase its renewables to 20 percent of the primary energy use. Subsequent to its commitment, China also announced a nationwide cap-and-trade system alongside a newfound partnership between U.S. cities. While all of these commitments—that is, they have partnership cities that say ''We will do it in our State if you do it over there''—they sound good to the media, but the facts don't pan out because it is nothing more than business as usual. At the end of the day, the country gets to increase its emissions for the next 15 years. Here is what they call an agreement that is in the best interest of reducing CO_2 worldwide. Yet they are committing not to reduce but to increase their emissions for the next 15 years, until 2030.

When they first made their commitment—I called it a nonbinding charade because as China's economy has grown, so has its demand for electricity. China is the largest consumer and importer of coal in the world, accounting for 50 percent of global consumption. Fifty percent of the global consumption of coal is in one country—China.

Over the next decade, China is expected to bring a new coal-fired powerplant online every 10 days to give it the electricity it demands. Unlike the United States, China does not have other inexpensive energy sources. Where we in the United States are benefiting from cheap natural gas, China doesn't have the technology and resources to do it, so they can't do that. Even though we have this huge shale revolution in this country where we are producing oil and natural gas—which brings up the other thing we need to do, and that is to do away with the export ban on natural gas and oil. But China doesn't have the technology to do that, so all they can use is coal. And to continue to support the world's largest economy, which China is, China will have no choice but to break its promise of hitting its emission peak by 2030, and that is not going to happen.

Russia has pledged to reduce its carbon emissions between 25 and 30 percent by 2030. Here is the sticking point. Russia made this projection based on its carbon emissions baseline of 1990. By playing with numbers, Russia's commitment will actually allow it to increase emissions between 700 and 900 tons in 2030.

Then there is Mexico, South Korea, and South Africa. All of them will have made pledges not cut emissions but to slow the growth—not to cut emissions but slow the growth. In other words, these countries are committing to increased emissions through 2030. In the meantime, President Obama is committing the United States to cut—not slow the growth but cut—its emissions from 26 to 28 percent by 2025. Nobody knows how they came to those years. There is no plan that we have seen that would do that. But this promise is also just as hollow as what we have been hearing from these other countries that I previously mentioned.

Not only does the President not have the backing of the Senate and the American people, but outside groups are finding that the President's methods to achieve these reductions through climate regulations—primarily the Clean Power Plan—are faulty. According to a recent analysis by the U.S. Chamber, the President's intended nationally determined contribution is about 33 percent short of meeting its stated target. So that is not going to work

On July 8, David Bookbinder, former Sierra Club chief climate counsel, testified before the committee that I chair about his own analysis that has found an even greater gap. It was in this same hearing where it was stated that to close the gap in the President's climate commitment, the United States would likely have to consider regulating other industrial sectors, including agriculture. So it is not just oil and gas and some of these emitters. It is everybody, and it is not going to happen because it can't happen. It doesn't work.

After that committee hearing, I led a letter with 10 other Senators to the President requesting a detailed response for just how the United States intends to meet the pledge of 26- to 28-percent emissions reduction by 2025. It has been 3 months, and we still haven't received a response. So they have been saying this. We are saying: How are you going to do it? Three months have gone by, and we still don't know how he plans to do it.

When we go to these other countries, they assume that America is like they are; if the President says it, he means it, and he is going to try to make it happen. With his pledge to the international community, the President is setting up the American economy to suffer great pain for no gain.

Now, his Clean Power Plan lacks credibility. The EPA does not even bother to assess the minuscule environmental benefits associated with the Clean Power Plan and with the cost of the plan. We are talking about something that would be upwards of $400 billion a year. That is very similar to when they tried to do this with cap-and-trade legislation.

I had the occasion and I do this: Every time I hear a big number, I go back to my State of Oklahoma and I do a calculation. I find out how many families in my State of Oklahoma filed a Federal tax return, and then I do the math. As it turned out, that would cost about $3,000 per family. Now, to some people who believe the world is coming to an end and global warming is causing it, that might sound like: Well, $3,000 a family is not that big a deal. But let's remember—and I would remind the Chair—that it was just a short while ago when Lisa Jackson, who was the President's nominee and eventually became the Director of the EPA, was asked by me on live TV in our committee: If we do pass any of these things, either by regulation or by legislation, will that have the effect of reducing CO_2 emissions worldwide? She said: No, because this isn't where the problem is. It is in China. It is in India and in these other countries that I mentioned before. So we would be doing that. Even if you are a believer in the doom philosophy, we would be doing it in a way that is not going to work.

So despite all the costs they have, the President's climate regulations would only reduce CO_2 concentrations by 0.2 percent. Global average temperature rise would be—would be, I say, not will be but would be—reduced only by .0016 degrees Farenheit. It could not even be measurable. And the sea level rise would be reduced by 0.2 millimeters, which is the thickness of two human hairs.

So it is no wonder the President is working so hard to circumvent

Congress's role in committing the United States to the agreement.

I only say this because we are now getting close to December and we have been through this so many times before, and this isn't going to be any different. There is going to be a difference, and that is that they are not going to attempt to do it by passing legislation. They want to circumvent Congress because they know Congress reports to the people and the people don't want this.

I can remember when global warming—when they had their annual Gallup poll every March. It used to be that when asked what were the critical concerns about America, global warming was always—in 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005—between first and second place of the greatest concern. Do we know what it is today? Out of 15, it is number 15. So the people have caught on. They know it will be the largest tax increase in history and that it will not accomplish anything.

Mr. President, what is our timing situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are no time limitations.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I wish to make some other comments because something very good happened, and it is not normally the case. We passed the Defense authorization bill. Here we are in the midst of over two decades of wars and we are being challenged on all fronts—from national states to terrorist organizations and extremists to cyber and lone-wolf attacks. Our military is directly engaged in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, and the demands that this country is placing on them continues to increase. It is greater than anything I have ever seen in the years I have been here and probably the greatest in history in terms of the numbers of threats to America from different countries.

Yesterday we voted to pass the National Defense Authorization Act, or the NDAA, for the 54th consecutive year. I have been worried. The last few years we ended up passing it not this early but passing it in December. If we had gone to December 31 in those years or even in this year, all of a sudden our people wouldn't get hazard pay and they wouldn't get reenlistment bonuses and we couldn't let that happen. So I am glad we did it earlier this year. I think it is the most important bill we pass every year.

It is our constitutional duty to provide oversight over the President and his administration. There is an old wornout document that nobody reads anymore. It is called the Constitution. If we read article I, section 8 of the Constitution, it tells us what we are supposed to be doing—No. 1, defending America, and No. 2, roads and highways. I am very glad we passed the highway bill. It is over in the House, and I am optimistic they will be able to pass it over there as well.

So the Constitution says the most important thing we do is defending America. It is our constitutional duty to do it.

The NDAA contains provisions that take care of military men and women—the pay, the benefits, the bonuses, the new starts, the reenlistment bonuses, military construction, and all of this stuff. This bill addresses things such as additional protections for victims of sexual assault. It is a good bill, and most of the members of this committee have been to the floor today and have talked about.

I just wanted to mention a couple of things that may have been overlooked by some of the other speakers. They should be focusing on accomplishing their missions instead of wondering if this bill authorizes spending priorities critical to our national security and supports the resources requirement of the Department of Defense. While this bill does not contain every provision that the Senate wanted, that I wanted, that the House wanted, and that the President would like to have, the final language is overall good policy for our national defense. It provides authorizations in a timely manner. This vital piece of legislation sets the course for our national security and provides for our Nation's nearly 2.1 million all-volunteer force.

I was a product of the draft many years ago. I have often said that is one of the things that this country probably ought to go back to. We wouldn't have a lot of the problems today if we had to have kids go through the discipline and the appreciation for our country. But nonetheless, this is an all-volunteer force, and it has worked beautifully.

I make it a point, when I go to Afghanistan or Iraq or Africa and these places where we have troops stationed, to sit down in the mess halls, to go out in the field and eat with them or listen to the problems they have and try to boost them up a little bit because they know that under this administration, which I have called the disarming of America, defending America is not the high priority that it should be. This is a time when each service chief, secretary, and combatant commander has testified that no service will be able to meet the wartime requirements under sequestration.

The President and many people in this body wanted sequestration to take place but only for domestic purposes as well as military, and we are saying this is where the problem is. Let's look at Secretary Carter, our Secretary of Defense. He said recently:

> Readiness remains at troubling levels across the force. Even with the fiscal year 2016 budget, the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps won't reach their readiness goals until 2020 and the Air Force until 2023.

At a time when former Secretary Hagel says—listen to this. I don't know why more people in America didn't hear this. This is the Secretary of Defense, Secretary Hagel, who said: ''American dominance in seas, in the skies, and in space can no longer be taken for granted.'' This is America, and people are thinking that the President might even veto this bill.

Admiral Winnefeld, who is Vice Chief of Staff, said: ''There could be for the first time in my career instances where we may be asked to respond to a crisis and we will have to say that we cannot.''

General Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, says we are putting our military on a path where ''the force is so degraded and so unready'' that it would be ''immoral to use it.''

General Dempsey labels it ''unlike any in his lifetime.''

So the passage of this legislation is absolutely necessary. We have passed it. We have done the responsible thing. And I think we need to be sure that we use full pressure to make sure the President does not veto this bill, because he is toying with a veto.

We have never seen anything like this in the history of this country. We have a level of threat to America, and we are going to have to make sure that we pass this bill. I am very proud that it was passed by the majority in the Senate.

I know I am the last speaker tonight. I suggest the absence of a quorum, just to see if there is any last message that has to be given.

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.

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.

RECOGNIZING COASTAL RIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I wish to commend Coastal Ridge Elementary School in York, ME, on being named a 2015 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. This year, Coastal Ridge Elementary was one of only 335 schools across the country and one of only two schools from Maine to receive this prestigious recognition of high accomplishment by the U.S. Department of Education.

Created in 1982, the Blue Ribbon Schools Award honors schools that are either academically superior in their States or that demonstrate significant gains in student achievement. The schools singled out for this national recognition are models of high educational standards and accountability.

This award recognizes Coastal Ridge Elementary as a model of excellence and high achievement. The students' success can be attributed to the school's focus on creating a healthy climate where adults model respect and selflessness. Principal Sean Murphy noted that while the award is based on exemplary test scores in math and reading, the school's emphasis on the arts, sciences, and social development has contributed to the students' overall achievement.

I am pleased that the U.S. Department of Education has selected Coastal Ridge Elementary School for this well-deserved honor and congratulate not only the students, but also the administrators, teachers, staff, and parents on this outstanding achievement. Together, they are making a difference in the lives of hundreds of students by helping them become energetic learners and engaged citizens.

RECOGNIZING MINOT CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I wish to commend Minot Consolidated School in Minot, ME, on being named a 2015 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. This year, Minot Consolidated was one of only 335 schools across the country and one of only two schools from Maine to receive this prestigious recognition of high accomplishment by the U.S. Department of Education.

Created in 1982, the Blue Ribbon Schools award honors schools that are either academically superior in their States or that demonstrate significant gains in student achievement. The schools singled out for this national recognition are models of high educational standards and accountability.

With just 240 students from prekindergarten to sixth grade, Minot Consolidated takes pride in a strong sense of community that contributes to the success of its students. Staff, families, and community members have come together to create a welcoming school environment where students are challenged, motivated, and rewarded for good work. Self-confidence and personal responsibility are strongly encouraged and have produced positive results for Minot Consolidated's high-achieving student body.

I am pleased that the U.S. Department of Education has selected Minot Consolidated School for this well-deserved honor and congratulate not only the students, but also the administrators, teachers, staff, and parents on this outstanding achievement. Together, they are making a difference in the lives of hundreds of students by helping them become energetic learners and engaged citizens.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO ETHEL LA ROCK AND ANDREW KIM

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Ethel La Rock and Andrew Kim, two Montana veterans who are also the first two individuals set to be interviewed as part of our office's participation in the Veterans History Project.

The Veterans History Project's mission is to collect, preserve, and make accessible the personal accounts of American wartime veterans, resulting in an incredible resource for researchers, educators, and future generations to hear directly from veterans and to better understand the realities of past wars.

Ethel La Rock retired from the United States Army as a lieutenant colonel in 1976 after 24 years of service. She served as a nurse in Korea and Vietnam. She was awarded the Bronze Star Medal in 1967 for meritorious service in Vietnam, which I had the honor to present to her in August.

Andrew Kim retired from the United States Navy after 25 years of service in 1969 as a chief boatswain's mate. As a 15-year-old, he watched the bombing of Pearl Harbor and then enlisted as soon as he turned 17. His tours of duty included WWII, the Korean conflict, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Vietnam war.

Thank you to Ethel and Andy for their service to our Nation and for sharing their stories with the people of Montana.•

TRIBUTE TO JESSICA ANDERSON

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Jessica Anderson, an outstanding educator at Powell County High School in Deer Lodge, MT.

Ms. Anderson is the epitome of ''leading by example.'' With experience in teaching both prekindergarten through eighth grade and now high school, she has developed a unique teaching style that has inspired countless students.

Her technology-based teaching style has led to her classroom's collaboration with students on opposite sides of the world. She is also a cofounder of #MTedChat on Twitter, where educators can come together to share, collaborate, and challenge each other to improve.

Ms. Anderson's instruction of students both in the classroom and online through the Montana Digital Academy has truly underscored the importance of universal education in our increasingly digital age. Not only am I proud to recognize her today, but also congratulate her on recently being awarded the title of 2016 Montana Teacher of the Year.

I thank her for promoting the educational ideals that Montanans hold so dear and look forward to watching the continual positive influence she will have on Montana's future leaders.•

RECOGNIZING LOCAL MONTANA BREWERIES

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the achievement of three local Montana breweries. Montana Brewing Company in Billings, Madison River Brewing Company in Belgrade, and KettleHouse Brewing Company in Missoula received medals for their excellent beer this year at the Great American Beer Festival, one of the largest beer festivals in the Nation. Out of more than 6,000 entries, these three great breweries were recognized as having the best beer in a certain category. Madison River Brewing Company received a gold medal in Scottish-style ale for their Cold Smoke, and KettleHouse Brewing Company followed with a silver medal in the same category for their Copper John Scotch Ale. Montana Brewing Company received a bronze medal in Irish-style red ale for their Hooligan's Irish Red Ale.

I would also like to recognize that Montana Brewing Company has received 16 medals since 1998, and KettleHouse Brewing Company has received 3 medals since 2009 at the Great American Beer Festival. The dedication and excellence of all three breweries are an example of Montana as a whole. I applaud their achievements.•

TRIBUTE TO EARLE G. SHETTLEWORTH, JR.

• Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the outstanding devotion of Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., who has worked tirelessly to preserve Maine's rich heritage throughout his career. After more than four decades with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Earle stepped down as director on October 1, 2015. Despite his retirement and to the delight of the people of Maine, Mr. Shettleworth will continue to hold the esteemed position of Maine's State historian.

Mr. Shettleworth's interest in historic preservation was sparked when he was just 13 years old, after witnessing the destruction of Portland's Union Station. Shortly after this defining event, Mr. Shettleworth became the youngest founding member of Greater Portland Landmarks and has had a distinguished career in public service ever since. Throughout his life, Earle has greatly appreciated architecture and art, which have added to his passion and devotion to preserving Maine's history.

Mr. Shettleworth has served on a wide range of historical commissions and societies, including the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. During his years with the commission, Earle helped designate over 1,500 properties in Maine as historic places in the National Register, and by the time he retired, he was the longest serving State historic preservation officer in the United States.

Mr. Shettleworth holds a bachelor's degree from Colby College and a master's degree from the American and

New England Studies Program at Boston University. He has published dozens of articles and authored numerous books. As a reporter at the Portland Evening Express, Mr. Shettleworth authored a series of 52 articles called ''Portland Heritage,'' which explored the history of the city's notable buildings. Mr. Shettleworth has received honorary doctorates of humane letters from Bowdoin College and the Maine College of Art for his scholarship in the fields of history, historical preservation, and art history.

I would like to join the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and the people of Maine in recognizing and thanking Mr. Shettleworth for his tireless work and dedication to the great State of Maine. Earle not only preserved Maine's history, but also inspired greater public interest in our State's rich heritage. The State of Maine owes Mr. Shettleworth immensely for all his hard work, and we cannot begin to thank him enough. I wish him all the best in his retirement.●

TRIBUTE TO CHIEF PETTY OFFICER MIKEL S. COOK

● Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I wish to recognize yeoman CPO Mikel S. Cook, on the occasion of his retirement from the United States Navy.

In his 22-year career in the United States Navy, yeoman Chief Petty Officer Cook has served with great distinction and made countless sacrifices to our country. I commend him for his service and extraordinary dedication to duty and the United States of America.

Yeoman Chief Petty Officer Cook graduated from boot camp in 1994 from Recruit Training Command in Orlando, FL. Following graduation, he attended Yeoman ''A'' School in Meridian, MS. He reported to his first sea assignment with the Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 7. He later reported to the USS Rainier, AOE–7, participating in Operations Southern Watch and Enduring Freedom and earning his enlisted surface and air warfare pins. His final sea assignment was with Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron 2 out of Whidbey Island, WA.

Yeoman Chief Petty Officer Cook also served with distinction in a variety of assignments ashore: as executive assistant to the Deputy Chief of Staff—Operations and Intelligence, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Mons, Belgium; and as a naval analyst with the special liaison detachment, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Brussels, Belgium.

After completing his last sea tour, yeoman Chief Petty Officer Cook reported to his current assignment as congressional liaison in the Navy Appropriations Matters Office, where he helped the Department of the Navy achieve their financial and legislative goals. For 5 years, yeoman Chief Petty Officer Cook has demonstrated exceptional leadership and foresight, engaging Members of the Appropriations Committee and its staff to provide information essential to resourcing the Navy for its role as the world's dominant sea power. In an increasingly difficult budget environment, he provided essential support in shepherding four Navy budgets through the appropriations process, serving our Navy with insight and dedication.

I join my colleagues today in saying thank you to yeoman CPO Mikel S. Cook for his extraordinary dedication to duty and steadfast service to this country throughout his distinguished career in the U.S. Navy. We wish him; his wife, Robyn; and his daughter, Norah, ''Fair Winds and Following Seas'' in his well-deserved retirement.●

TRIBUTE TO JAMES BRUBAKER

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Mr. James Brubaker, director of the Department of Veterans Affairs regional offices in Sioux Falls, SD, and Fargo, ND, since 2010. Mr. Brubaker will be retiring from the Department of Veterans Affairs on October 30, 2015, after an accomplished career.

Mr. Brubaker graduated with a bachelor's degree in financial administration from Michigan State University in 1982. He joined the Department of Veterans Affairs in 1987 and has diligently served veterans in offices throughout the Nation. As the director of the Dakotas Veterans Affairs regional offices, he administered benefits for nearly 156,000 veterans in South Dakota, North Dakota, and 15 counties in Minnesota. Under Mr. Brubaker's leadership, the Sioux Falls and Fargo regional offices have maintained an excellent compensation rating related claim-based accuracy of over 95 percent, one of the best ratings in the Nation. This significant achievement demonstrates Mr. Brubaker's management ability and his dedication to serving our Nation's veterans.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Mr. Brubaker for his fine work. I wish him continued success in the years to come.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:52 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, without amendment:

S. 986. An act to require the Secretary of the Interior to take into trust 4 parcels of Federal land for the benefit of certain Indian Pueblos in the State of New Mexico.

S. 1300. An act to amend the section 221 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide relief for adoptive families from immigrant visa fees in certain situations.

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

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1525. An act to require the Securities and Exchange Commission to make certain improvements to form 10–K and regulation S–K, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1553. An act to amend the Federal Deposit Insurance Act to specify which smaller institutions may qualify for an 18–month examination cycle.

H.R. 1839. An act to amend the Securities Act of 1933 to exempt certain transactions involving purchases by accredited investors, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2091. An act to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to clarify the ability to request consumer reports in certain cases to establish and enforce child support payments and awards.

H.R. 2168. An act to make the current Dungeness crab fishery management regime permanent and for other purposes.

H.R. 3102. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to reform programs of the Transportation Security Administration, streamline transportation security regulations, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3510. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a cybersecurity strategy for the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH) announced that on today, October 7, 2015, he has signed the following enrolled bill, previously signed by the Speaker of the House:

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.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 6:05 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 986. An act to require the Secretary of the Interior to take into trust 4 parcels of Federal land for the benefit of certain Indian Pueblos in the State of New Mexico.

S. 1300. An act to amend the section 221 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide relief for adoptive families from immigrant visa fees in certain situations.

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

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1525. An act to require the Securities and Exchange Commission to make certain improvements to form 10–K and regulation S–K, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 1553. An act to amend the Federal Deposit Insurance Act to specify which smaller institutions may qualify for an 18-month examination cycle; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 1839. An act to amend the Securities Act of 1933 to exempt certain transactions involving purchases by accredited investors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 2091. An act to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to clarify the ability to request consumer reports in certain cases to

establish and enforce child support payments and awards; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 2168. An act to make the current Dungeness crab fishery management regime permanent and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 3102. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to reform programs of the Transportation Security Administration, streamline transportation security regulations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 3510. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a cybersecurity strategy for the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2146. A bill to hold sanctuary jurisdictions accountable for defying Federal law, to increase penalties for individuals who illegally reenter the United States after being removed, and to provide liability protection for State and local law enforcement who cooperate with Federal law enforcement and for other purposes.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. VITTER, from the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

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.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Mr. BURR):

S. 2147. A bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 with respect to participant votes on the suspension of benefits under multiemployer plans in critical and declining status; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. CARPER, Mr. UDALL, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KING, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. COONS, Mr. FRANKEN, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 2148. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to prevent an increase in the Medicare part B premium and deductible in 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. FRANKEN):

S. 2149. A bill to amend the Higher Education Opportunity Act to add disclosure requirements to the institution financial aid offer form and to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to make such form mandatory; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. FRANKEN):

S. 2150. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to make technical improvements to the Net Price Calculator system so that prospective students may have a more accurate understanding of the true cost of college; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. CASEY):

S. 2151. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide liability protections for volunteer practitioners at health centers under section 330 of such Act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CORKER (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. COONS):

S. 2152. A bill to establish a comprehensive United States Government policy to encourage the efforts of countries in sub-Saharan Africa to develop an appropriate mix of power solutions, including renewable energy, for more broadly distributed electricity access in order to support poverty reduction, promote development outcomes, and drive economic growth, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 2153. A bill to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to require applicable manufacturers to include information regarding payments made to physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and other advance practice nurses in transparency reports submitted under section 1128G of such Act; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN:

S. 2154. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the percentage depletion allowance for certain hardrock mines; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 2155. A bill to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to permanently prohibit the conduct of offshore drilling on the outer Continental Shelf off the coast of California, Oregon, and Washington; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN:

S. 2156. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide a criminal penalty for launching drones that interfere with fighting fires affecting Federal property or responding to disasters affecting interstate or foreign commerce, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. BOXER:

S. 2157. 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. LANKFORD:

S. 2158. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the credit for electricity produced from certain renewable resources; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 2159. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to allow for greater State flexibility with respect to excluding providers who are involved in abortions; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. KIRK (for himself and Mr. HELLER):

S. 2160. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, relating to enlistment and consequences of certain service in the Armed Forces, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FRANKEN, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2161. A bill to provide for the adjustment of status of certain nationals of Liberia to that of lawful permanent residents and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. ROBERTS, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 2162. A bill to establish a 10-year term for the service of the Librarian of Congress; considered and passed.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. DAINES, and Mr. GARDNER):

S. 2163. A bill to amend title 23, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Transportation to require that broadband conduits be installed as a part of certain highway construction projects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 2164. A bill to extend the secure rural schools and community self-determination program and to make permanent the payment in lieu of taxes program and the land and water conservation fund; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. VITTER (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. FISCHER, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. PETERS, Mr. ENZI, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. COONS):

S. Res. 280. A resolution recognizing the month of October 2015 as ''National Women's Small Business Month''; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. THUNE):

S. Res. 281. A resolution designating the week of October 5 through October 9, 2015, as ''National Health Information Technology Week'' to recognize the value of health information technology in transforming and improving the healthcare system for all people in the United States; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. SCHATZ:

S. Con. Res. 23. A concurrent resolution supporting the establishment of a bipartisan Museum Study Commission to study the establishment of a National Museum of the American People to tell the immigration and migration stories of all people of the United States; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 208

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 208, a bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to gain and maintain operational control of the international borders of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 275

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S.

275, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coverage of home as a site of care for infusion therapy under the Medicare program.

S. 377

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 377, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to increase access to ambulance services under the Medicare program and to reform payments for such services under such program, and for other purposes.

S. 502

At the request of Mr. LEE, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY), the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) and the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 502, a bill to focus limited Federal resources on the most serious offenders.

S. 520

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 520, a bill to amend the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act to reauthorize the Act.

S. 628

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 628, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the designation of maternity care health professional shortage areas.

S. 681

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 681, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes.

S. 743

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 743, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to recognize the service in the reserve components of the Armed Forces of certain persons by honoring them with status as veterans under law, and for other purposes.

S. 1013

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1013, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage and payment for complex rehabilitation technology items under the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 1056

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1056, a bill to eliminate racial profiling by law enforcement, and for other purposes.

S. 1081

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1081, a bill to end the use of body-gripping traps in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

S. 1383

At the request of Mr. PERDUE, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1383, a bill to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to subject the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection to the regular appropriations process, and for other purposes.

S. 1493

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1493, a bill to provide for an increase, effective December 1, 2015, in the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 1766

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1766, a bill to direct the Secretary of Defense to review the discharge characterization of former members of the Armed Forces who were discharged by reason of the sexual orientation of the member, and for other purposes.

S. 1915

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1915, a bill to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to make anthrax vaccines and antimicrobials available to emergency response providers, and for other purposes.

S. 1945

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1945, a bill to make available needed psychiatric, psychological, and supportive services for individuals with mental illness and families in mental health crisis, and for other purposes.

S. 1979

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S. 1979, a bill to direct the Chief of Engineers to transfer an archaeological collection, commonly referred to as the Kennewick Man or the Ancient One, to the Washington State Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation.

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1979, supra.

S. 2021

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2021, a bill to prohibit Federal agencies and Federal contractors from requesting that an applicant for employment disclose criminal history record information before the applicant has received a conditional offer, and for other purposes.

S. 2031

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2031, a bill to reduce temporarily the royalty required to be paid for sodium produced on Federal lands, and for other purposes.

S. 2034

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 2034, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide additional aggravating factors for the imposition of the death penalty based on the status of the victim.

S. 2067

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) were added as cosponsors of S. 2067, a bill to establish EUREKA Prize Competitions to accelerate discovery and development of disease-modifying, preventive, or curative treatments for Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, to encourage efforts to enhance detection and diagnosis of such diseases, or to enhance the quality and efficiency of care of individuals with such diseases.

S. 2068

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2068, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to include automated fire sprinkler system retrofits as section 179 property and classify certain automated fire sprinkler system retrofits as 15-year property for purposes of depreciation.

S. 2091

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2091, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to stimulate international tourism to the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 2142

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr.

MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2142, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to establish an efficient system to enable employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, and for other purposes.

S. 2146

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2146, a bill to hold sanctuary jurisdictions accountable for defying Federal law, to increase penalties for individuals who illegally reenter the United States after being removed, and to provide liability protection for State and local law enforcement who cooperate with Federal law enforcement and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 22

At the request of Mrs. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 22, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency relating to the definition of ''waters of the United States'' under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

S. RES. 237

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 237, a resolution condemning Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army for continuing to perpetrate crimes against humanity, war crimes, and mass atrocities, and supporting ongoing efforts by the United States Government, the African Union, and governments and regional organizations in central Africa to remove Joseph Kony and Lord's Resistance Army commanders from the battlefield and promote protection and recovery of affected communities.

S. RES. 278

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 278, a resolution welcoming the President of the Republic of Korea on her official visit to the United States and celebrating the United States-Republic of Korea relationship, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FRANKEN, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2161. A bill to provide for the adjustment of status of certain nationals of Liberia to that of lawful permanent residents and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I am pleased to reintroduce the Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act along with Senators WHITEHOUSE, KLOBUCHAR, WARREN, and FRANKEN.

This bill, which I have introduced every Congress since 1999, seeks to provide a path to citizenship for qualifying Liberian refugees who came here decades ago to escape Liberia's civil wars. Since this time, they have been in our country legally through short term extensions of Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Enforced Departure. After years of uncertainty about whether they will be able to stay in their communities or whether their families will be split up, this bill give eligible Liberians the chance to apply for legal permanent residency, and begin the process of finally becoming citizens.

Similar safeguards were included in the last Comprehensive Immigration Reform bill that the Senate passed, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to provide this critical and long overdue support for our Liberian community.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. DAINES, and Mr. GARDNER):

S. 2163. A bill to amend title 23, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Transportation to require that broadband conduits be installed as a part of certain highway construction projects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, as a fifth generation Montanan, I have seen firsthand the struggles rural America faces when it comes to broadband connectivity. I worked in the cloud computing industry for 13 years, so I also know the opportunities created by technology and connectivity.

Not only does access to broadband connect rural Americans and tribal communities to the rest of the world, but there are many farming applications that will enable farmers in Montana to be more efficient and equip them to feed the growing population. Despite the importance of connecting these communities, Montana remains ranked among the worst States for broadband connectivity and there are too many instances where the Federal Government stands in the way of broadband infrastructure deployment. This is especially important for States like Montana where 29 percent of the State is federally owned. Every Federal agency has their own set of requirements for siting infrastructure on Federal lands, and the process can take up to 10 years in some cases. This burdensome, bureaucratic process is driving industry away from serving rural America and tribal lands.

That is why I am proud to introduce the bipartisan Streamlining and Investing in Broadband Infrastructure act with my colleagues Senator KLOBUCHAR and Senator GARDNER. The bill implements a dig once policy that incorporates broadband conduit installation into new highway projects. It also directs the Federal Government to further consolidate and streamline siting on Federal lands by establishing a fee schedule for the grant of property interests and by developing a master application form for communications construction on all Federal lands. Making effective use of existing resources and streamlining these processes are essential to continue broadband deployment in rural America. By making it easier for providers to lay the groundwork for broadband, we take an important step toward connecting our unserved communities.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 280—RECOGNIZING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2015 AS ''NATIONAL WOMEN'S SMALL BUSINESS MONTH''

Mr. VITTER (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. FISCHER, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. PETERS, Mr. ENZI, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. COONS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 280

Whereas the Small Business Administration has declared the month of October 2015 to be ''National Women's Small Business Month'' along with the celebration of the anniversary of the signing of the Women's Business Ownership Act of 1988 (Public Law 100–533; 102 Stat. 2689) that established the National Women's Business Council and the Women's Business Center program;

Whereas there are over 9,900,000 women-owned small businesses in the United States;

Whereas women-owned small businesses collected $1,600,000,000,000 in total receipts in 2012, which is an increase of 35 percent since 2007;

Whereas the rate of growth for women-owned employer firms is 3 times that of men-owned employer firms;

Whereas, since 2007, the number of women-owned small businesses in the United States has increased by 2,100,000 and women-owned small businesses have added nearly 1,500,000 more jobs;

Whereas Congress continues to support the National Women's Business Council and the focus of the National Women's Business Council on alleviating obstacles faced by women small business owners and women entrepreneurs; and

Whereas the celebration of ''National Women's Small Business Month'' would honor women small business owners and women entrepreneurs and recognize the significance of their contributions to the small business community: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the month of October 2015 as ''National Women's Small Business Month'';

(2) honors the vital role of women small business owners and women entrepreneurs in the United States during ''National Women's Small Business Month'';

(3) recognizes the significant contributions of women small business owners and women entrepreneurs to the small business community;

(4) supports and encourages young women entrepreneurs to pursue their passions and create more start-up businesses;

(5) recognizes the importance of creating policies that promote a business-friendly environment for small business owners that is free of unnecessary regulations and red tape; and

(6) supports efforts to increase awareness of the value of women-owned small businesses on the economy of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 281—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 5 THROUGH OCTOBER 9, 2015, AS ''NATIONAL HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY WEEK'' TO RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN TRANSFORMING AND IMPROVING THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM FOR ALL PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES

Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. THUNE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 281

Whereas 2015 celebrates the 10th anniversary of National Health Information Technology Week;

Whereas Congress has emphasized that the use of health information technology is essential to providing coordinated care, expanding access to care, and improving the quality and safety of the mental and physical health of all people in the United States;

Whereas health information technology is essential for improving patient care, ensuring patient safety, stopping duplicative tests and paperwork, and reducing healthcare costs;

Whereas Congress has recognized that the convergence of medical advances, health information technology, and high-speed broadband networks are transforming the delivery of care by bringing the healthcare provider and patient together virtually, especially those in disadvantaged populations and geographies;

Whereas by 2020, the market segment for the healthcare-related Internet of Things, which allows data to move among people, sensors, and machines, is expected to approach $120,000,000,000;

Whereas personalized medicine is an important emerging healthcare topic that includes the tailoring of medicines and treatments to the unique genetic blueprint and lifestyle and environmental data of each patient and comparing that information to the information of other individuals to predict illness and determine best treatments;

Whereas Congress has recognized and taken action to modernize regulations so as to grow the health information technology market, improve the health of all people in the United States, create high-demand jobs, and stimulate market innovation; and

Whereas it is necessary to continue activities that are foundational to the transformation of healthcare delivery in the United States, including—

(1) innovation in health information technology;

(2) opening interoperability between systems and devices; and

(3) the exchange of health information confidently and securely among different providers, systems, and insurers: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of October 5 through October 9, 2015, as ''National Health Information Technology Week'';

(2) recognizes the value of information technology and management systems in transforming healthcare for the people of the United States;

(3) encourages all interested parties to promote the use of information technology and management systems to transform the healthcare system of the United States; and

(4) calls on all people to be engaged in their mental and physical health through the use of health information technology.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 23—SUPPORTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BIPARTISAN MUSEUM STUDY COMMISSION TO STUDY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO TELL THE IMMIGRATION AND MIGRATION STORIES OF ALL PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. SCHATZ submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources:

S. CON. RES. 23

Whereas the United States was founded and built by people from every country who made the United States the economic, military, scientific, and cultural leader of the world;

Whereas as of October 2015, there is no national museum in Washington, DC, that—

(1) celebrates the making of the people of the United States; or

(2) tells the migration history of any group of people to or within the United States;

Whereas a National Museum of the American People would—

(1) recount the history of all groups of people who came to the United States and the contributions of those people to the United States;

(2) have the theme *E Pluribus Unum*, the original motto of the United States;

(3) celebrate every ethnic and minority group in the United States;

(4) foster a sense of belonging to the United States;

(5) contribute to a common national identity as people of the United States;

(6) highlight the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, the founding documents of the United States;

(7) explore the ways in which those documents shaped the character of the people of the United States and infused the people of the United States with common values; and

(8) be a resource for State, local, and ethnic museums throughout the United States that present exhibits that celebrate the heritage of the people of the United States;

Whereas the people of the United States do not have a comprehensive and accurate picture of the history of all of the people who founded and continue to build the United States;

Whereas people from every ethnic group in the United States would visit a National Museum of the American People to learn their own history and the history of every other ethnic group in the United States;

Whereas a National Museum of the American People would attract foreign visitors and dignitaries because few foreigners know the story of the individuals who—

(1) became citizens of the United States at the founding of the country; and

(2) migrated to the United States from other countries;

Whereas a museum that tells the story of the making of the people of the United States and celebrates all individuals who migrated and settled in the United States and the territories of the United States belongs near the National Mall in Washington, DC;

Whereas Canada and Mexico have major popular museums in, or adjacent to, the capital cities of those countries that tell the story of the making of the people of Canada and Mexico, respectively;

Whereas the goals of a National Museum of the American People would be—

(1) to be the best storytelling museum in the world;

(2) to recount 1 of the most amazing stories in human history;

(3) to celebrate all of the people who have become people of the United States; and

(4) to foster learning at the museum and throughout the United States;

Whereas non-Federal funding sources will be sought to defray the costs of a Museum Study Commission to study the establishment of a National Museum of the American People and the funding will commence on the date on which the President signs an Executive order creating the bipartisan commission;

Whereas no Federal appropriations will be sought to provide funding for—

(1) the design, construction, or operation a National Museum of the American People; or

(2) the exhibitions or components of the museum; and

Whereas the National Museum of the American People will benefit all people of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress supports the establishment of a bipartisan Museum Study Commission to study the establishment of a National Museum of the American People to tell the immigration and migration stories of all people of the United States, if none of the funding to plan, construct, or operate the museum is from Federal appropriations.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 7, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 7, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Removing Barriers to Wireless Broadband Deployment.''

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

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 7, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD–406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Oversight of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 7, 2015, at 10 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 7, 2015, in room SD–628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:15 p.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Mr. CORNYN. 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 7, 2015, at 11 a.m., in room SR–428A of the Russell Senate Office Building.

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

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Special Committee on Aging be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 7, 2015, at 2 p.m., in room SD–562 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Protecting Seniors from Identity Theft: Is the Federal Government Doing Enough?''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ANTITRUST, COMPETITION POLICY, AND CONSUMER RIGHTS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition Policy, and Consumer Rights, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on October 7, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''S. 2102, The 'Standard Merger and Acquisition Reviews Through Equal Rules Act of 2015'.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EAST ASIA, THE PACIFIC, AND INTERNATIONAL CYBERSECURITY POLICY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific, and International Cybersecurity Policy be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 7, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Assessing the North Korea Threat and U.S. Policy: Strategic Patience or Effective Deterrence?''

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

TRANSNATIONAL DRUG TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 232, S. 32.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 32) to provide the Department of Justice with additional tools to target extraterritorial drug trafficking activity, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 32) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 32

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 ''Transnational Drug Trafficking Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. POSSESSION, MANUFACTURE OR DISTRIBUTION FOR PURPOSES OF UNLAWFUL IMPORTATIONS.

Section 1009 of the Controlled Substances Import and Export Act (21 U.S.C. 959) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (b) and (c) as subsections (c) and (d), respectively; and

(2) in subsection (a), by striking ''It shall'' and all that follows and inserting the following: ''It shall be unlawful for any person to manufacture or distribute a controlled substance in schedule I or II or flunitrazepam or a listed chemical intending, knowing, or having reasonable cause to believe that such substance or chemical will be unlawfully imported into the United States or into waters within a distance of 12 miles of the coast of the United States.

''(b) It shall be unlawful for any person to manufacture or distribute a listed chemical—

''(1) intending or knowing that the listed chemical will be used to manufacture a controlled substance; and

''(2) intending, knowing, or having reasonable cause to believe that the controlled substance will be unlawfully imported into the United States.''.

SEC. 3. TRAFFICKING IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS OR SERVICES.

Chapter 113 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in section 2318(b)(2), by striking ''section 2320(e)'' and inserting ''section 2320(f)''; and

(2) in section 2320—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking paragraph (4) and inserting the following:

''(4) traffics in a drug and knowingly uses a counterfeit mark on or in connection with such drug,'';

(B) in subsection (b)(3), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''counterfeit drug'' and inserting ''drug that uses a counterfeit mark on or in connection with the drug''; and

(C) in subsection (f), by striking paragraph (6) and inserting the following:

''(6) the term 'drug' means a drug, as defined in section 201 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321).''.

SOCIAL MEDIA WORKING GROUP ACT OF 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 234, H.R. 623.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 623) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize the Department of Homeland Security to establish a social media working group, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

H.R. 623

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''DHS Social Media Improvement Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. SOCIAL MEDIA WORKING GROUP.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title III of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 181 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 318. SOCIAL MEDIA WORKING GROUP.

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish within the Department a social media working group (in this section referred to as the 'Group').

''(b) PURPOSE.—In order to enhance the dissemination of information through social media technologies between the Department and appropriate stakeholders and to improve use of social media technologies in support of preparedness, response, and recovery, the Group shall identify, and provide guidance and best practices to the emergency preparedness and response community on, the use of social media technologies before, during, and after a natural disaster or an act of terrorism or other man-made disaster.

''(c) MEMBERSHIP.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Membership of the Group shall be composed of a cross section of subject matter experts from Federal, State, local, tribal, territorial, and nongovernmental organization practitioners, including representatives from the following entities:

''(A) The Office of Public Affairs of the Department.

''(B) The Office of the Chief Information Officer of the Department.

''(C) The Privacy Office of the Department.

''(D) The Federal Emergency Management Agency.

''(E) The Office of Disability Integration and Coordination of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

''(F) The American Red Cross.

''(G) The Forest Service.

''(H) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

''(I) The United States Geological Survey.

''(J) The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

''(2) CHAIRPERSON; CO-CHAIRPERSON.—

''(A) CHAIRPERSON.—The Secretary, or a designee of the Secretary, shall serve as the chairperson of the Group.

''(B) CO-CHAIRPERSON.—The chairperson shall designate, on a rotating basis, a representative from a State or local government who is a member of the Group to serve as the co-chairperson of the Group.

''(3) ADDITIONAL MEMBERS.—The chairperson shall appoint, on a rotating basis, qualified individuals to the Group. The total number of such additional members shall—

''(A) be equal to or greater than the total number of regular members under paragraph (1); and

''(B) include—

''(i) not fewer than 3 representatives from the private sector; and

''(ii) representatives from—

''(I) State, local, tribal, and territorial entities, including from—

''(aa) law enforcement;

''(bb) fire services;

''(cc) emergency management; and

''(dd) public health entities;

''(II) universities and academia; and

''(III) nonprofit disaster relief organizations.

''(4) TERM LIMITS.—The chairperson shall establish term limits for individuals appointed to the Group under paragraph (3).

''(d) CONSULTATION WITH NON-MEMBERS.—To the extent practicable, the Group shall work with entities in the public and private sectors to carry out subsection (b).

''(e) MEETINGS.—

''(1) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Group shall hold its initial meeting.

''(2) SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS.—After the initial meeting under paragraph (1), the Group shall meet—

''(A) at the call of the chairperson; and

''(B) not less frequently than twice each year.

''(3) VIRTUAL MEETINGS.—Each meeting of the Group may be held virtually.

''(f) REPORTS.—During each year in which the Group meets, the Group shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that includes the following:

''(1) A review and analysis of current and emerging social media technologies being used to support preparedness and response activities related to natural disasters and acts of terrorism and other man-made disasters.

''(2) A review of best practices and lessons learned on the use of social media technologies during the response to natural disasters and acts of terrorism and other man-made disasters that occurred during the period covered by the report at issue.

''(3) Recommendations to improve the Department's use of social media technologies for emergency management purposes.

''(4) Recommendations to improve public awareness of the type of information disseminated through social media technologies, and how to access such information, during a natural disaster or an act of terrorism or other man-made disaster.

''(5) A review of available training for Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial officials on the use of social media technologies in response to a natural disaster or an act of terrorism or other man-made disaster.

''(6) A review of coordination efforts with the private sector to discuss and resolve legal, operational, technical, privacy, and security concerns.

''(g) DURATION OF GROUP.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Group shall terminate on the date that is 5 years after the date of enactment of this section unless the chairperson renews the Group for a successive 5-year period, prior to the date on which the Group would otherwise terminate, by submitting to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives a certification that the continued existence of the Group is necessary to fulfill the purpose described in subsection (b).

''(2) CONTINUED RENEWAL.—The chairperson may continue to renew the Group for successive 5-year periods by submitting a certification in accordance with paragraph (1) prior to the date on which the Group would otherwise terminate.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 317 the following:

''Sec. 318. Social media working group.''.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

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

The bill was read the third time.

The bill (H.R. 623), as amended, was passed.

LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS SUCCESSION MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 2162, introduced earlier today.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2162) to establish a 10-year term for the service of the Librarian of Congress.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 2162) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2162

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 ''Librarian of Congress Succession Modernization Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. APPOINTMENT AND TERM OF SERVICE OF LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall appoint the Librarian of Congress, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

(b) TERM OF SERVICE.—The Librarian of Congress shall be appointed for a term of 10 years.

(c) REAPPOINTMENT.—An individual appointed to the position of Librarian of Congress, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, may be reappointed to that position in accordance with subsections (a) and (b).

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall apply with respect to appointments made on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. CONFORMING AMENDMENT.

The first paragraph under the center heading ''LIBRARY OF CONGRESS'' under the center heading ''LEGISLATIVE'' of the Act entitled ''An Act Making appropriations for the legislative, executive, and judicial expenses of the Government for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, eighteen hundred and ninety-eight, and for other purposes'', approved February 19, 1897 (29 Stat. 544, chapter 265; 2 U.S.C. 136), is amended by striking ''to be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate,''.

NATIONAL DYSLEXIA AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of and the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 275.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 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.''

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.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 275) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of October 1, 2015, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

NATIONAL WOMEN'S SMALL BUSINESS MONTH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 280, submitted earlier today.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 280) recognizing the month of October 2015 as ''National Women's Small Business Month.''

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. 280) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

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

NATIONAL HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY WEEK

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 281.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 281) designating the week of October 5 through October 9, 2015, as ''National Health Information Technology Week'' to recognize the value of health information technology in transforming and improving the healthcare system for all people in the United States.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Hearing no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 281) was agreed to.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the preamble be agreed to and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The preamble was agreed to.

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

PROVIDING FOR CORRECTIONS TO THE ENROLLMENT OF H.R. 1735

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H. Con. Res. 81, which is at the desk.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 81) providing for corrections to the enrollment of the bill H.R. 1735.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 81) was agreed to.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, October 8; 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 10:45 a.m., with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; that at 10:45 a.m., the Senate resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 2028; that the time from 10:45 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. be controlled by the majority, that the time between 11:30 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. be controlled by the Democrats, and that the time between 12:15 p.m. and 12:45 p.m. be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; further, that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2028 occur at 12:45 p.m. on Thursday, October 8.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:53 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, October 8, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ADOPTIVE FAMILY RELIEF ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. EDWARD R. ROYCE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 6, 2015

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation and appreciate Chairman GOODLATTE's work to bring it to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, all of us have had constituents who have adopted children internationally. These families go through a long, complex and very emotional process as they wait on legal decisions and government reviews.

Along with the emotional stress can come financial stress too. In a number of cases, as wait times lengthen and lengthen, an adoptive child's American visa will expire before they are able to leave their home country. This means the American parents adopting this child have to reapply and repay hefty fees.

But under this legislation, that reapplication fee can be waived if a family is faced with extraordinary circumstances outside their control.

This is common sense.

Mr. Speaker, passage of this bill—and the President's signature—means immediate help for hundreds of American families seeking to adopt children from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Foreign Affairs Committee has been particularly focused on this tragic and frustrating situation.

These American families have been unable to bring their legally adopted children home from the DRC because of a bureaucratic chokehold by the Congolese government. In some cases, some children who had a loving home ready and waiting in the United States died in Congo's orphanages. Yes, died.

Nearly every congressional district has a family impacted by this tragic policy of the Congolese government.

I have met with a number of families from Southern California, who have adopted children from the DRC that they now cannot take home. Some of these families have paid over $1,000 in fees to the U.S. government—and will continue to pay more—to keep their adoptive child's visa active, while they wait in limbo for the Congolese government to do the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, last month marked the two-year anniversary of the DRC suspending international adoptions. For two years these families have been hurting. The Congolese system is failing these children, for sure. But today, the American system will respond to give these families some relief during this time of distress. We are doing all we can to see that these legally adopted children are allowed into loving American homes, but for now, we can all feel good about relieving this financial burden.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PEOPLE OF TAIWAN ON DOUBLE TEN DAY

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, as the people of Taiwan celebrate their national day, Double Ten Day, on October 10th, I would like to extend my congratulations and best wishes to them.

The United States and Taiwan enjoy a longstanding relationship that stems from our shared values: democracy, the rule of law, and free enterprise. Not only an important security partner, Taiwan is also a strong economic partner—in fact, our 10th—largest trading partner now almost two years running. In 2014, Colorado's exports to Taiwan reached $191.5 million, a 32.6% increase from 2012. Taiwan is Colorado's 7th largest export market in Asia, and 14th largest export market in the world. Colorado companies have substantial opportunities to expand their business and cooperation with Taiwan. These accomplishments have been greatly aided by the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office and I am proud that it now calls Denver home. Equally important are the Taiwanese-Americans living in Colorado and the wealth of knowledge and entrepreneurial energy they bring to Colorado. The Taiwanese-American community has thrived in the Centennial State and has served as an economic engine for the 6th Congressional District. Furthermore, our students represent a bright future and it has been my honor to work closely with the Colorado Chinese Language School, which is organized by the Taiwanese community, by presenting certificates to excelling students at their "Year-End" celebration.

Given the increasing importance of Taiwan's trade with the rest of the world, it is in our best interest to see Taiwan and its 23 million people enjoy a balanced trade partnership that is fully integrated in global and regional trading regimes. Taiwan should be allowed to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), as it is a close ally and an important economic engine of Asia-Pacific. Additionally, I support a Bilateral Investment Agreement between the United States and Taiwan to provide greater protections for investors, while fostering confidence and encouraging movement in other items on the trade agenda.

I believe the United States should continue to enhance our friendship with Taiwan and we in Congress must to do everything in our power to enrich this valuable relationship.

HONORING THE LIFE OF COACH ANTHONY "TONY" NAPOLET

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a dear friend and mentor. A devoted family man, a respected teacher and coach, Anthony "Tony" Napolet, passed away Saturday, Sept. 26, 2015, at the age of 77, surrounded by his loving family. Tony was born July 4, 1938, in Warren, the son of Harold and Lucy (DiPaolo) Napolet.

Tony was a 1956 graduate of St. Mary's High School. Tony also received his Bachelor's Degree in Education from Marquette University in Milwaukee, where he played and lettered in football. Following graduation, Tony coached the freshman squad at Marquette while attending Marquette University's School of Law. Tony returned to the Warren area, where he would begin an illustrious coaching career that would span five decades.

Tony coached football for more than 50 years with over 35 years as a head coach. He took pride in all his teams and his kids. His overall record was 214–104–3. Tony won many championships, to include two state runner-ups, three regional championships, five state semi-finals, and a 1991 state championship.

Coach Napolet was recognized with many honors from countless organizations which included Coach of the Year in 1991, the 1995 John F. Kennedy Golden Eagle Award, the 2004 Mahoning Valley Italian-American Sports Hall of Fame Man-of-the-Year, the 2006 Associated Press Coach of the Year, the 2011 Kennedy Sports Hall of Fame, Warren Sports Hall of Fame, and the 2013 Ohio High School Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame. He was a past member of the Ohio High School Football Coaches Association and Trumbull County Coaches Association.

Although Coach Tony Napolet's football career is impressive, his greatest success is the impact he has made on his family, friends, players, fellow coaches, and community. You will never find a more compassionate, generous, and loving person than Tony Napolet, a proud Italian American, a loving father, grandfather, brother, uncle, and friend. Tony always lived by his lifelong mantra, God, family, Catholic education, and football.

Tony was a man of strong faith. He was an active member of St. Mary's Church in Warren.

Tony will be deeply missed by his two sons, Harold J. and Mario R. (Paula) Napolet of Pickerington; and his loving daughter, Natalie A. (Greg) Hoso; his beloved grandchildren, Aarika and Anthony Napolet, Mario, Olivia, and Ella Napolet, and Ambrose, Ava and Gennaro Hoso.

Tony is also survived by his two sisters, Norma Napolet and Marie Guanciale; his brother-in-law, Manlio Guanciale; and his

nephew and niece, Christopher and Joanna Guanciale. He is also survived by his former wife and dear friend, Mary Jo Napolet.

Tony was preceded in death by his parents, Harold and Lucy (DiPaolo) Napolet.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. MARK ISAACS

HON. JOHN C. CARNEY, JR.

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Mark Isaacs and his work on behalf of Delaware farmers. This weekend, Mr. Isaacs' work was acknowledged by the Sussex County Farm Bureau with the Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award. Mr. Isaacs is a lifelong resident of Delaware—born and raised in Sussex County. He received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Clemson University, and a Doctorate from Virginia Tech.

In 1986, Mr. Isaacs began his career at the University of Delaware. Since then, he has contributed to UD, and Delaware's agriculture community, in innumerable ways. Mr. Isaacs now serves as the Director of the Elbert N. & Ann V. Carvel Research and Education Center. He oversees, directs, and supports research in addition to teaching students in several subject areas.

Mr. Isaacs not only plays an active role at UD, he also has given back to our community in many other ways. He has worked with high school students on special projects and with local high schools to improve their agriculture and environmental programs. He has also served on boards of education, agriculture task forces, and policy and scholarship committees.

I want to thank Mr. Isaacs for his dedicated service to the Delaware farm community, and commend him on his well-deserved Distinguished Service Award.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF JOSE M. TORRES

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of the late Jose M. Torres. Jose Torres was a son of Guam and a member of our greatest generation who suffered the occupation of Guam during World War II. Jose passed away on September 28, 2015 at the age of 88. He was also an author, radio show host and medical researcher who shared his deep love for Guam and our people.

In February of 2015, Jose's memoir of his World War II experiences was published by the University of Guam Micronesian Area Research Center. His book, ''Massacre at Atåte'', tells the story of a brave battle he fought in against the Japanese during the Japanese occupation of Guam.

Jose wrote the story and had it published to preserve a very important part of Guam's history and have it shared with future generations. He had joined a group of men from the village of Merizo who lost their families when Japanese soldiers massacred them in nearby caves. Jose was the youngest of the group and joined the men in helping the U.S. Navy by providing intelligence on the Japanese occupiers and giving updates on the situation facing the Chamorros. The battle demonstrated the strength and perseverance of the Chamorro people, especially during such a difficult time and with barely any weapons.

Jose also served the island as a medical researcher with the National Institutes of Health. Jose's team studied the high rates of Parkinson's disease, Dementia, and Lou Gehrig's disease on Guam. Additionally, Jose will be remembered fondly for his love of classical music which he demonstrated through hosting the two-hour radio program ''Classical Concert'' on Guam's public radio.

I am deeply saddened by the passing of Jose M. Torres, and I join the people of Guam in celebrating his life and recognizing his dedicated service to Guam. My thoughts and prayers are with his family, loved ones and friends. He will be missed, and his memory will live on in the hearts of the people of Guam.

IN RECOGNITION OF HoYIN YUEN, MIDDLE SCHOOL ART EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of HoYin Yuen, who was named the Middle School Art Educator of the Year for 2016 by the Massachusetts Art Education Association.

Every year, the Massachusetts Art Education Association recognizes outstanding educators, like Yuen, who set an example in providing quality art education to students while also contributing to their profession. Yuen became an art teacher because he knew it would always be a fulfilling vocation. A native of Cape Cod, Yuen pursued an undergraduate degree at Emmanuel College and a Master's in Art Education from the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, but he always wanted to return to his community to teach and impact young minds. He takes particular interest in teaching middle school students, where he finds the age group both challenging yet rewarding.

Yuen employs a variety of creative mediums to teach a broad curriculum over the course of the school year. His enthusiasm for art and passion for teaching has not gone unnoticed by his colleagues. Many have admired his ability to adapt his assignments to address the needs of all his students and his teaching style leaves his students, parents and other teachers alike at ease.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring HoYin Yuen for receiving this prestigious recognition. I know all my colleagues in the House join me in wishing him nothing but success in the future.

RECOGNIZING THE YMCA OF CENTRAL FLORIDA AND THE ROPER FAMILY YMCA COMMUNITY IMPACT

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the YMCA of Central Florida and the good work they do in our community.

With its focus on Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility, YMCA of Central Florida is helping us change our approach to community health and chronic disease prevention. Today, I bring to your attention how this is happening on a local level through public private partnerships.

In West Orange County as part of Metropolitan Orlando, the Roper YMCA Family Center is expanding to become the community's destination for healthy living, made possible in partnership with its local healthcare system and healthcare district. Leveraging each organization's strengths and resources, the Roper Y will be making health education more accessible to thousands more residents, offering more Y Diabetes Prevention programs, and helping residents of all ages and incomes start and stick to healthier lifestyles.

On behalf of the citizens of Central Florida, I wish to thank and congratulate the Roper YMCA Family Center and its partners, the West Orange Healthcare District and Health Central Hospital—Orlando Health, for their commitment to improving the health of Central Florida.

REMEMBERING LEON FRANKEL

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember a remarkable hero of the United States and Israel, Leon Frankel. I would like to recognize his heroic efforts and remarkable sacrifice in defending both countries during World War II and Israel's War of Independence.

Leon was born in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1923 and, at a young age, he was fascinated with the thought of flying. After he graduated high school, he pursued his dream and was accepted into the V–5 Naval Aviation Program. After completing the program, Leon joined Air Group 9, and as a pilot in Torpedo Squadron 9 he flew 25 missions while aboard the USS *Lexington* and the USS *Yorktown*. In February of 1945, Leon took part in the first Navy raid on Tokyo.

After the War, Leon returned to his native Minnesota and served in the Navy Reserves. In May of 1948, he was recruited by the newly-founded State of Israel to become a member of their first Fighter Squadron, the 101. He fought bravely for the nascent nation against almost impossible odds, flying 25 missions during Israel's War of Independence.

After returning to the United States, Leon rejoined his Navy Reserve Squadron, and served until 1959 when he was honorably discharged. As a testament to his exemplary

service to the United States, Frankel was awarded many decorations including the Navy Cross, two Distinguished Flying Crosses, three Air Medals and two Presidential Citations.

It is with a heavy heart that I must announce Leon Frankel passed away this week. However, he will never be forgotten and his life will be remembered as one of exceptional service and commitment to both the United States and Israel. Leon Frankel is a true hero.

HONORING BARRY CICERO

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Barry Cicero of Western Springs who passed away on October 2, 2015. Barry was known for his remarkable dedication to his family, church, community, and fellow veterans.

Mr. Cicero was a veteran of the United States Army and served as a nuclear weapons storage specialist in Alaska during the Vietnam War era. He was a graduate and active alum of both St. Mel's High School and DePaul University. For many years he worked as Director of Auditing at UFCW Union and Pension Funds.

Barry honorably served the American Legion in Illinois for many years. He held multiple leadership roles including Post Commander at the Robert E. Coulter, Jr. Post, Fifth District Commander, and First Division Commander. Mr. Cicero continued to work as a community relations contact with American Legion even after his term as commander ended. He was consistently engaged in programs to help his fellow veterans and everyone in the community.

Mr. Cicero will best be remembered for his compassion, integrity, and warm spirit. He was active at St. John of the Cross Catholic Church and was a loving family man. Those of us who knew him will miss his thoughtfulness and enthusiastic kindness.

Today I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Mr. Barry Cicero, a truly admirable man. His leadership and dedication to his community were extraordinary and will not be forgotten.

RECOGNIZING TAIWAN'S 104TH NATIONAL DAY

HON. ALBIO SIRES

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise, along with the other co-chairs of the Congressional Taiwan Caucus—Representative MARIO DIAZ-BALART, Representative GERALD E. CONNOLLY, and Representative GREGG HARPER—to commemorate the upcoming 104th National Day of the Republic of China (ROC) on October 10th. Marking this special occasion underscores the critical importance of the United States and Taiwan relationship throughout history.

The pillars of United States cross-Strait policy are the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act and the 1982 Six Assurances. The United States supports peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and the democratic institutions of Taiwan. Any future evolution in cross-Strait relations can only be achieved through the non-use of force and by respecting the will of the people of Taiwan. Further, we hope to continue to work with our colleagues in Congress on providing Taiwan access to meaningful participation in international organizations, such as in the World Health Organization (WHO) and International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Mr. Speaker, as we observe the ROC's 104th National Day, we should use this occasion to rededicate ourselves to the tenets of our longstanding and close partnership with Taiwan. The commitment of the United States to provide Taiwan with a sufficient defensive capability under the Taiwan Relations Act is critical to both peace in the Taiwan Strait and regional stability. It also serves U.S. national interests as we continue to re-balance attention and resources to the Asia-Pacific. Our commercial relationship with Taiwan, our tenth largest trading partner, will also be well-served by a framework of peace and stability in the region.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Taiwan are noble, peaceful, and hard-working. We invite our colleagues in the House of Representatives to learn more about our friendship with Taiwan and join the Congressional Taiwan Caucus, the largest nation-based caucus in the House of Representatives. Again, we are honored to rise today to celebrate the 104th birthday to our great friend, Taiwan.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOE P. OLIVEIRA

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleague Mr. DAVID VALADAO to pay tribute to the life of our good friend, Joe P. Oliveira Sr. of Lemoore, California who recently passed away at the age of 89. He leaves behind his loving family including his daughters, Marlene Jeung and husband Don, Patty Silva and husband Denny, Debbie Etchebehere and husband Jean, Cheryl Silva and husband Russ; daughter in law, Pam Oliveira, Son-in-law Darryl Ray, Brothers Jon, Frank, Westley, Leonard, Manuel, Edward, Louie and sister Mary, along with 16 grandchildren; and 29 great grandchildren.

Joe P. Oliveira Sr. was born in Hanford, CA on January 28, 1926 to John P. and Eliza Leal Oliveira he was the fourth born of 12 children. Joe P., as he liked to be called, was a man who dedicated himself to his family and the dairy industry in the San Joaquin Valley and California. He returned to the family dairy after his honorable discharge from the U.S. Army-Air Force in 1947. He bought his own dairy in 1953 and throughout his working years he dedicated his time and efforts to his love of dairy.

He served on the Kings County Creamery Association Board for over 20 years and Challenge Cream and Butter Association Board for fifteen years. This experience and his involvement with the Western Dairyman's Association prompted then Governor Reagan to appoint Joe P. to the Milk Pooling Formulation Committee which resulted in a program that helped all dairymen.

After selling his dairy, he worked full time for Western Dairyman's from 1973 to 1987 and upon his retirement he was presented with a Resolution from the California State Legislature recognizing his contributions to the dairy industry.

Joe P. married the love of his life Adeline Paulo; they were blessed with one son, and five daughters. He was actively involved in the Lemoore Trinity Association for over 50 years. He led the efforts of many, placing calves on dairy farms where his many friends raised them. They were then sold with the donations going towards building a new hall at Lemoore Trinity Association. He also served on the Kings County Grand Jury.

It goes without saying that Joe P. Oliveira Sr. was an honorable man with a commitment to his family and friends and the agricultural community in the San Joaquin Valley that will forever live in the lives of the people he so graciously touched. His passion for family, education, and his community will be remembered by all who knew him. He was my friend and I will miss him a great deal. He conducted his life with reverence for humanity. It is with great pride that I honor him for all he did on behalf of the San Joaquin Valley and for California.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that Mr. VALADAO and I ask our colleagues in the House of Representatives to join us in honoring the life of Joe P. Oliveira Sr., a remarkable Californian. We are honored and humbled to join his family in celebrating the life of this amazing man who will never be forgotten.

IN RECOGNITION OF PETER J. ADONIZIO, RECIPIENT OF 2015 ITALIAN-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION'S LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Peter J. Adonizio who will be awarded the Italian-American Association's Lifetime Achievement Award on Sunday, October 11, 2015. A native of Pittston, Pennsylvania, Peter has a long history of service to his local community and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Peter attended Scranton Preparatory School and is a graduate of St. Leo University in Florida. In 1983, Peter studied at the Simmons Institute of Funeral Service, earning a diploma in Mortuary Science. Upon completing his internship and completing the requirements of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Peter became a licensed funeral director in 1984.

After completing his education, Peter worked for his family's asphalt company until 1991. He then worked as a probation officer for Luzerne County, PA. In 1993, Peter was appointed by Luzerne County as a deputy coroner. Four years later, he was appointed Deputy Court Administrator, also earning his district magistrate certification. In 2000, after a Pennsylvania Supreme Court order and the formation of the Unified Judicial Court System, Peter became a Deputy Court Administrator

for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. During that time, Peter received a special commendation from the Pennsylvania Supreme Court for his service to the judicial system as a member of the Judicial Council's Committee on Judicial Security and Emergency Preparedness. He retired in 2013, after twenty years of service.

In addition to his career in government, Peter also worked as a funeral director. Peter established the Peter J. Adonizio Funeral Home in 2001 in West Pittston. As a result of flooding caused by Tropical Storm Lee in 2011, Peter relocated his funeral home to William Street in Pittston. Adonizio is a member of the Luzerne County Funeral Directors Association, Pennsylvania Funeral Directors Association, and the National Funeral Directors Association.

It is an honor to recognize Peter for all of his community and state accomplishments, and I extend my congratulations on his award. I wish him the best in all future endeavors and thank him for the contributions he has made serving his fellow Pennsylvanians.

CONGRATULATING THOMAS QUIGLEY ON HOMETOWN HERO AWARD

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to congratulate Thomas Clayton Quigley of Bedford, Texas, on his receipt of the City of Bedford's Hometown Hero Award for his service to our nation and outstanding citizenship in his community.

Thomas chose to enlist in the United States Army in 1942, in the midst of World War II. He graduated Officer Candidate School and became a First Lieutenant who served in Company E, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment in the 2nd Infantry Division. After training in Scotland and England, Thomas and his unit landed on Omaha Beach on June 7, 1944, shortly after the first D-Day landings to liberate Europe from Nazi Germany. He was wounded twice in France but ultimately continued to fight, participating in the Battle of the Bulge. He recounts that, in the middle of war, he and his men were often too busy to be afraid, reflecting that, ''it was our job, the one we signed up for.''

After Germany surrendered, Thomas was stationed at Fort Swift in Texas, awaiting deployment to the Pacific, which was preempted by the Japanese surrender in August, 1945. While at Fort Swift, he met his wife, Barbara, when he and some friends decided to talk to some young women on a porch in Austin. He offered to help her when she brought out some water and she says ''He has been helping me ever since.'' Together they have been married almost seventy years and have three children—Barbette, Kay, and Keith—and three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He says that surviving the war is ''one of [his] greatest accomplishments'' but that it is his ''wonderful family that has made [him] truly blessed.''

Thomas took advantage of the G.I. bill and went to study at Michigan State University, bringing his new wife with him. They returned to Texas for the weather (Thomas says, ''I survived the Bulge weather but couldn't stand the cold Michigan weather''), and he graduated from Texas Tech with a degree in agronomy. At first, like many returning veterans, finding a job in civilian life was difficult and he was a guard at the gate of a food plant. He eventually became a dispatcher for Central Freight Lines for 28 years, retiring in 1984. Even after retirement, Thomas was engaged and industrious, becoming the owner of a local 9-hole golf course and driving range.

In his later years, Thomas has also become involved in keeping the recorded memories of World War II available for the public and future generations. With two Purple Hearts and two Bronze Stars, he went with Barbara to the 40th anniversary ceremonies at Normandy in 1984. Since that experience, he has written a memoir book, World War II, My War, logged his oral accounts in the National World War II museum in New Orleans, Louisiana, received the French Legion of Honor medal, and been featured recounting the Battle of the Bulge on the History Channel in 2008.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 24th Congressional District of Texas, I ask all my distinguished colleagues to join me in congratulating Thomas Quigley on the Hometown Hero Award, honoring his valor and strong citizenship, and thanking him for his selfless sacrifice for our nation and freedom in the Second World War.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for roll call votes 519 through 520 due to congressional travel.

Had I been present. I would have voted yes on Number 519 and yes on Number 520.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EVAN H. JENKINS

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 535, due to an in-district event announcing new funding for displaced coal miners and their families to pay for job retraining and educational opportunities, I was unable to cast my vote on this bill. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea.''

IN RECOGNITION OF GREATER BEALLWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH'S 139TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and pleasure to extend my sincere congratulations to the congregation of Greater Beallwood Baptist Church in Columbus, Georgia as they celebrate a remarkable 139 years. An anniversary celebration will be held on Sunday, October 11, 2015 at 2:30 p.m. at the church in Columbus. The event will also be an opportunity to welcome Reverend Adrian J. Chester as the church's new pastor.

Greater Beallwood Baptist Church traces its roots back to the post-Civil War era in 1876, when Beallwood Baptist Church was first organized under the leadership of Reverend Boston Miles and Deacon Albert Harper.

Over the years, the church would see many outstanding leaders but perhaps the most noteworthy were Reverend I.S.H. Allen, who served sixteen fruitful years from 1920 until his passing in 1936, and Reverend James Carter Cook, who served for four decades as the church grew and flourished tremendously.

In addition to the achievements of pastors, many laymen have also made significant contributions to the life of the church. In 1905, Deacon Eddie Borders became chairman of the Board of Deacons and served for over fifty years. The church would see many more dedicated citizen leaders, men and women, called to serve all the way into the 21st century.

In 1956, Beallwood Baptist Church became incorporated and the name was changed to Greater Beallwood Baptist Church, Inc. A growing church membership at Greater Beallwood meant pastors had a larger flock to shepherd. In 1975, Greater Beallwood began meeting in worship every Sunday morning, rather than two Sundays out of the month. The church then called upon its first assistant pastor, Reverend Billy J. Carter, to assist in growing pastoral duties.

In January 1987, the church was blessed when the Lord placed Reverend Willie L. Hill over this flock. Much was accomplished during Rev. Hill's twenty-eight years as pastor, including increased participation in the learning programs of the church, especially Sunday School and Bible Study. In 2010, Rev. Hill instituted Children's Church for children ages 5 through 12. Not only did Rev. Hill's leadership grow the congregation in number and in spirit, but it also was instrumental in the building of a new sanctuary that would accommodate the numerous church services and meetings.

In 2014, God had strategically placed Reverend Adrian J. Chester as the church's first youth pastor. After Rev. Hill's retirement in 2015, Rev. Chester became the seventeenth pastor of Greater Beallwood Baptist Church.

Today, Greater Beallwood is blessed to have numerous ministries and fellowship opportunities. Fellowship at Greater Beallwood is characterized by unconditional love, rich in relationship with God, family, and friends. The members of Greater Beallwood reflect this idea of fellowship throughout the community by serving those in need.

The story of the Greater Beallwood Baptist Church, which began as a small group of people worshipping 139 years ago and has grown into an expansive and successful church, is truly an inspiring one of the dedication and perseverance of a faithful congregation of people who put all their love and trust in the Lord.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the membership of the Greater Beallwood Baptist Church in Columbus, Georgia for their long history of coming together through good and difficult times to praise and worship our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

104TH COMMEMORATION OF TAIWAN'S NATIONAL DAY

HON. STEVE KING

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, as Taiwan approaches the 104th commemoration of the National Day of the Republic of China next October 10th, it is important that we remember a few key points. First, the Republic of China, Taiwan is an extraordinary friend and ally of the United States. This year we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the allied victory in World War II. We must not forget the critical contribution of the Republic of China to freedom's victory over the forces of fascist tyranny. Second, Mr. Speaker, Taiwan deserves to be commended for having consolidated its representative democracy in an extremely challenging regional environment. Finally, people of Taiwan are hard-working and admirable.

The current framework of U.S.-Taiwan relations has developed successfully in large part to the passage of the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979. The United States has sold defensive arms to Taiwan, allowing it to remain a respected force in the region. It is extremely important that the transfer of sophisticated defensive weapons such as Perry Class Naval vessels and other weaponry supported in the National Defense Authorization Act, take place soon.

The government of Taiwan has set forth a noteworthy peace-seeking agenda in recent years, and it has accomplished a remarkable reduction in cross-strait tensions. History will certainly note President Ma Ying-jeou's East China Sea Peace Initiative and South China Sea Peace Initiative with deep admiration for these wise and responsible proposed solutions to critically important regional challenges.

PROVISO EAST CLASS OF 1975—40TH YEAR REUNION

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to commend and congratulate the Proviso East Class of 1975 on their 40th year reunion. As all of us know, we can take great engagement to make use of the lessons learned and skills developed while students at Proviso East.

The Class of 1975 can be proud of the heritage, accomplishments and proud of what being a Pirate has meant. The Class of 1975 can have pride in the accomplishments of the Proviso East graduates who left a great school well prepared to confront the challenges of everyday life. The families have been and continue to be role models of excellence and community engagement.

Best wishes and good luck to the Proviso East Class of 1975.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF THE FRESNO EOC

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of the Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission as they celebrate 50 years of dedicated service to Fresno County. Fresno EOC has spent five decades investing in people and assisting them in becoming self-sufficient. Further this agency administers numerous human services and economic development programs. These programs include pre-school education, vocational training, juvenile and drug abuse counseling, treatment for serious juvenile offenders, youth recreation, and senior citizen hot meal services to name a few.

As one of the largest and most effective poverty fighting organizations in the country, Fresno EOC has touched the lives of more than 145,000 residents of Fresno County. Through programs that make real measurable differences, Fresno EOC continues to give families the immediate help they need and the long-term support that allows them to build better lives.

When Congress passed the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the goal was to obtain equality of opportunity in education, employment, health and living conditions for every American in our Country and Fresno EOC has done an exemplary job of accomplishing these goals. Over the past 5 decades, Fresno EOC has made countless contributions to our city and the entire San Joaquin Valley. From programs ranging from Head Start, to the Local Conservation Corps, and Fresno CDFI, Fresno EOC has done so much to make our community a better place.

The results of these programs have allowed local organizations like Fresno EOC to leverage nearly $2.20 in private capital from every dollar that the federal government invests in Community Service Block Grant (CSBG). 90 percent of CSBG funds go directly to local communities to provide critical services such as child care, job training, housing, and financial education that improve self-sufficiency.

Fresno EOC employs over 1,300 full and part time staff members committed to transforming lives. With over 30 programs to serve the community, they bridge the gaps with almost every aspect of the underserved population. There are more than 1,100 Community Action Agencies across the nation offering services every year in 99 percent of U.S. counties. These agencies serve 16 million low-income individuals, primarily members of working families and seniors, and in Fresno we are lucky to have one of the largest Community Action Agencies in the nation.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me as we celebrate Fresno EOC's 50th year of improving economic opportunities and empowering individuals in the San Joaquin Valley. This agency is making a difference and creating better opportunities for our future generations.

CELEBRATING TAIWAN'S 104TH NATIONAL DAY

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, on October 10, Taiwan's 104th National Day will be celebrated, marking the anniversary of the Republic of China's founding. For many years, Taiwan has been a strong ally of the United States, one which shares our interests and values, including an enduring commitment to democracy and the freedom of expression. Approximately one hundred miles from communist China, Taiwan is a beacon of freedom in the Pacific, serving as an inspiration for the world's oppressed and as a model for future democratic transitions.

As we celebrate Taiwan's 104th National Day, we must also think about how we can strengthen the U.S.-Taiwan alliance. Taiwan is increasingly under pressure from an aggressive China that is attempting to assert its dominance in the Pacific and it is crucial that the United States provides the kind of assistance—politically, militarily, and economically—that will allow Taiwan to resist any type of Chinese coercion. China's military buildup, construction of artificial islands, and territorial claims, has greatly escalated tensions in the Asia-Pacific and the risk of conflict with Taiwan. Taiwan's recent successful efforts to reduce tensions in the Asia-Pacific can be used as a model to find further peaceful solutions in maritime Asia.

In order to assist Taiwan, the United States should ensure its meaningful participation in international organizations and entities that it has expressed an interest in participating, including at the United Nations. The United States should also help Taiwan upgrade its air force and its navy, including assisting in the procurement of diesel-electric submarines, so that Taiwan has the capacity to deter Chinese aggression and act as a force for peace and stability in the region. The United States should also be economically assisting Taiwan, our 10th largest trading partner, in order to help it resist China's economic pressure. By strengthening U.S.-Taiwan trade ties, we can give Taiwan the economic and political flexibility it needs to diversify, reduce its reliance on China, and resist Chinese intimidation.

Taiwan is a vibrant democratic partner and ally that the United States cannot afford to neglect. We must remember that not only is the Taiwan Relations Act the law of the land in the United States but, together with President Reagan's Six Assurances, forms the cornerstone of U.S.-Taiwan relations. As Taiwanese all around the world celebrate Taiwan's National Day, we here in the United States stand with our ally, ready to ensure we are supporting her and its people to the best of our ability. Happy Double Tenth Day.

IN RECOGNITION OF CATHERINE R. O'DONNELL, ESQ., RECIPIENT OF THE WILKES-BARRE LAW & LIBRARY ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S AWARD

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Catherine R. O'Donnell, Esq., who was selected for the President's Award by the Wilkes-Barre Law & Library Association. The President's Award honors attorneys who display exemplary professionalism, integrity, and ethics throughout his or her legal career. It is the highest award that the Wilkes-Barre Law & Library Association bestows.

Cathy has been practicing law for over 25 years. She graduated cum laude from the University of Pittsburgh with a joint degree in business and economics and a minor in history. In 1987, Cathy received her Juris Doctor and Master of Business degrees from the University of Pittsburgh. She is a member of the Pennsylvania and District of Columbia Bar. In addition, Cathy is a member of The American Association for Justice and the Pennsylvania Association for Justice.

In October of 2000, Governor Thomas Ridge appointed Cathy as a District Justice. Unanimously confirmed by the Pennsylvania Senate, Cathy honorably served our state until January 2002. Today, Cathy practices estate planning and administration at the O'Donnell Law Offices. Her skill and knowledge as a lawyer has earned her recognition as a Pennsylvania Super Lawyer, ALM Top-Rated Trusts and Estates Lawyer, Martindale-Hubbell's Bar Register of Preeminent Women Lawyers and Martindale-Hubbell's AV Preeminent Rating from 2002–2015. In 2015, she was named one of Rue Rating's Best Attorneys of America.

Cathy remains an active member of her local community. Cathy is a past president of the Parent's Associates of Wyoming Valley Montessori School and the Lower and Upper Schools of Wyoming Seminary. She is also a past president of the pastoral council of the former St. Therese's Church in Wilkes-Barre. She is a current member of the Orphans' Court Practice Committee and current Chair of the Religious Outreach Committee of the Wilkes-Barre Law Library Association. Cathy is a board member of Junior Leadership of Wilkes-Barre, a member of the United Way Cabinet, and a board member for Dress for Success of Luzerne County.

It is an honor to recognize Cathy O'Donnell for her many accomplishments, and I extend Cathy my congratulations for being awarded the Wilkes-Barre Law & Library Association President's Award. I commend Cathy for her service to our community.

HONORING MR. TERRANCE KELLY

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 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 him. I thank him for a lifetime of service and congratulate him on his many achievements. I wish him success as he continues to serve the residents of the East Bay.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RANDY NEUGEBAUER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I was not able to be present for a series of votes on June 2, 2015, July 10, 2015 and September 10, 2015.

Had I been present, I would have voted:

Roll Call Vote Number 268 on June 2nd, Agreeing to Rule for THUD and CJS Appropriations, I would have voted aye.

Roll Call Vote Number 269 on June 2nd, Approving the Journal, I would have voted aye.

Roll Call Vote Number 431 on July 10th, Agreeing to Brat Amendment to H.R. 6, 21st Century Cures Act, I would have voted aye.

Roll Call Vote Number 432 on July 10th, Agreeing to Lee Amendment to H.R. 6, 21st Century Cures Act, I would have voted nay.

Roll Call Vote Number 491 on September 10th, Providing for consideration of H. Res. 411, I would have voted aye.

CONGRATULATING ORATORY PREPARATORY FOR BEING NAMED A BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

HON. LEONARD LANCE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Oratory Prep School of Summit, New Jersey for being named a Blue Ribbon School by the United States Department of Education.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools award honors 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 achievement. Oratory Prep was cited as an ''Exemplary High Performing'' school, as measured by state assessments and national tests. This recognition is a testament to the outstanding work and dedication of the faculty and staff, as well as the efforts and successes of the students in creating a safe and welcoming school where students master challenging content.

The curriculum at Oratory Prep has prepared students to attend some of the finest universities in the Nation and the extracurricular activities, electives, leadership training and guest speakers offer students a wide array of academic experiences. Oratory Prep's athletic program continues to grow as well, both in scope and success.

This is a prestigious award to receive and Oratory Prep is a proud example of academic excellence and worthy of this national distinction.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EVAN H. JENKINS

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 534, due to an in-district event announcing new funding for displaced coal miners and their families to pay for job retraining and educational opportunities, I was unable to cast my vote on this bill. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

RECOGNIZING ARMY SGT. WILLIAM ''WILD BILL'' GUARNERE

HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Sgt. William ''Wild Bill'' Guarnere, who served in the 101st Airborne division of the United States Army during World War II.

Sgt. Guarnere was a Philadelphia native who enlisted in the Army in 1942. His bravery earned him the nickname ''Wild Bill'' for his passion and perseverance in battle. Sgt. Guarnere's first combat jump was Operation Overlord, in the early hours of the morning of June 6, 1944, hours before the first allied landing craft hit the beaches of Normandy on D-Day. A member of the famed ''Band of Brothers'' of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment's ''Easy Company'', Guarnere served in some of the most significant engagements of the European theater, including Operation Market Garden. Ultimately, Sgt. Guarnere's combat service ended when he lost a leg in the Battle of the Bulge. He was eventually awarded a Silver Star, two Bronze Stars, and two Purple Hearts for his bravery in the face of the enemy.

On Saturday, September 19, the Delaware County Veterans' Memorial Park will unveil a statue of ''Wild Bill'' Guarnere to commemorate his service and sacrifice. It's a fitting tribute to a true American hero from Pennsylvania.

Mr. Speaker, Sgt. Guarnere's admirable service displayed an extraordinary devotion to his country and his fellow soldiers. I am honored to recognize him today as one of the true heroes of our Greatest Generation.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was $10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is $18,150,568,904,537.03. We've added $7,523,691,855,623.95 to our debt in 6 years. This is over $7.5 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

LEADING A HALL OF FAME BUSINESS

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Alfred Froberg, Jr. of Alvin, Texas for receiving the 2015 Junior Achievement Hall of Fame award.

Mr. Froberg received this award thanks to his positive impact on the Alvin and Brazoria County business community. He is deeply dedicated to growing and promoting businesses all across his hometown. As a member of the Junior Achievement Hall of Fame, Mr. Froberg's efforts serve as a model for other local businesses, helping them grow and succeed. Brazoria County is proud to have such an inspiring business leader.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Alfred for being part of the Junior Achievement Hall of Fame.

HEROES MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA FLOODING

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the past few days have been an extraordinary catastrophe, correctly identified by Governor Nikki Haley of South Carolina as a ''thousand year rain'' causing flooding and damage across South Carolina. Fortunately, Hurricane Joaquin bypassed the state after causing destruction in the Bahamas but, it created a weather anomaly of record rainfall of over 20 inches and flooding. I am grateful to the National Weather Service and senior forecaster John Quagliariello, for monitoring the situation and providing early warnings for our citizens.

Six generations of my family have lived on Wilton Road in Springdale, which was washed away during the storm for the first time ever since construction in 1890. I am grateful that our home was spared major damage, though thousands were not so fortunate.

Our state officials were true leaders and handled the catastrophe impressively. When visiting the State Emergency Response Center in Pine Ridge, I thanked Governor Nikki Haley, Adjutant General Bob Livingston, and Attorney General Alan Wilson for leading the recovery, as well as South Carolina Emergency Management Division Kim Stinson. I am further grateful for the National Guard's role in aiding the relief efforts—three of my sons, Alan, Julian, and Hunter, were activated for National Guard disaster service.

I visited the world-class Lexington County Emergency Response Center, led by Director Bo Davenport, with Sheriff Jay Koon and County Administrator Joe Mergo where I thanked the dedicated personnel who saved many lives.

In between stops, I appreciated thanking Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin for his leadership and I thanked Homeland Secretary Jeh Johnson for coming to tour the impacted areas this Friday with Congressman JIM CLYBURN and myself. Mayor Mike Miller of Wagener assured me his Aiken County community was secure.

Lexington Mayor Steve MacDougall and Town of Lexington Police Chief Terrence Green gave me a first-hand tour of multiple pond dam breaks, including the Mill Pond blocking U.S. Highway 1 of Main Street in Lexington.

I visited the Lake Katherine neighborhood with State Representative Kirkman Finlay of Columbia, where I met homeowners and volunteers already planning the reconstruction of their homes. Sheriff Leon Lott had experienced deputies at critical roadways.

At the Red Cross shelter at A.C. Flora High School, I thanked the A.C. Flora Key Club and other volunteers who distributed bottled water, food, diapers, and clothes to those who had lost everything. I am grateful to Richland School District One Board Member Beatrice King and State Senator Joel Lourie for coordinating such a positive outpouring of donations from the community.

Visiting the Richland County Emergency Center, led by Columbia Deputy Fire Chief Tisdale, there were dedicated personnel thoughtfully handling calls of distress.

At the Seven Oaks Recreation Center shelter, sponsored by the Irmo-Chapin Recreation Commission, I thanked the organizers: Director Elizabeth Taylor and Park Director John Cantey. I saw first-hand how those who had to flee their homes found people who cared and supported them.

A lesson learned is that in the watersheds of multiple downstream dams, as exist in Richland and Lexington counties, there should be a coordination of lowering water levels to anticipate extraordinary rainfall to reduce the potential for sequential dam failures resulting in catastrophic loss of life and property damages.

Late yesterday, I returned to my Congressional office in West Columbia, where I found that a leak in the roof had caused the ceiling and light fixture above my desk to collapse.

Though the destruction of the 1000-year event was catastrophic, it was a testament to the people of South Carolina working together for the common good.

IN RECOGNITION OF WEHADKEE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH'S 141ST ANNIVERSARY

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and pleasure to extend my sincere congratulations to the congregation of Wehadkee Missionary Baptist Church in Roanoke, Alabama as they celebrate a remarkable 141 years. An anniversary celebration will be held on Sunday, October 11, 2015.

The Wehadkee Missionary Baptist Church is one of the oldest African-American churches in Randolph County, Alabama. Throughout its 141-year history, the church has been a bridge over troubled waters for the African-American community of Wehadkee-High Shoals-Springfield.

Under the name ''Perhaps,'' the church was established in 1874, just eleven years after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. The church held its first services in a very small log cabin one mile south of its current location, which is 1216 County Road 310 in Roanoke, Alabama.

Reverend Spy Flag was the founding Pastor of the church, serving from 1874 until approximately 1884. Between 1884 and 1918, ten ministers led the church: Reverend Ben Goss, Reverend Symon Vickers, Reverend Aaron Strong, Reverend Tom Almond, Reverend Charlie Steward, Reverend Spencer Beasley, Reverend A.E. Stitt, Reverend John T. Hines,

Reverend A.J. Turner, and Reverend A.J. Green.

From 1918 to 1972, the six pastors who led the church included Reverend S.A. Adamson, Reverend C.C. Terry, Reverend G.W. Sims, Reverend J.P. Madison, Reverend B.O. Phillips, and Reverend R.L. Thompson.

In March 1973, Reverend Elijah Jackson, Jr. was called to lead the flock and in April 1974, the Wehadkee Missionary Baptist Church was incorporated. In October of that same year, Reverend Jackson presided over the church's first centennial celebration.

For the past 42 years, Reverend Jackson has led the congregation with distinction as the longest serving Pastor of the church. His spouse, First Lady Farris Jackson, plays an important role in his ministry.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly join President Obama in celebrating the 141st anniversary of the Wehadkee Missionary Baptist Church.

I am pleased to join in celebrating your 141st anniversary.

Throughout our Nation's history, places of worship have brought us together in the spirit of faith and love. Offering space for celebration in times of joy and comfort in times of uncertainty, they help foster a strong sense of community and call on us to meet life's most sacred responsibility—to give of ourselves in service to others.

As you mark this special milestone, I hope you take pride in your community's commitment to faith. May the years ahead be filled with continued blessings.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *August 28, 2015*.

OCTAVIA GEE—BEST IN THE WORLD

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate nine year old Octavia Gee from Sugar Land, Texas for setting a world shot put record.

Octavia, a student at Settler Way Elementary, recently competed at the Texas Vs. The World All Comers Meet with the goal of setting a world record in the nine-year-old division with an 8.8-pound shot put. If Octavia was nervous, she didn't show it, blasting the old record with a throw of 7.28 meters. Even better—she broke the world record on her mom's birthday. Octavia made her family, friends, and community proud. We look forward to seeing her set more records. We'll definitely see Octavia in future Olympic games.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations to Octavia for setting a world shot put record.

IN HONOR OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

HON. MARK TAKANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, for 50 years the National Collegiate Honors Council has been enriching the lives and education of honors program students around the country. I rise today to congratulate them on this historic accomplishment. Serving over 325,000 honors students at 800 colleges and universities, the NCHC is dedicated to excellence in education in diverse subject and curriculum areas.

I would like to further honor the University of California, Riverside, in my home district. Since 1988 the University of California, Riverside has provided a world-class honors education to its students.

Founded on the principle of strengthening the involvement of faculty in undergraduate teaching and, through doing so, improve the quality of undergraduate education, the University of California, Riverside's honors program has produced significant results.

With their four-year honors program, the University has a program that provides intellectual growth, personal development, and social responsibility, at its core. The four-year honors program provides guidance and preparation to students, and allows entry portals to select students who demonstrated academic excellence, interest in research, or creative activities, that led to a senior thesis project.

The robust honors program at The University of California, Riverside has proven to be at the pinnacle of education creating the global citizens of today and tomorrow.

TRIBUTE TO CLEMENCIA SPIZIRRI

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Clemencia Spizirri for being named Iowa's Teacher of the Year by the Iowa Department of Education.

Established in 1958, the Iowa Teacher of the Year Award recognizes one teacher each year who displays the ability to motivate, challenge and inspire their students. They must be someone who is respected by their peers and students. The Teacher of the Year must be able to think outside the box and have a positive influence on their students, not only inside the classroom but also outside the classroom.

Clemencia is a shining example of all the qualities this award represents. She has dedicated her career to bettering the lives of her students through effective teaching techniques and a determination to provide high quality education for each and every one of her students. It is clear that Clemencia is uniquely qualified and deserving of this prestigious award.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud and congratulate Clemencia for receiving this award and for her role in molding the leaders of our future generations. Her hard work and dedication truly embodies our Iowa values, and I am proud to represent her in the United States Congress. I know that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives will join me in congratulating Clemencia and in wishing her nothing but the best moving forward.

RECOGNIZING FLORIDA'S 16TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT FIRE AND RESCUE AND EMS PERSONNEL

HON. VERN BUCHANAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize fire and rescue and EMS personnel who have provided distinguished service to the people of Florida's 16th Congressional District.

As first responders, fire departments and emergency medical service teams are summoned on short notice to serve their respective communities. Oftentimes, they arrive at scenes of great adversity and trauma, to which they reliably bring strength and composure. These brave men and women spend hundreds of hours in training so that they are prepared when they get "the call."

In 2012, I established the 16th District Congressional Fire and Rescue and EMS Awards to honor officers, departments, and units for outstanding achievement.

On behalf of the people of Florida's 16th District, it is my privilege to congratulate the following winners, who were selected this year by an independent committee comprised of a cross section of current and retired fire and rescue personnel living in the district.

Firefighter/EMT Michael Dunn of the Cedar Hammock Fire Rescue was chosen to receive the Preservation of Life Award.

Lt. Don Rossow of the Englewood Area Fire Control District was chosen to receive the Dedication and Professionalism Award.

District Chief/Paramedic Robin Thayer of the Manatee County Emergency Medical Services was chosen to receive the Career Service Award.

Lt. Jason Wilkins, Lt. Jamie Mann, Firefighter/EMT Nicholas Jones, Firefighter/Paramedic Sean Sponable and Firefighter/EMT Clayton Huber were chosen to receive the Unit Citation Award.

Deputy Chief Brett Pollock of the West Manatee Fire and Rescue was chosen to receive the Career Service Award.

Fire Investigator/Inspector Larry Betts of the Southern Manatee Fire and Rescue District was chosen to receive the Dedication and Professionalism Award.

IN MEMORY OF GREGORY THOMAS ALIA

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, tragically Forest Acres, South Carolina, Police Officer Gregory Thomas Alia was killed Wednesday, September 30th at Richland Fashion Mall in the line of duty protecting the people of his community. There was an outpouring of love and appreciation for his services. The following obituary is from The State on October 2nd.

Columbia—A Mass of Christian burial for Officer Gregory Thomas Alia, 32, will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, October 3, 2015, at St.

Joseph Catholic Church. Final Commendation and Farewell Prayers will be in St. Peter's Cemetery. The family will receive friends from 6 until 8.00 p.m. Friday, October 2, 2015, at Dunbar Funeral home, Devine Street Chapel.

Officer Alia died in the line of duty Wednesday, September 30, 2015. Born in Columbia, he was the son of Dr. Richard Thomas Alia and Mary Alexis Wade Alia. He was a graduate of Richland Northeast High School and the University of South Carolina with degrees in Criminal Justice and Media Arts. He was a founding father of Phi Sigma Kappa Gamma Triton Chapter. Officer Alia was with the Forest Acres Police Department for seven years. He was an Eagle Scout and a member of the St. Joseph Catholic Church.

Surviving are his wife, Kassandra Kugler ''Kassy'' Alia; son Salvatore David Alia; and his parents; sisters, Christine A. Corbly (Brett) of Indian Land, Rebecca Mesnil (Pierre) of Columbia; a niece, Madeleine; father-in-law and mother-in-law, David and Carol Ann Kugler; sisters-in-laws, Kristina Persinger (Brian), Knatalia Kugler, Kara Kugler; and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Greg Alia Memorial Fund at www.gofundme.com/rw5b9wbc. Please sign the online guestbook at www.dunbarfunerals.com.

The State further published a thoughtful front page article by Avery G. Wilkes on October 4th reflecting the love and affection for the Alia family as headlined Officer was 'strong and brave, selfless'.

Hundreds gathered Saturday at St. Joseph Catholic Church and Elmwood Cemetery to mourn the death and celebrate the life of Forest Acres police officer Greg Alia.

Alia, 32, a seven-year veteran of the Forest Acres Police Department, was shot and killed Wednesday morning by a suspect in Richland Mall. His funeral Mass and burial services were crowded with police officers and law enforcement officials, including Forest Acres Police Chief Gene Sealy, Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott and S.C. Attorney General Alan Wilson.

Some mourners who packed into the downtown Columbia church, including police from departments across South Carolina, wore blue ribbons in support of police.

Alia on Saturday was recalled as a gentle patient protector who sought to serve others before himself.

Christine Corbly, one of Alia's sisters who spoke at the funeral Mass, said Alia's overwhelming love and happiness were evident in the way he treated his family, friends and those he protected as a police officer.

''This is not the first time my brother rushed into danger, and if things had been different it wouldn't have been the last,'' Corbly said.

''This is not what made my brother a hero. What made my brother a hero was that every day he got up, put on his uniform, loved his family, loved his son, loved his wife, was full of commitment and happiness and contentment that he poured into everything he did.

''He gave it his all.''

Corbly, who is older than Alia, said she used to read to him stories about heroes, warriors and adventure when they were kids. She said Alia wasn't usually drawn to the main character, preferring the sidekicks instead for their loyalty, selflessness and sacrifice.

''It seems that is the man he tried to become—strong and brave, selfless,'' Corbly said.

''Never the star, never the center, but rather the one who sacrificed himself so the hero could escape and save the day.''

Monsignor Richard Harris, who delivered the homily at the funeral Mass, said Alia always looked for the good in others and that even when there wasn't much good to find, he was still patient and understanding.

''We will miss Gregory Alia—his voice, a touch, a smile, and a presence that will be longed for in the weeks, months and years to come,'' Harris said. ''And there is the wish to say just one more, 'I love you.' ''

Corbly thanked those in attendance for the outpouring of support the family has received over the past few days, most of all the memories of her brother that friends shared with them.

A GoFundMe set up by Alia's Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity brothers at the University of South Carolina had raised nearly 3500 donations, amounting to nearly $175,000, as of Saturday afternoon.

That support also was visible on the way to Alia's burial service, said Chris Scott, who grew up with Alia in Forest Acres and went to USC and then California with him before he came back to South Carolina to become a police officer.

Officers and others lined the streets throughout Columbia, the officers saluting the funeral procession as it drove from St. Joseph's on Devine Street to the cemetery on Elmwood Avenue.

''It blew me away,'' Scott said.

''There were officers at every corner. They saluted every time.

''Outside of every shop on the way, there were people standing there.''

Scott said the driver of the hearse he rode said that in the more than 1,800 funerals he had worked, he had never seen anything like that.

''To see this tidal wave of support and people that Greg knew and touched—he was the most magnetic, charming guy.'' Scott said. ''I think his greatest super-power was he could not just make friends, but he could bring people together and form groups of friends and then bring them together.''

''I know hundreds of people here, all through Greg, and every single one of them has an amazing incredible story.''

A PERSONAL APPRECIATION OF GREG

The Wilson family has a personal appreciation of Greg as in 1999, I joined my third son Julian Wilson accompanying Greg on a trek to the Philmont Scout Ranch at Cimmaron, New Mexico, with Greg's Scout leaders being John Graham, Jim Flynn, Vincent VanBrunt, and Dave Cartledge, Scoutmaster of Troop 100 at St. Joseph Catholic Church of Columbia, South Carolina. Our oldest son Alan Wilson was grateful for Greg's volunteering to put up campaign signs in Alan's successful campaign for State Attorney General. And a dear family friend Adam Piper was fortunate to be a Phi Sigma Kappa Fraternity brother at the University of South Carolina.

LOCAL ARTIST WINS BIG

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Lauren Luna for winning Best in Show at the Pearland Arts League Show.

Lauren's winning painting is called Late Nights (Burgundy St.) and is based on a picture she took last year in New Orleans. Ms. Luna is active in our local art community and shares her passion for art as an art teacher at Mark Twain Elementary in Alvin, Texas. She is a true inspiration to her students by not only teaching them about the importance of art, but also showing them that they can follow their dreams. Ms. Luna's students share her success and also encourage her to never give up. The Alvin community is proud of Lauren's talents both as an artist and teacher.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Lauren Luna for winning Best in Show. Your beautiful art is truly inspiring.

RECOGNIZING JUDGE JAMES PROUD

HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Judge James Proud, who is completing his service on the Delaware County Court of Common Pleas.

Judge Proud began his service to our country in 1968 when he entered the United States Army. Judge Proud soon entered the U.S. Army Engineer Officer Candidate School where he completed the program as a Distinguished Military Graduate, finishing first in his class among 55 other candidates.

Following his military service, Judge Proud received his law degree from Villanova University and continued to serve southeastern Pennsylvania when he was appointed as a Judge of the Delaware County Court of Common Pleas in 1996 by Governor Ridge. He served with honor and integrity, earning respect among his colleagues and others in the law enforcement and legal communities. Judge Proud also gave back to his community through his support for the Delaware County Chamber of Commerce, the Community Development Committee, and the Delaware County Emergency Food and Shelter Program.

Mr. Speaker, Judge Proud has dedicated his life to serving his community and his country, and he leaves the bench with the continuing gratitude of his friends and neighbors. I thank him for his service and wish him the best in retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, last week I missed several roll call votes due to weather. I wish to state how I would have voted had I been present:

Roll Call No. 534—Yes

Roll Call No. 535—Yes

RECOGNIZING PARK GEUN-HYE, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

HON. MIKE KELLY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Park Geun-hye, president of the Republic of Korea, on the occasion of her second visit to Washington, D.C.

This year marks the 65th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War. As Korea has transformed itself in six decades from a war torn economy into the thirteenth largest economy in the world, as well as an indispensable ally and linchpin of regional peace and stability in Northeast Asia, it stands as one of America's greatest foreign policy success stories of the post-World War II era.

Today Korea is the sixth largest trading partner of the United States, the fifth largest market for agricultural goods, and the third largest destination for U.S. foreign direct investment in the Asia-Pacific region. Bilateral trade between our two nations reached $101.3 billion in 2013 alone, cemented by the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement. Overall, American exports to Korea reached a record level of $44.5 billion last year. Trade with Korea injects billions of dollars into the U.S. economy, supporting thousands of American jobs.

Next week, Korean President Park Geun-hye will be making her second visit to Washington, D.C. While I regret not being here to welcome her in person, I want to express my heartfelt welcome and convey my best wishes for her every success.

I know that President Park's agenda for her visit will be important and robust. There are many challenges that confront us in the region, as shown by the recent incident along the Demilitarized Zone in which two South Korean soldiers were maimed by land mines laid by the North. Yet we shall remain resolute in countering North Korean provocations, and our iron-clad alliance will only be strengthened by President Park's visit.

In addition, I look forward to hearing about expanded U.S.-Korea cooperation in other areas including energy, space, health and cybersecurity.

Again, I offer my best wishes to President Park on a productive and successful visit and I ask my colleagues to join me with their own expressions of friendship and support.

SWIMMING, BIKING AND RUNNING TO 375

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jeff Gill for successfully completing his 375th career triathlon last month.

Triathlons have allowed Jeff to travel the world. Of all the places he's traveled to compete, it was great to see Jeff complete his milestone triathlon in his hometown of Katy, Texas in a race he hasn't missed in over 20 years. Jeff has already completed nine triathlons just this year and hopes to complete nine more. He is well on his way to number 475.

We all look forward to cheering him along throughout his triathlon career. On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Jeff for completing his 375th triathlon.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, October 8, 2015 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

OCTOBER 20

10 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Cherry Ann Murray, of Kansas, to be Director of the Office of Science, and Victoria Marie Baecher Wassmer, of Illinois, to be Under Secretary, both of the Department of Energy, and Mary L. Kendall, of Minnesota, to be Inspector General, Suzette M. Kimball, of West Virginia, to be Director of the United States Geological Survey, and Kristen Joan Sarri, of Michigan, to be an Assistant Secretary, all of the Department of the Interior.

SD–366

OCTOBER 21

10 a.m.

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

To hold hearings to examine agriculture biotechnology, focusing on Federal regulation and stakeholder perspectives.

SD–106

2:15 p.m.

Committee on Indian Affairs

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Government Accountability Office report on Indian energy development.

SD–628

OCTOBER 22

10 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine Puerto Rico, focusing on the economy, debt, and options for Congress.

SD–366

OCTOBER 27

10 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation, and Enforcement's proposed Stream Protection Rule.

SD–366

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate agreed to the conference report to accompany H.R. 1735, National Defense Authorization Act.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S7173–S7225

Measures Introduced: Eighteen bills and three resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2147–2164, S. Res. 280–281, and S. Con. Res. 23. **Page S7219**

Measures Reported:

S. 2116, to improve certain programs of the Small Business Administration to better assist small business customers in accessing broadband technology, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Page S7219**

Measures Passed:

Transnational Drug Trafficking Act: Senate passed S. 32, to provide the Department of Justice with additional tools to target extraterritorial drug trafficking activity. **Page S7223**

DHS Social Media Improvement Act: Senate passed H.R. 623, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize the Department of Homeland Security to establish a social media working group, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S7223–24**

Librarian of Congress: Senate passed S. 2162, to establish a 10-year term for the service of the Librarian of Congress. **Page S7224**

National Dyslexia Awareness Month: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 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", and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S7224**

National Women's Small Business Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 280, recognizing the month of October 2015 as "National Women's Small Business Month". **Page S7224**

National Health Information Technology Week: Senate agreed to S. Res. 281, designating the week of October 5 through October 9, 2015, as "National Health Information Technology Week" to recognize the value of health information technology in transforming and improving the healthcare system for all people in the United States. **Page S7225**

Enrollment Corrections: Senate agreed to H. Con. Res. 81, providing for corrections to the enrollment of the bill H.R. 1735. **Page S7225**

Measures Considered:

Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act—Agreement: Senate continued consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 2028, making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016. **Pages S7195–S7216**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill at 10:45 a.m., on Thursday, October 8, 2015; that the time from 10:45 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. be controlled by the Majority, that the time between 11:30 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. be controlled by the Democrats, and the time between 12:15 p.m. and 12:45 p.m. be equally divided between the two Leaders, or their designees; and that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill occur at 12:45 p.m. **Page S7225**

Conference Reports:

National Defense Authorization Act: By 70 yeas to 27 nays (Vote No. 277), Senate agreed to 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 S7175–95**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 71 yeas to 26 nays (Vote No. 276), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, having voted in the affirmative, Senate agreed to the motion to waive all applicable sections of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and applicable budget resolutions, with respect to the conference report to accompany the bill. Subsequently, the point of order that the pending measure was in violation of section 3101 of S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025, was not sustained, and thus the point of order fell. **Page S7195**

Messages from the House: **Page S7218**

Measures Referred: **Pages S7218–19**

Measures Placed on the Calendar: **Pages S7173, S7219**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S7219–21**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S7221–22**

Additional Statements: **Pages S7217–18**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S7222–23**

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—277) **Page S7195**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 6:53 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, October 8, 2015. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S7225.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine the National Institutes of Health, focusing on investing in a healthier future, after receiving testimony from Francis Collins, Director, Douglas Lowy, Acting Director, National Cancer Institute, Griffin P. Rodgers, Director, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, Walter J. Koroshetz, Director, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, Jon R. Lorsch, Director, National Institute of General Medical Sciences, and Nora D. Volkow, Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse, all of the National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services.

IRANIAN INFLUENCE IN IRAQ AND CAMP LIBERTY CASE

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine Iranian influence in Iraq and the case of Camp Liberty, after receiving testimony from former Senator Joseph I. Lieberman, Yeshiva University; General James L. Jones, USMC (Ret.), Atlantic Council Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security, former National Security Advisor; and Colonel Wesley Martin, USA (Ret.), U.S. Foundation for Liberty, former Commander, Forward Operating Base Ashraf.

WIRELESS BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine removing barriers to wireless broadband deployment, after receiving testimony from Douglas Kinkoph, Associate Administrator, Office of Telecommunications and Information Applications, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Department of Commerce; Jonathan Adelstein, PCIA—The Wireless Infrastructure Association, Alexandria, Virginia; Mayor Gary Resnick, Wilton Manors, Florida, on behalf of the National League of Cities and the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors; Cory J. Reed, Deere and Company, Moline, Illinois; and Bruce Morrison, Ericsson Inc., Bellevue, Washington.

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION OVERSIGHT

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, after receiving testimony from Stephen G. Burns, Chairman, and Kristine Svinicki, William Ostendorff, and Jeffrey Baran, each a Commissioner, all of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

NORTH KOREA

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific, and International Cybersecurity Policy concluded a hearing to examine the North Korea threat and United States policy, after receiving testimony from Robert L. Gallucci, Director, John W. Kluge Center, Library of Congress; Jay Lefkowitz, former Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea, Kirkland and Ellis LLP, New York,

New York; and Victor D. Cha, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 1607, to affirm the authority of the President to require independent regulatory agencies to comply with regulatory analysis requirements applicable to executive agencies, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 1818, to amend title 5, United States Code, to reform the rule making process of agencies, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 1820, to require agencies to publish an advance notice of proposed rule making for major rules, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 1817, to improve the effectiveness of major rules in accomplishing their regulatory objectives by promoting retrospective review, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 2109, to direct the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to develop an integrated plan to reduce administrative costs under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 1873, to strengthen accountability for deployment of border security technology at the Department of Homeland Security, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 2128, to require the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency to submit to Congress a report on Inspector General mandates;

S. 2133, to improve Federal agency financial and administrative controls and procedures to assess and mitigate fraud risks, and to improve Federal agencies' development and use of data analytics for the purpose of identifying, preventing, and responding to fraud, including improper payments;

S. 2021, to prohibit Federal agencies and Federal contractors from requesting that an applicant for employment disclose criminal history record information before the applicant has received a conditional offer, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 2093, to provide that the Secretary of Transportation shall have sole authority to appoint Federal Directors to the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority;

H.R. 998, to establish the conditions under which the Secretary of Homeland Security may establish preclearance facilities, conduct preclearance operations, and provide customs services outside the United States, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

H.R. 322, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 16105 Swingley Ridge Road in Chesterfield, Missouri, as the ''Sgt. Zachary M. Fisher Post Office'';

H.R. 323, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 55 Grasso Plaza in St. Louis, Missouri, as the ''Sgt. Amanda N. Pinson Post Office'';

H.R. 324, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 11662 Gravois Road in St. Louis, Missouri, as the ''Lt. Daniel P. Riordan Post Office'';

H.R. 558, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 55 South Pioneer Boulevard in Springboro, Ohio, as the ''Richard 'Dick' Chenault Post Office Building'';

H.R. 1442, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 90 Cornell Street in Kingston, New York, as the ''Staff Sergeant Robert H. Dietz Post Office Building'';

H.R. 1884, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 206 West Commercial Street in East Rochester, New York, as the ''Officer Daryl R. Pierson Memorial Post Office Building''; and

H.R. 3059, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4500 SE 28th Street, Del City, Oklahoma, as the James Robert Kalsu Post Office Building.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 1579, to enhance and integrate Native American tourism, empower Native American communities, increase coordination and collaboration between Federal tourism assets, and expand heritage and cultural tourism opportunities in the United States; and

H.R. 487, to allow the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma to lease or transfer certain lands.

INDIAN AFFAIRS LEGISLATION

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine pending Indian Affairs legislation, including S. 817, to provide for the addition of certain real property to the reservation of the Siletz Tribe in the State of Oregon, S. 818, to amend the Grand Ronde Reservation Act to make technical corrections, S. 1436, to require the Secretary of the Interior to take land into trust for certain Indian tribes, S. 1761, to take certain Federal land located in Lassen County, California, into trust for the benefit of the Susanville Indian Rancheria, S. 1822, to take certain Federal land located in

Tuolumne County, California, into trust for the benefit of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians, S. 1986, to provide for a land conveyance in the State of Nevada, and H.R. 387, to provide for certain land to be taken into trust for the benefit of Morongo Band of Mission Indians, after receiving testimony from Michael R. Smith, Deputy Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior; Glenn Casamassa, Associate Deputy Chief, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; Arlan D. Melendez, Reno Sparks Indian Colony, Reno, Nevada; Robert Martin, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, Banning, California; and Darren Daboda, Moapa Band of Paiutes, Moapa, Nevada.

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition Policy and Consumer Rights concluded a hearing to examine S. 2102, to amend the Clayton Act and the Federal Trade Commission Act to provide that the Federal Trade Commission shall exercise authority with respect to mergers only under the Clayton Act and only in the same procedural manner as the Attorney General exercises such authority, after receiving testimony from Edith Ramirez, Chairwoman, Federal Trade Commission; Deborah A. Garza, Covington and Burling LLP, David A. Clanton, Baker and McKenzie LLP, and Abbott B. Lipsky, Jr., Latham and Watkins LLP, all of Washington, D.C.; and Jonathan M. Jacobson, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich and Rosati, New York, New York.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 1811, to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to establish a program to make loans to certain businesses, homeowners, and renters affected by Superstorm Sandy, with amendments;

S. 2116, to improve certain programs of the Small Business Administration to better assist small business customers in accessing broadband technology, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 2126, to reauthorize the women's business center program of the Small Business Administration;

S. 2136, to establish the Regional SBIR State Collaborative Initiative Pilot Program, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 2138, to amend the Small Business Act to improve the review and acceptance of subcontracting plans; and

S. 2139, to amend the Small Business Act to prohibit the use of reverse auctions for the procurement of covered contracts, with an amendment.

PROTECTING SENIORS FROM IDENTITY THEFT

Special Committee on Aging: Committee concluded a hearing to examine if the Federal Government is doing enough to protect seniors from identity theft, after receiving testimony from Sean Cavanaugh, Deputy Administrator and Director, Center for Medicare, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and Gary Cantrell, Deputy Inspector General for Investigations, Office of Inspector General, both of the Department of Health and Human Services; Betty Balderston, Legal Services for the Elderly, Winthrop, Maine; and Marc Rotenberg, Electronic Privacy Information Center, Washington, D.C.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 12 public bills, H.R. 3696–3707 were introduced.

Page H6892

Additional Cosponsors: Pages H6893–94

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H. Res. 466, providing for consideration of the bill (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, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 702) to adapt to changing crude oil market conditions (H. Rept. 114–290); and H.R. 3442, to provide further means of accountability of the United States debt and promote fiscal responsibility (H. Rept. 114–291). Page H6892

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Stewart to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. Page H6839

Recess: The House recessed at 10:40 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. Page H6843

Privileged Resolution—Intent to Offer: Representative Slaughter announced her intent to offer a privileged resolution. Page H6844

Question of Privilege: The Chair ruled that the resolution offered by Representative Slaughter did not constitute a question of the privileges of the House. Subsequently, Representative Slaughter appealed the ruling of the chair and Representative Stivers moved to table the appeal. Agreed to the motion to table the appeal of the ruling of the Chair by a yea-and-nay vote of 240 yeas to 183 nays, Roll No. 536.

Pages H6856–58

Unanimous Consent Agreement: Agreed by unanimous consent that the question of adopting a motion to recommit on H.R. 3192 may be subject to postponement as though under clause 8 of rule 20.

Page H6858

Homebuyers Assistance Act: The House passed 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, by a vote yea-and-nay of 303 yeas to 121 nays, Roll No. 540.

Pages H6858–69, H6880–81

Rejected the Moulton motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Financial Services with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with an amendment, by a yea-and-nay vote of 185 yeas to 240 nays, Roll No. 539.

Pages H6868–69, H6880

H. Res. 462, the rule providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3192) was agreed to by a yea-and-nay vote of 238 yeas to 181 nays, Roll No. 537, after the previous question was ordered.

Pages H6848–56, H6858

Establishing a Select Investigative Panel of the Committee on Energy and Commerce: The House agreed to H. Res. 461, amended, establishing a Select Investigative Panel of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, by a yea-and-nay vote of 242 yeas to 184 nays, Roll No. 538. **Pages H6869–79**

Agreed to the Foxx amendment by voice vote.

Pages H6878–79

Commission on Care—Minority Leader Appointment: The Chair announced the Minority Leader's reappointment of the following individual on the part of the House to the Commission on Care: Ms. Lucretia M. McClenney, Locust Grove, Virginia.

Page H6881

Senate Messages: Message from the Senate and message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appear on page H6848.

Senate Referral: S. Con. Res. 22 was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Page H6890

Quorum Calls—Votes: Five yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H6857, H6858, H6879, H6880, H6880–81. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Committee Meetings

DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2015 DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS

Committee on Agriculture: Full Committee held a hearing to review the development of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Testimony was heard from Tom Vilsack, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; and Sylvia Burwell, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services.

PLUTONIUM DISPOSITION AND THE MOX PROJECT

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Strategic Forces held a hearing entitled ''Plutonium Disposition and the MOX Project''. Testimony was heard from Frank G. Klotz, Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration; John J. MacWilliams, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Energy, Department of Energy; and a public witness.

STRENGTHENING HEAD START FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Strengthening Head Start for Current and Future Generations''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

PROTECTING AMERICA'S WORKERS: AN ENFORCEMENT UPDATE FROM THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Subcommittee on Workforce Protections held a hearing entitled ''Protecting America's Workers: An Enforcement Update from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration''. Testimony was heard from David Michaels, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health, Department of Labor.

EPA'S CO2 REGULATIONS FOR NEW AND EXISTING POWER PLANTS

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Energy and Power held a hearing entitled ''EPA's CO2 Regulations for New and Existing Power Plants''. Testimony was heard from Janet McCabe, Acting EPA Administrator for Air and Radiation, Environmental Protection Agency.

IMPROVING FEDERAL SPECTRUM SYSTEMS

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing entitled ''Improving Federal Spectrum Systems''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

REFORMING FOOD AID: DESPERATE NEED TO DO BETTER

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Reforming Food Aid: Desperate Need to Do Better''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS IN AFRICA

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations held a hearing entitled ''Food Security and Nutrition Programs in Africa''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

REVIEWING PRESIDENT XI'S STATE VISIT

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific held a hearing entitled ''Reviewing President Xi's State Visit''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

EXAMINING THE MISSION, STRUCTURE, AND REORGANIZATION EFFORT OF THE NATIONAL PROTECTION AND PROGRAMS DIRECTORATE

Committee on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies held a hearing entitled ''Examining the Mission, Structure, and Reorganization Effort of the National Protection and Programs Directorate''. Testimony was heard from the following Department of Homeland Security officials: Suzanne Spaulding, Under Secretary, National Protection and Programs Directorate; Phyllis Schneck, Deputy Under Secretary, Cybersecurity and Communications, National Protections and Programs Directorate; and Ronald J. Clark, Deputy Under Secretary, National Protections and Programs Directorate; and Chris P. Currie, Director, Emergency Management National Preparedness and Critical Infrastructure Protection Homeland Security and Justice Team, Government Accountability Office.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Full Committee began a markup on H.R. 974, the ''Yellowstone and Grand Teton Paddling Act''; H.R. 1107, the ''Bureau of Reclamation Transparency Act''; H.R. 1452, to authorize Escambia County, Florida, to convey certain property that was formerly part of Santa Rosa Island National Monument and that was conveyed to Escambia County subject to restrictions on use and reconveyance; H.R. 1820, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to retire coal preference right lease applications for which the Secretary has made an affirmative commercial quantities determination, and for other purposes; H.R. 2212, to take certain Federal lands located in Lassen County, California, into trust for the benefit of the Susanville Indian Rancheria, and for other purposes; H.R. 2270, the ''Billy Frank Jr. Tell Your Story Act''; H.R. 2406, the ''SHARE Act''; and H.R. 3382, the ''Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2015''.

NATIVE AMERICAN ENERGY ACT; BILL TO ADAPT TO CHANGING CRUDE OIL MARKET CONDITIONS

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 538, the ''Native American Energy Act''; and H.R. 702, to adapt to changing crude oil market conditions. The committee granted, by voice vote, a structured rule for H.R. 538. The rule provides one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule makes in order as original text for the purpose of amendment an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 114–30 and provides that it shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute. The rule makes in order only those further amendments printed in part A of the Rules Committee report. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in part A of the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Additionally, the rule grants a structured rule for H.R. 702. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule makes in order as original text for the purpose of amendment an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 114–29 and provides that it shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order

against that amendment in the nature of a substitute. The rule makes in order only those further amendments printed in part B of the Rules Committee report. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in part B of the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Testimony was heard from Chairman Bishop of Utah, and Representatives Polis, Young of Alaska, Barton, Rush, Gene Green of Texas, Curbelo of Florida, and Jackson Lee.

THE EMV DEADLINE AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Committee on Small Business: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''The EMV Deadline and What It Means for Small Businesses''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

ENSURING AVIATION SAFETY IN THE ERA OF UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Aviation held a hearing entitled ''Ensuring Aviation Safety in the Era of Unmanned Aircraft Systems''. Testimony was heard from Michael G. Whitaker, Deputy Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration; James Hubbard, Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry, U.S. Forest Service; and public witnesses.

A CALL FOR SYSTEM-WIDE CHANGE: EVALUATING THE INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''A Call for System-Wide Change: Evaluating the Independent Assessment of the Veterans Health Administration''. Testimony was heard from Robert A. McDonald, Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs; and public witnesses.

RISING COSTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TAX POLICY

Committee on Ways and Means: Subcommittee on Oversight held a hearing on the rising costs of higher education and tax policy. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2015

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine Russian strategy and military operations, 9:30 a.m., SH–216.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance, and Data Security, to hold hearings to examine consumer product safety and the recall process, 10 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold hearings to examine H.R. 2898, to provide drought relief in the State of California, S. 1894, to provide short-term water supplies to drought-stricken California, S. 1936, to provide for drought preparedness measures in the State of New Mexico, S. 1583, to authorize the expansion of an existing hydroelectric project, S. 2046, to authorize the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to issue an order continuing a stay of a hydroelectric license for the Mahoney Lake hydroelectric project in the State of Alaska, and S. 2083, to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project, 9:30 a.m., SD–366.

Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining, to hold hearings to examine S. 414, to provide for conservation, enhanced recreation opportunities, and development of renewable energy in the California Desert Conservation Area, S. 872, to provide for the recognition of certain Native communities and the settlement of certain claims under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, S. 1295 and H.R. 1324, bills to adjust the boundary of the Arapaho National Forest, Colorado, S. 1448, to designate the Frank Moore Wild Steelhead Sanctuary in the State of Oregon, S. 1592, to clarify the description of certain Federal land under the Northern Arizona Land Exchange and Verde River Basin Partnership Act of 2005 to include additional land in the Kaibab National Forest, S. 1941 and H.R. 2223, bills to authorize, direct, expedite, and facilitate a land exchange in El Paso and Teller Counties, Colorado, S. 1942 and H.R. 1554, bills to require a land conveyance involving the Elkhorn Ranch and the White River National Forest in the State of Colorado, S. 1955, to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide for equitable allotment of land to Alaska Native veterans, S. 1971, to expand the boundary of the California Coastal National Monument, and S. 2069, to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to modify provisions relating to certain land exchanges in the Mt. Hood Wilderness in the State of Oregon, 2:30 p.m., SD–366.

Committee on Foreign Relations: business meeting to consider S. 2152, to establish a comprehensive United States Government policy to encourage the efforts of countries in sub-Saharan Africa to develop and appropriate mix of power solutions, including renewable energy, for more broadly distributed electricity access in order to support poverty reduction, promote development outcomes, and

drive economic growth, S. 1789, to improve defense cooperation between the United States and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, S. Res. 274, commemorating the 25th anniversary of the peaceful and democratic reunification of Germany, S. Res. 278, welcoming the President of the Republic of Korea on her official visit to the United States and celebrating the United States-Republic of Korea relationship, S. Res. 148, condemning the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights, and the nominations of Jennifer Ann Haverkamp, of Indiana, to be Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, Roberta S. Jacobson, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the United Mexican States, 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, 9:45 a.m., SD–419.

Subcommittee on State Department and USAID Management, International Operations, and Bilateral International Development, to hold hearings to examine ensuring an efficient and effective diplomatic security training facility for the twenty-first century, 2:30 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: to hold hearings to examine threats to the homeland, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider S. 2123, to reform sentencing laws and correctional institutions, and the nomination of Edward L. Gilmore, of Illinois, to be United States Marshal for the Northern District of Illinois for the term of four years, Department of Justice, 10:30 a.m., S–216, Capitol.

Subcommittee on the Constitution, to hold hearings to examine eminent domain ten years after *Kelo v. City of New London*, 2 p.m., SD–226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry, hearing to review the 2015 fire season and long-term trends, 10 a.m., 1302 Longworth.

Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan'', 9:30 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Military Personnel, hearing entitled ''Update on Military Suicide Prevention Programs'', 2 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Reviewing the Juvenile Justice System and How It Serves At-Risk Youth'', 10 a.m., HVC–210.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Volkswagen Emissions Cheating Allegations: Initial Questions'', 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled ''Examining Legislative Proposals to Combat our Nation's Drug Abuse Crisis'', 10:15 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, hearing entitled ''Examining the Syrian Humanitarian Crisis from the Ground, Part I'', 10:30 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, hearing entitled ''Protecting Maritime Facilities in the 21st Century: Are Our Nation's Ports at Risk for a Cyber-Attack?'', 10 a.m., 311 Cannon.

Subcommittee on Transportation Security, hearing entitled ''Reform and Improvement: Assessing the Path Forward for the Transportation Security Administration'', 2 p.m., 311 Cannon.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Planned Parenthood Exposed: Examining Abortion Procedures and Medical Ethics at the Nation's Largest Abortion Provider'', 2 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 974, the ''Yellowstone and Grand Teton Paddling Act''; H.R. 1107, the ''Bureau of Reclamation Transparency Act''; H.R. 1452, to authorize Escambia County, Florida, to convey certain property that was formerly part of Santa Rosa Island National Monument and that was conveyed to Escambia County subject to restrictions on use and reconveyance; H.R. 1820, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to retire coal preference right lease applications for which the Secretary has made an affirmative commercial quantities determination, and for other purposes; H.R. 2212, to take certain Federal lands located in Lassen County, California, into trust for the benefit of the Susanville Indian Rancheria, and for other purposes; H.R. 2270, the ''Billy Frank Jr. Tell Your Story Act''; H.R. 2406, the ''SHARE Act''; and H.R. 3382, the ''Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2015'' (continued), 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 3033, the ''Research Excellence and Advancements for Dyslexia (READ) Act''; and H.R. 3293, the ''Scientific Research in the National Interest Act'', 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Regulations, hearing entitled ''The Consequences of DOL's One-Size-Fits-All Overtime Rule for Small Businesses and their Employees'', 10 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:30 a.m., Thursday, October 8

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond 10:45 a.m.), Senate will continue consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 2028, Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. At 12:45 p.m., Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Thursday, October 8

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Consideration of H.R. 538—Native American Energy Act (Subject to a Rule).

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

Bishop, Sanford D., Jr., Ga., E1442, E1445
Bordallo, Madeleine Z., Guam, E1440
Buchanan, Vern, Fla., E1446
Capuano, Michael E., Mass., E1447
Carney, John C., Jr., E1440
Cartwright, Matt, Pa., E1441, E1444
Coffman, Mike, Colo., E1439, E1445
Costa, Jim, Calif., E1441, E1443
Davis, Danny K., Ill., E1443
Israel, Steve, N.Y., E1440
Jenkins, Evan H., W.Va., E1442, E1444
Keating, William R., Mass., E1440
Kelly, Mike, Pa., E1448
King, Steve, Iowa, E1443
Lance, Leonard, N.J., E1444
Lee, Barbara, Calif., E1442, E1444
Lipinski, Daniel, Ill., E1441
Marchant, Kenny, Tex., E1442
Meehan, Patrick, Pa., E1445, E1447
Neugebauer, Randy, Tex., E1444
Olson, Pete, Tex., E1445, E1446, E1447, E1448
Ros-Lehtinen, Ileana, Fla., E1443
Royce, Edward R., Calif., E1439
Ryan, Tim, Ohio, E1439
Sires, Albio, N.J., E1441
Takano, Mark, Calif., E1446
Webster, Daniel, Fla., E1440
Wilson, Joe, S.C., E1445, E1446
Young, David, Iowa, E1446

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