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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. JENKINS of West Virginia).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 10, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable EVAN H. JENKINS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
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.

NOTICE

If the 114th Congress, 1st Session, adjourns sine die on or before December 24, 2015, a final issue of the *Congressional Record* for the 114th Congress, 1st Session, will be published on Thursday, December 31, 2015, to permit Members to insert statements.

All material for insertion must be signed by the Member and delivered to the respective offices of the Official Reporters of Debates (Room HT–59 or S–123 of the Capitol), Monday through Friday, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. through Wednesday, December 30. The final issue will be dated Thursday, December 31, 2015, and will be delivered on Monday, January 4, 2016.

None of the material printed in the final issue of the *Congressional Record* may contain subject matter, or relate to any event, that occurred after the sine die date.

Senators' statements should also be formatted according to the instructions at http://webster.senate.gov/secretary/Departments/Reporters__Debates/resources/cong__record.pdf, and submitted electronically, either on a disk to accompany the signed statement, or by e-mail to the Official Reporters of Debates at "Record@Sec.Senate.gov".

Members of the House of Representatives' statements may also be submitted electronically by e-mail, to accompany the signed statement, and formatted according to the instructions for the Extensions of Remarks template at https://housenet.house.gov/legislative/research-and-reference/transcripts-and-records/electronic-congressional-record-inserts. The Official Reporters will transmit to GPO the template formatted electronic file only after receipt of, and authentication with, the hard copy, and signed manuscript. Deliver statements to the Official Reporters in Room HT–59.

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By order of the Joint Committee on Printing.

GREGG HARPER, *Chairman.*

BOOKS 'N FRIENDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, it is always a joy for me to kick off the holiday season in Sparta, North Carolina, at the annual Christmas parade down Main Street.

As I visited with folks at this year's parade, I was reminded again how special Alleghany County and its people are. The pride that they take in their community is apparent in everything they do. It is especially evident in the

hardworking volunteers who donate so much time because they love their hometown and fellow citizens.

A great example of this generosity is seen at Books 'n Friends, a nonprofit used bookstore owned by the friends of the Alleghany County Library. Since 2003, volunteers like Alice Keighton, Joyce Speas, and many others have donated their time at the bookstore, whose profits provide funding for activities and necessities at the library.

This support makes quite a difference and helps the library inform and educate the citizens of Alleghany County.

My deepest appreciation to all of the friends of the library and all the wonderful volunteers in Alleghany County, who do so much to make it such a special place to live, work, and visit.

CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, there has been a great deal of discussion about trade agreements, but there is another important piece of legislation that deals with Customs. This is an often obscure element, but it makes a huge difference to be able to manage the hundreds of billions of dollars of products that leave the United States and those that are imported.

The Customs bill represents important work by our Ways and Means Committee and our colleagues in the Senate Finance Committee finally reaching conclusion. I am pleased with many of the key results. It includes items that are not in the headlines, but are very important to the people that I represent.

For example, the legislation will help our growing outdoor industry by creating new definitions and tariff classifications for recreational performance outerwear.

It reduces costly taxes on outdoor footwear, which both supports the outdoor recreation industry and makes it more affordable for people to get outside and enjoy our beautiful parks and trails.

It includes the full ENFORCE Act, requiring immediate action to investigate and address trade cheaters and take measures to stop those who continually attempt to circumvent the penalties already imposed upon them.

As our trade agreements become more complex, so, too, has trade enforcement. We can no longer rely on a handful of agencies to effectively protect our market from tax cheaters. It requires a whole government approach, and this is why it is critical to see the bill permanently establish the Interagency Trade Enforcement Center to centralize and enhance trade enforcement efforts.

It finally puts into law a ban on the import of goods made with child and forced labor. This will reshape markets and provide additional tools to confront horrific work conditions around the world.

Very important for me, it will help ensure our trade agreements actually are enforced. A lack of enforcement is a justifiable criticism of people who are skeptical of trade agreements, who wonder is it worth the paper that it is printed on to have labor and environmental protections.

Well, the greatest obstacle to enforcement has been lack of resources. Enforcing trade agreements is expensive, time consuming, and highly complex. That is why I fought hard to include in this legislation elements that I have introduced, along with Senator MARIA CANTWELL, the Trade STRONGER Act, which creates a trade enforcement and capacity-building fund which would not only provide more resources for the enforcement of labor and environment violations, but helps the fund managed by the USTR be accessible government-wide, not only for enforcement, but for in-country capacity building, helping our current and future trading partners implement the labor and environmental provisions they have committed to.

This is an important step forward because, regardless of what one feels about a particular trade treaty, I think everyone agrees they ought to be enforced.

This Customs bill, in addition to promoting the trade process more effectively and providing relief for some inequitable treatment for products so important to my constituents, establishes more resources to make sure our trade agreements are, in fact, enforced.

This has been the result of long and arduous negotiations, but done in a spirit of cooperation and goodwill.

I particularly want to thank the efforts of Speaker PAUL RYAN and Ways and Means Committee Chair KEVIN BRADY, who have worked with me in a spirit of cooperation to make sure the enforcement provisions are effective. I appreciate this.

I think this will be an achievement that we all should support because we will all benefit from it.

E-FREE ACT

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to tell the story of Kathryn Frederickson of Maryland. Kathryn is one of the tens of thousands of women that have been harmed by a permanent sterilization device, the medical device known as Essure.

Essure was recommended as the optimal birth control solution for Kathryn, despite a pre-existing autoimmune condition and a known nickel allergy. After the procedure, she felt severe pain, extreme bleeding, vomiting, and rashes, caused by the nickel-based device.

After 3 weeks of pain and discomfort, Kathryn paid $7,000 out of pocket to remove the device. One coil was found in her uterus. She lost 2 months of work and of her life. Kat's health has never been the same.

I rise as a voice for the Essure Sisters to tell this Chamber that their stories are real, their pain is real, and that their fight is real.

Mr. Speaker, my bill, the E-Free Act, can halt this tragedy by removing this dangerous device from the market. Too many women have been harmed.

So I urge my colleagues to join this fight and to join the bill because stories like Kathryn's are too important to ignore.

THE MOST EFFECTIVE DEFENSE AGAINST AN ARMED TERRORIST IS AN ARMED AMERICAN

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, ever since the terrorist attack in San Bernardino, leftist politicians have called for more restrictions on gun ownership for Americans. These are the same politicians who have worked for years to open our Nation to unprecedented and indiscriminate immigration from hotbeds of Islamic extremism.

The most effective defense against an armed terrorist is an armed American. If one person in that room in San Bernardino had been able to return fire, many innocent lives would have been saved. But Californians are subject to the most restrictive gun laws in the country, making it very difficult for law-abiding citizens to exercise their Second Amendment right to defend themselves. In a society denied its right of self-defense, the gunman is king.

I repeat: the most effective defense against an armed terrorist is an armed American. Yet, the President and his followers seek to increase the number of terrorists entering through porous borders and lax immigration laws while, at the same time, seeking to decrease the number of armed Americans.

Their latest ploy was announced by the President on Sunday and has been parroted by his Congressional allies this week, to the point of disrupting the work of the House.

In the President's words, ''Congress should act to make sure no one on a no-fly list is able to buy a gun.'' He asked: What could possibly be the argument against that?

Well, while serving in the California State Senate a decade ago, I discovered suddenly I couldn't check in for a flight. When I asked why, I was told I was on this government list. The experience was absolutely Kafkaesque.

My first reaction was to ask, ''Well, why am I on that list?

''Well, we can't tell you.

''Well, what criteria do you use?

''That is classified.

''How do I get off that list?

''You can't.''

I soon discovered that another California State Senator had been placed on that list. A few months later, U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy found himself on that list.

I at least had the Office of the Sergeant at Arms of the State Senate to work through, something an ordinary American would not. Even so, it took months of working through that office with repeated petitions to the government to get my name removed from that list.

The farce of it all was this: I was advised, in the meantime, just to fly under my middle name, which I did without incident.

In my case, it turns out it was a case of mistaken identity with an IRA activist the British Government was mad at. This could happen to any American.

The fine point of it is this: During this administration, the IRS has been used extensively to harass and intimidate ordinary Americans for exercising their First Amendment rights.

What the President proposes is that, on the whim of any Federal bureaucrat, an American can be denied their Second Amendment rights as well with no opportunity to confront their accuser, contest the evidence, or avail themselves of any of their other due process rights under the Constitution.

The concept that the left is seeking to instill in our law is that mere suspicion by a bureaucrat is sufficient to deny law-abiding American citizens their constitutional rights under the law. Given the left's demonstrated hostility to freedom of speech and due process of law, it is not hard to see where this is leading us.

I would support the President's proposal if it established a judicial process where an individual could only be placed on this list once he had been accorded his constitutional rights to be informed of the charges, to be given his day in court, to be accorded the right to confront his accuser and contest the evidence against him and submit himself to a decision by a jury of his peers. But that is the farthest thing from the left's agenda.

The President's proposal would have done nothing to stop the carnage in San Bernardino, where the terrorists were not on any watch list. Indeed, one was admitted from Saudi Arabia after the vetting that the President keeps assuring us is rigorous and thorough. And several of the guns used in this massacre weren't even acquired directly but, rather, through a third party.

Of course the American people don't want terrorists to have guns. The American people don't want terrorists in our country in the first place. But the President's policies have left our Nation's gate wide open while he seeks to take from Americans their means of self-defense.

So I leave off as I began. The best defense against an armed terrorist is an armed American. That is what the Second Amendment is all about. It is an absolutely essential pillar of our security.

Our Constitution is our best defense of all. It must be defended against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

FRENCH RAIL/HOLOCAUST SETTLEMENT

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to raise awareness about Holocaust survivors' continued quest for justice, an ever-elusive goal still nearly three-quarters of a century after living through the crimes of modern humanity's darkest period.

Though it is said that the moral universe's arc bends toward justice, time is not a luxury we can afford any longer for elderly Holocaust survivors.

□ 1015

Of the approximately half a million Holocaust survivors, around half of them live at or near poverty. Can you imagine that? Holocaust survivors should be able to live out the remaining days in comfort and with the knowledge that their long-sought justice has finally been achieved.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, an agreement was reached between the Government of France and the United States regarding victims of Holocaust-related deportations during the Nazi era. The French rail company, SNCF, knowingly and willfully transported tens of thousands of Holocaust victims to concentration camps and near certain death during the Second World War. They were paid to do this.

For over 70 years, SNCF, the French rail company and the French Government eluded any and all responsibility for these actions. For years, I have been fighting for justice for all victims of the Holocaust.

On this issue in particular, I have joined Representative CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York as she attempted to shepherd the Holocaust Rail Justice Act through Congress over the past few sessions. I want to thank the gentlewoman from New York for her leadership and her unyielding effort to hold SNCF accountable for its heinous actions.

While the agreement reached over SNCF's—remember, that is the French rail company—culpability in the deaths of tens of thousands of Jews is not the optimal solution, it is imperative that we do hold these perpetrators accountable and that we win justice for as many Holocaust survivors and their heirs as possible.

However, Mr. Speaker, it is important that Holocaust survivors and their families are made aware of this agreement and the claims process. Many do not know of this.

For more information, questions, and to file a claim, the State Department has set up a Web site at www.state.gov/deportationclaims.com. I know that is very difficult. Or you can call 202–776–8385, or send an email to deportationclaims@state.gov.

That is a lot to take in.

Or contact your congressional Representative, and we can help.

Mr. Speaker, I urge everyone to spread the word to make sure that every Holocaust survivor eligible gets an opportunity to file a claim. I want to thank the continued efforts and the support of the many Holocaust survivors that I am blessed to have in my congressional district who have been at the forefront in the fight for justice for survivors and their heirs.

My good friends, David Mermelstein, David Schaecter, Joe Sachs, Alex Gross, Herbie Karliner, Jack Rubin, and so many others—they have seen the unforgettable, and they have lived through the unthinkable. Yet, they continue steadfast in the fight for justice against those who have committed the unforgivable and the unthinkable.

I, also, want to thank the others who have pursued justice for these individuals at every turn, like my good friend and long-time constituent, Sam Dubbin. Sam has been instrumental in highlighting fraud at the Claims Conference, that we know now, very clearly, occurred over decades and deprived Holocaust survivors of at least tens of millions of dollars, and the real numbers are likely even higher.

Next year, Mr. Speaker, I plan to introduce my bill, once again, to allow survivors to have their day in court. That is all the bill does, to have their day in court, because we now know that the Claims Conference process has failed so many of the Holocaust survivors.

Mr. Speaker, time is of the essence. We owe survivors and their heirs every opportunity to achieve justice. I urge my colleagues to continue this fight on behalf of the remaining Holocaust survivors and their heirs to get the word out to their constituents and their local community leaders.

If you know someone who may be eligible to receive compensation under this incredibly horrific act done by the French rail company to transport victims to certain death, please direct them to the State Department Web site. The deadline is May 31 next year. Let's get the word out as soon and as far as possible.

IRAN IS UNTRUSTWORTHY

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to start by thanking my good friend and colleague from Florida for her efforts in trying to make sure we are doing all we can for the Holocaust survivors.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that these are very turbulent and fast-moving times. As we train our focus on ISIS, however, I think it would be a

very foolish mistake if we lose sight of the terror threat from Iran, the world's greatest state sponsor of terror.

In the past week, two alarming developments have exposed why Iran cannot be trusted:

First, a December 2 report from the International Atomic Energy Agency revealed that Iran had previously been working on nuclear weapons.

That is right, Mr. Speaker. Despite Iran's repeated insistence that its nuclear program had only been for peaceful purposes, the IAEA report makes clear that Iran had an active nuclear weapons program.

In short, Iran lied, and it has been telling a very big lie for some time. This deceit is precisely why we must not close the book on uncovering Iran's past nuclear efforts.

Second, Mr. Speaker, it has now been reported that on November 21, Iran tested a ballistic missile, one capable of carrying a nuclear warhead. This is a breach of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions and is in obvious defiance of the 8-year ban on ballistic missile work that was part of the nuclear agreement.

This is Iran's second such launch of a ballistic missile since the conclusion of the nuclear agreement. Regrettably, no such action has been taken against Iran for that first test in October. Instead, the U.N. Security Council is still debating on how to respond. They are still debating. What message does that send?

Mr. Speaker, Iran cannot be given a pass for these flagrant provocations. A failure to forcibly respond now with repercussions will only encourage Iran to incrementally cheat in the future again and again, as it already has.

The unavoidable truth is that simply looking the other way so as not to ruffle any feathers in Tehran will neither bring peace nor an end to belligerent behavior from the Iranians. We know that Iran cannot be trusted, plain and simple. We know that Iran will continue to test the world's resolve.

The real question now, Mr. Speaker, is whether the world will even be interested in responding. It is time for our voices to be heard loud and clear. The United States must step forward and lead.

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 22 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON) at noon.

PRAYER

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

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

As the two parties negotiate the funding of government in these waning days of the first session, grant them a surfeit of wisdom and a spirit of cooperation in ongoing negotiations.

Continue to bless our Nation with a sense of peace and healing as the victims of San Bernardino are being laid to rest. During this holy season, continue to be with us.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PAULSEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PAULSEN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

> I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

THE PRESIDENT SHOULD CHANGE COURSE

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, it is sad to me that it took the President 5 days to identify the attack in San Bernardino as terrorism. After I heard the tragic news last Wednesday, I knew in 5 seconds it was a terrorist attack.

The President needs to revisit the 9/11 Memorial in New York City, which clearly establishes the timeline of the global war on terrorism. He can see copies of fatwas by Islamic extremists declaring war on modern civilization dated in 1996. The war has never stopped.

The Second Amendment's right to bear arms has never been more important for citizens to protect their families. The thought that gun control can stop terrorism is a diversion from the real threats. This was revealed by the mass murders in Paris, despite French strict gun control.

In the past weeks, the terrorists' mass murders have been horrifying, of Lebanese, Russians, and French, along with Americans in Iraq, Israel, Paris, and San Bernardino, of Muslims, Christians, and Jews.

The President should change course to actually destroy ISIL, not just give pathetic political lectures. We are facing an enemy that requires us to set aside partisanship to protect American families.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and may the President by his actions never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

SOLAR INVESTMENT TAX CREDIT

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, notably absent from the tax extenders bill released this week is a provision on which 174,000 American jobs depend.

The solar investment tax credit, a 30 percent credit for the installation of solar on residential and commercial properties, was implemented in 2006. The result has been an annual growth of 73 percent.

That growth allowed the industry to develop panels that have soared in efficiency and plummeted in price. Solar is our fastest growing energy source and is responsible for 40 percent of all new generating capacity brought online this year. Solar employment is growing at a rate 20 times higher than the overall economy.

If the solar investment tax credit is not extended, that growth will stop, demand will drop by 71 percent, and 100,000 jobs will be lost; but a 5-year extension would create 60,000 jobs and allow the industry to come to maturity.

Mr. Speaker, tax legislation that does not include the solar investment tax credit is not serious about creating American jobs. I urge its inclusion.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MARY CALDWELL PLUMER

(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, I rise today to honor and celebrate the life of a patriot and dear friend, Mary Caldwell Plumer, known as Mere.

Mere accomplished so much throughout her long and rewarding life and did it with a constant smile and positive outlook. We treasured the moments we had with Mere because we knew we could not have her forever.

As per her wish, I will not stand by her grave and cry but adhere to the standards she established and always maintained of loving life and each other. Her friends, family, and loved ones admired her, and we were blessed to have known her.

Mr. Speaker, Mere is now reunited with her husband of 45 years, Dick, and two of her children, Penny and Christopher. Though Heaven has gained her, we have not lost her; and we will never lose her, for she is rooted in our hearts and in our memories now and forever.

Mere is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Patience and Charles Flick; her son, Richard; and her three loving grandchildren, Penny, Bonnie, and Willis Flick.

May God bless and keep Mary Caldwell Plumer in His bosom.

TERRORIST WATCH LIST LOOPHOLE

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on my Republican colleagues to approve the Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act, which would prevent individuals on the terrorist watch list from buying weapons here in the U.S. This legislation has been blocked from coming to the floor for a vote nearly a dozen times over the past 2 weeks.

Most Americans find it mind-boggling that we continue to allow individuals deemed too dangerous to fly to buy weapons in the U.S., guns designed to kill as many people as possible, as quickly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my Republican colleagues to fix this loophole and protect our citizens, to find some courage and put the safety of the American people before the politics of the gun lobby.

Mr. Speaker, if Republicans truly have concerns over how the terrorist watch list is constructed, then they should offer an amendment to fix it. But more than 2,000 suspects on the terrorist watch list have already bought guns in our country. We don't need to add to that list. We need to act right now.

WEST VIRGINIA HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

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

Mr. MCKINLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of three West Virginia State football champions, all of which are from the First District of West Virginia: Head Coach Josh Nicewarner and the Indians of Bridgeport High School on their third straight Class AA championship title; and from Magnolia High School, Head Coach Josh Sims and the Blue Eagles on their single A championship title; and for the first time in school history, Chris Daugherty and the Wheeling Park Patriots on the Class AAA championship.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am told by my astute research staff that, except for States with one Representative, this is the first time in American history that all three high school champions have come in a single year from one district. So I challenge my esteemed colleagues, Mr. JENKINS and Mr. MOONEY, from the other districts of West Virginia, to match that title next year.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate International Human Rights Day.

This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Mr. Speaker, the United States of America was founded upon freedom, democracy, and liberty, and America must perform its role as an advocate and as a defender of these values.

Today, more than 140 prisoners of conscience are currently imprisoned in Vietnam due to their political views and activities. These activists are victims of constant mental and physical harassment and oftentimes are forced to endure unsanitary prison conditions.

Activists, including Tran Huynh Duy Thuc, Dang Xuan Dieu, and Ho Duc Hoa, were falsely tried and imprisoned simply for practicing their right to assemble.

This year, in November, Burma, a country known for its horrendous human rights record, held its first free election, yet Vietnam continues to function as a single-party system. Today, on International Human Rights Day, I urge Vietnam to finally open up its society and to empower its people.

TRIBUTE TO THOMAS GALLAGHER

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

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Thomas Gallagher, an honorable public servant who passed away earlier this week.

Following his service in the United States Air Force during the Korean war, Thomas earned an undergraduate and master's degree while simultaneously pursuing his career in law enforcement and raising a family.

Thomas joined the New York City Police Department in 1957 and went on to serve the city for 37 years, rising all the way to the rank of assistant chief.

Mr. Speaker, Thomas Gallagher was the son of Irish immigrants. From a very early age, he learned the importance of hard work and selfless dedication to his family and the community. Though he endured many tragedies in his life, including the loss of all three of his wives to various diseases, he never lost his zeal for life. He was often buoyed by the great pride he held for all three of his children, who rose to become great successes in law, business, and the Secret Service.

Thomas personifies the great American spirit. Not only did he persevere through trying times, he prospered. His was a life well lived, and I feel truly blessed to have known him and his great family.

May God now hold Thomas in the palm of His hand.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF PROFESSOR JOHN ARTHUR RASSIAS

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

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the life of a truly extraordinary Granite Stater, Professor John Rassias, who passed away last week in New Hampshire at the age of 90.

Professor Rassias was a lifelong Granite Stater, a World War II veteran, and an internationally renowned language professor at my alma mater, Dartmouth College. He developed the Rassias method, a revolutionary way of teaching languages that includes rapid-fire drills and dramatic flair, allowing students to be immersed in the language and culture.

He was an extraordinary mentor. His teaching style has been widely adopted at universities and institutions around the world, including in the Peace Corps, where Dr. Rassias was the first director of language programs in 1964.

His legacy extends far beyond simply teaching language. Dr. Rassias' deep commitment to cultural dialogue and understanding shaped the perspective of countless students and inspired them to make the world a better place. He will be truly missed by the entire Granite State and members of the Dartmouth community throughout the world.

PINKY SWEAR FOUNDATION

(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, the pinky swear promise is a universal symbol to keep one's promise and one's word. For the Pinky Swear Foundation, keeping that promise means helping children who are battling cancer and their families.

The foundation's work was actually started 12 years ago, after 9-year-old Mitch Chepokas of Chanhassen, Minnesota, had been diagnosed with terminal bone cancer and, while in his hospital room, overheard others discussing that there would not be enough money for Christmas that year.

Mitch decided that he would give away all of his money to those families so they could celebrate the holidays, and he made his father pinky swear to continue to make sure that they will

help children with cancer after he was gone.

Today the Chepokas family has been joined by others in the community and around the country who have agreed to help keep this promise and help in the fight against cancer. The Pinky Swear Foundation has raised millions of dollars for different events for this cause.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is Pinky Swear Day and a great time to recognize the wonderful work of this foundation. Mitch's bravery, selflessness, and heart continue to live on to help others.

MAUI FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

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

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, for 35 years, Maui Family Support Services has been helping to build strong, healthy families on Maui, Molokai, and Lanai.

Last year alone, the organization assisted over 5,000 people in need, which included: making 4,466 home visits; helping 136 people access mental health, substance abuse, or domestic violence services; and providing developmental screenings for 953 children.

Additionally, thousands of people have gone through the organization's programs for early childhood development, teen substance abuse prevention, and fatherhood involvement, helping to build and strengthen local families and communities.

One in eight children in Hawaii lives in poverty, and it is organizations like Maui Family Support Services that play a critical role in making sure that our keiki and local families get the support and services they need.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you to this great organization for the service that they have provided for over 35 years.

□ 1215

RECOGNIZING DANIEL LYONS

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

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, you may know, and others may know, and may have heard about the wildfires that swept through central Washington this past summer, destroying many homes, lives, wildstock, and livestock across Washington State. Tragically, they also took the lives of three brave firefighters.

On August 19, 25-year-old Daniel Lyons, who is also a firefighter, was with his friends and partners, Richard Wheeler, Andrew Zajac, and Tom Zbyszewski, when their vehicle was overcome by flames. Daniel made it out of the fire truck alive but suffered burns over 60 percent of his body.

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to meet with Daniel. After he had spent 3 months undergoing treatment at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle, he has a positive attitude about life, and is excited about his opportunity to continue to serve.

This young man still wants to be a police officer. He lost his fingertips in this fire. He still believes that he—and I know he can do this, and I want to be there for him—can accomplish his goal of continuing to serve as a police officer in the State of Washington.

As a former cop of 33 years, I could not be more proud of Daniel. He is a real-life hero. I will always remember his friends and partners.

LET'S HAVE A MOMENT OF ACTION

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

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, Faisal Shahzad was already on the no-fly list when he attempted to bomb Times Square in May of 2010. If he had decided to walk into a gun store that day, he would have walked out with a gun in hand. Fortunately, Shahzad's bomb failed to go off. But had he, instead, purchased a military-style weapon that day, it could have been very different.

It is absolutely against common sense that suspected terrorists can walk into a gun store and purchase any firearm that they would like. They can't walk onto a plane, mind you, but they can purchase a military-style assault weapon and wreak havoc on a community.

Seventy-seven percent of the American people believe we should close this loophole. The Republicans have an option. A bill by their Republican colleague from New York (Mr. KING) would close that loophole.

I ask my colleagues on the Republican side to listen to Mr. KING and the American people and not to the NRA and the gun manufacturers. We have had enough moments of silence. For once, let's have a moment of action.

STUDENT VISA SECURITY IMPROVEMENT ACT

(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 discuss important legislation that will help keep our country safe.

In light of recent tragedies across the globe, our national security has been at the forefront of our minds. As elected officials, we have a responsibility to do everything we can to protect our Nation. That is why I reintroduced H.R. 4089, the Student Visa Security Improvement Act, to further address potential threats to our national security.

It is clear there are significant gaps of vulnerabilities that must be addressed in our student visa program. This bill would provide additional scrutiny for foreign students and exchange applicants, and put mechanisms into place to ensure students are in this country for their intended purpose, rather than to do us harm.

My legislation will safeguard our universities, communities, and our Nation. I urge my colleagues to support this very important piece of legislation.

CLOSE THE TERRORIST GUN LOOPHOLE

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

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House passed bipartisan legislation to better protect our Nation by making our Visa Waiver Program more rigorous. That is because we recognized, on a bipartisan basis, that legal loopholes that make Americans less safe must be closed.

Why can't we bring that same spirit to commonsense gun violence legislation? That is a rhetorical question because I think we all know that the gun manufacturing and sales industry and their puppet, the NRA, have a stranglehold on the Republican majority in this Congress that has kept Congress silent for years on this issue, but that silence will no longer be tolerated.

More than 2,000 suspects on the FBI terrorist watch list have legally purchased guns in the United States in recent years. Thankfully, one brave Republican has dared to confront the gun lobby by introducing a bill to close this loophole. I demand a vote on that bill.

Americans are tired of hearing thoughts and prayers in response to mass shootings. They are sick of our regularly scheduled moments of silence. Our silence has become the problem.

Americans want action to address the gun violence epidemic in this country. There is no better way to start than the bipartisan bill prohibiting suspected terrorists on the terrorist watch list from stockpiling assault weapons.

Let's have a vote on H.R. 1076. It is time to end Congress' shameful silence on this critical national security issue.

RECOGNIZING VALOR CHRISTIAN'S STATE CHAMPION FOOTBALL TEAM

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

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Valor Christian High School football team.

On Saturday night, the Eagles rallied to a 29–26 victory over Pomona to capture the State title for the sixth time in seven seasons.

The comeback victory achieved by the team is a testament to their character and tenacity. The players stood

strong, and their victory in the final minutes is a credit to the determination and commitment of the entire team and Coach Rod Sherman.

It is an honor to highlight the accomplishments of these young men, who finished the season 12–2 and established an impressive 30–1 playoff record.

I would also like to recognize the championship game MVP, junior quarterback Dylan McCaffrey, who led the team on two touchdown drives in the final minutes to win the comeback victory.

Again, congratulations to the Valor Christian High School football team on their impressive season.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to stop the silence and to encourage and stress that my colleagues need to take action to expand background checks and to close the loopholes. I will continue to stand here and fight, and I will not be silent.

While many of my colleagues have spoken about the loophole that allows terrorist suspects to purchase guns, we have many other loopholes that present a danger to the safety of Americans and our homeland.

Since the enactment of the Brady Act in 1994, the law has stopped nearly 2.5 million guns from being transferred to individuals legally disqualified. However, despite the success of this law, it does not apply to 40 percent of all gun purchases.

Mr. Speaker, 92 percent of Americans favor universal background checks. It is well past time for us, as Congress, to reflect the will of the people that we represent, to pass legislation to expand background checks, and to close the loopholes.

Stop the silence. We must do what the people sent us here to do, and that is to take action.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Human Rights Day.

Sixty-seven years ago today, December 10, 1948, the U.N. General Assembly proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Universal Declaration set out a common understanding of the fundamental human rights that were to be universally protected.

Today, we recall the inalienable rights intrinsic to every human being. In many regions of the world, people continue to struggle to attain the most basic rights and respect for their basic human dignity. In several regions of the world, defenseless civilians face attacks by terrorist organizations and networks that seek to intimidate, maim, and kill in the name of a distorted theology.

I join my distinguished colleague from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) and people everywhere in reaffirming our commitment to the fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the Universal Declaration, and urge all leaders to redouble their efforts to promote and guarantee them.

I also want to thank the human rights defenders everywhere, who so often carry out their work at great risk to themselves and their families.

NO GUNS FOR SUSPECTED TERRORISTS

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

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I come here today to speak about weapons of murder and terror.

Mr. Speaker, suspected terrorists should not be able to walk into a gun store and come out with weapons of murder and terror.

As Members of Congress, we have an obligation to keep American families safe. To not bring the bipartisan bill, H.R. 1076, to the floor for a vote is to deny us the opportunity to keep our families safer.

This bill, H.R. 1076, is sensible and straightforward. If you are a suspected terrorist, you should not be able to buy a gun. If you are a suspected terrorist, you should not, Mr. Speaker, be able to buy a gun. I will say it today and tomorrow and repeatedly: if you are a suspected terrorist, you should not be able to buy a gun. We should not have guns and weapons of murder and terror.

I will no longer be silent. Mr. Speaker, we should no longer be silent. Let's transcend partisan politics and uphold our promise to keep American families safe.

SAN BERNARDINO VICTIM, SHANNON JOHNSON

(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 Mr. Shannon Johnson.

On December 2, our country witnessed the worst terrorist attack on American soil since 9/11. On this horrific day in San Bernardino, California, 14 people were tragically killed.

Mr. Shannon Johnson was one of the people whose life was cut short that day. His friends and family say he enjoyed laughter, conversation, and music. He believed in the greatness of love, equality, and kindness, and treated others accordingly.

On December 2, Mr. Johnson, who was a native of Jesup, Georgia, in the First Congressional District, displayed the ultimate act of heroism and sacrifice by shielding fellow coworkers from a hail of bullets. His last words were: ''I got you.''

Mr. Johnson died a hero. My thoughts and prayers go out to his friends and family. I hope we may all recognize and never forget the acts of sacrifice that Mr. Johnson and others have made to protect the ones we love.

THANKS TO THE SPEAKER

(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, I would like to express my profound appreciation to the Speaker for his recent acknowledgement that he expects the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Reauthorization Act to be part of the omnibus bill.

I thank Leader PELOSI for her steadfast commitment and leadership in support of this important lifesaving legislation.

I am grateful to every single Democratic Member of this Congress, all of whom are cosponsors of this important legislation, and the many Republicans who are sponsors of this bill. All of them have helped us to live up to our commitment that: ''We will never forget.''

Heroic first responders and survivors of 9/11—men and women from all 50 States and nearly every Congressional District—will now be able to breathe a little easier, and will certainly have a much happier holiday season when this bill is finally across the finish line. This is how Congress can, and should, work in a bipartisan way, doing the right thing more often.

Happy holidays and Happy New Year. Now, when do we vote on this important lifesaving legislation.

□ 1230

REESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH BELARUS

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

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution calling for reestablishing full diplomatic relations between the United States and the nation of Belarus with the focus of exchanging ambassadors between our countries. This resolution recognizes that the Government of Belarus has reached out to the West and has improved political conditions in their own country.

For example, the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe monitored the recent Presidential election in Belarus and noted the progress made in establishing a more democratic and open system.

Another example of Belarus' positive action is that it played a significant role in bringing about a cease-fire in Ukraine. It did this by hosting immense diplomatic talks between all

parties to the conflict. This was a major contribution toward restoring peace to that region.

Furthermore, on October 22 of this year, Belarus released all of its very few political prisoners.

In response, the European Union and the United States have temporarily lifted economic sanctions. Hopefully, that temporary suspension of economic sanctions will become permanent as Belarus continues to improve its standing.

Exchanging ambassadors, as my resolution calls for, is a major step forward in the right direction. I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution, which I will submit to the Congress right now.

COMMONSENSE GUN REFORM

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

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because passing commonsense gun legislation should really not be a partisan issue. What our country needs is commonsense gun reform, but many in this Chamber won't even take the first step: taking guns out of the hands of terrorists.

Time and time again, Republicans have voted to block debate. Let me say that again: a debate. They won't even let us discuss Congressman PETER KING's Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act, otherwise known as H.R. 1076. That is simply outrageous. We should debate, yes, and we should vote up or down on this important bill.

This bill, which I am proud to cosponsor, would close a dangerous loophole that allows individuals on the government's no-fly list to legally purchase guns. Let me emphasize this. These are people who are deemed too dangerous to fly on planes, but they can and do purchase guns. If they are too dangerous to fly on an airplane, why aren't they too dangerous to have a weapon that fires 800 rounds per minute?

My Democratic colleagues and I remain committed to blocking dangerous individuals from buying guns, and we remain committed to stopping the senseless violence that has already taken too many lives in this country. It is past time to listen to the American people and not to the NRA.

REFORMING AMERICA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, just a few minutes ago I returned from the White House, where President Barack Obama signed historic reforms for elementary and secondary education into law.

I was proud to serve on the conference committee that was responsible for settling the differences between the House and the Senate versions of the Every Student Succeeds Act, which has replaced No Child Left Behind.

This is legislation which has been years in the making and which will finally put the control of education back into the hands of our States, our schools, and, of course, our parents and teachers across the Nation.

It also calls for the U.S. Department of Education to study how title I funds are distributed. I have long been concerned that children are put at a disadvantage based on the populations of their school districts rather than on a concentration of poverty. I am hopeful that this study will make the argument for a more equitable method of distributing these funds to areas that are deeply affected by poverty.

This is a bill that I believe will make a real difference for students across the Nation. I was proud to see it gain overwhelming bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate.

AMERICA'S GUN VIOLENCE EPIDEMIC

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

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, we were elected to protect and serve the American people against all enemies, foreign and domestic. One of the best ways that we can uphold this sacred duty is to deal with the gun violence epidemic that we have in America, which claims the lives of more than 11,000 people each year.

One of the things that we should be doing is passing legislation to prevent individuals who are on the FBI's terrorist watch list, because they are suspected terrorists, from being able to purchase guns. To me, this seems to be a no-brainer.

If you are not able to fly because you are a suspected terrorist, you should not be able to purchase an AK–47, an AR–15, or another weapon of mass destruction which is not used to hunt deer, but is used to hunt human beings.

It is time for House Republicans to stop functioning as wholly owned subsidiaries of the NRA. It is time to cut the puppet strings from the gun lobby. It is time to do the business of the American people and pass sensible gun violence prevention legislation.

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT IS NOW LAW

(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 applaud the enactment of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

This legislation passed the House and the Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support and was signed into law today by the President. Education is not a partisan issue. At a time of political gridlock, I am proud to see both bodies and both parties come together to improve our education system.

The Every Student Succeeds Act repeals No Child Left Behind, gets rid of 49 wasteful and ineffective programs, and eliminates the Secretary of Education's coercion of States into adopting Common Core standards.

Most importantly, this legislation gets Washington out of our local classrooms and it restores control back to the school districts, teachers, and parents. These are the folks who know what our children need to succeed, not bureaucrats who are thousands of miles away.

As the son of two educators, I know that the future of Georgia's 12th District education system belongs in Georgia, not in Washington. As a member of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, I am proud to see the Every Student Succeeds Act as the law of the land.

UPHOLDING THE SECOND AMENDMENT

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

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, given the challenges we face today with the economy and the labor force, I have watched since December 2 so much dishonesty on this floor concerning the actions on December 2 and the ability for terrorists to purchase weapons automatically.

FBI Director James Comey told the Senate Judiciary Committee that every time someone buys a weapon it is run through the FBI and they are notified if someone is on the no-fly list.

I am a little concerned with the other side of the aisle as they keep talking about having to protect our public when, in turn, they are taking away the Constitution of our Nation.

If the FBI is sent this information, it is reviewed. If the terrorists are actually buying weapons and walking the streets, they should be arrested, but they are not.

You can get on the no-fly list. I personally have been on the no-fly list. It took me 6 months to get off of it. They didn't tell me who put me on it, why I was put on it, and what it was the result from. Six months.

Yes, I am an NRA board member. But to have people say that terrorists are running around buying guns is an outright lie. I will say that on the floor. It is not true. It is part of the Constitution. We should uphold the Constitution.

When coming into office, I swore to uphold the Constitution. What they are talking about doing is against the Constitution. I will fight until my dying breath to make sure that we have the ability to retain the Second Amendment.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 10, 2015.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
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 December 10, 2015 at 9:15 a.m.:

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 2820.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 39 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1445

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LOUDERMILK) at 2 o'clock and 48 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

SECURING FAIRNESS IN REGULATORY TIMING ACT OF 2015

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3831) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend the annual comment period for payment rates under Medicare Advantage, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3831

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 ''Securing Fairness in Regulatory Timing Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. EXTENDING THE ANNUAL COMMENT PERIOD FOR PAYMENT RATES UNDER MEDICARE ADVANTAGE.

Section 1853(b)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–23(b)(2)) is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(or, in 2017 and each subsequent year, at least 60 days)'' after ''45 days''; and

(2) by inserting ''(in 2017 and each subsequent year, of no less than 30 days)'' after ''opportunity''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TIBERI) and the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

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

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 3831, the Securing Fairness in Regulatory Timing Act of 2015. This is a small but really important piece of legislation. I am pleased to have the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON), my friend, here to discuss this important measure.

The House passed this measure earlier this year, in June, by unanimous consent. Now, we return to the bill to add the technical corrections asked for by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Senate so we can send this bill to the President's desk before the end of the year.

Today, the Medicare Advantage program, known by many as the MA program, serves more than 16 million seniors across the United States of America, including my mom and dad. Enrollment has increased more than threefold in the past 10 years and is expected to nearly double in the next 10 years.

To ensure that seniors in MA plans across the country are able to continue to receive the high-quality care that they deserve, CMS is expected to pay about $156 billion to more than 3,600 MA plans this year alone. That amounts to nearly 30 percent of overall Medicare spending.

Typically, every year CMS sends out what it calls a rate notice to plans and Medicare Advantage companies that details the various payment rates, as well as benefit changes that the agency intends to make for the following plan year that impacts people like my mom and dad. This notice follows the standard process of a draft notice. It gets published; then the public has a certain amount of time to submit comments and questions; and then the agency publishes a final notice based on that feedback that they receive.

However, MA and Part D aren't treated the same as the other major payment systems within Medicare itself. Right now, the current process takes about 45 days, but only 15 of those days are allotted for the commenting portion; 15 days for thousands of plans, millions of stakeholders to submit comments on proposed changes to a program that amounts to one-third of all Medicare spending.

I could almost understand this if the rate notice were a short and concise document, if it were easy to understand and simple to implement. But it is not. In fact, the rate notice has grown from around 16 pages in 2006 to nearly 150 pages this year. That is over a 900 percent increase. All the while, the time for the public comment period has remained static, exactly the same.

This means less and less time for the plans and Congress to conduct the necessary review in order to provide CMS with the kind of feedback that would better help the agency assess the impact of their proposed changes to consumers. This is important because without accurate feedback, CMS could inadvertently move forward with a proposed change to the Medicare Advantage program that might negatively impact those seniors—again, like my mom and dad—who depend on these plans for access to their providers, to their doctors.

The legislation before us is simple, and it is straightforward. It extends the public notice period from 45 days to 60 days. Therefore, it would double the extension of the comment period from 15 days to 30 days. This is a commonsense, good-government fix we can make that will give plans more time to understand the changes that CMS proposes and other constructive feedback in order to make the Medicare Advantage program, overall, more responsive to senior citizens' needs.

I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass this legislation again and send it to the Senate so we can get it to the President's desk.

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

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 3831, the Securing Fairness in Regulatory Timing Act of 2015. Every year, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services publishes its Medicare Advantage call letter and rate notice, which outlines payment rates and changes for the nearly 2,000 plans that serve our most vulnerable population.

Nearly 10 years ago, the call letter and rate notice were less than 20 pages long. However, since then, enrollment in Medicare Advantage has nearly tripled, from 5.4 million to 16 million. Medicare Advantage policies have become more complex, and the call letter and rate notice has grown nearly tenfold, sometimes up to over 200 pages long.

At the same time, the time between the publishing of these draft notices and the final notices, which is currently 45 days, has remained unchanged. During this 45-day period, in which there are only 15 days to comment on the proposed changes in the program, plans, stockholders, members, and staff, are expected to review 150 pages of regulatory changes and understand the impacts of those proposed policy changes on a program that provides essential medical care to over a third of Medicare beneficiaries.

We know from our experience, every February and March, that this does not lend itself to an efficient, effective, nor transparent process. Moreover, it

shortchanges CMS of thoughtful, constructive feedback that is necessary to improve a program that our seniors enjoy and rely on.

H.R. 3831 is a simple, straightforward bill that will improve the current process by expanding the cycle from 45 to 60 days, and that gives plans, stakeholders, Members, and our staff 30 full days—double the current time allowed—to analyze and provide feedback on the draft call letter and rate notice.

This is a no-cost, good-government, bipartisan bill that will make the process more transparent, fair, and advantageous for the beneficiaries we serve. As my good friend from Ohio pointed out, we have already passed this bill. It is only coming back for some technical changes. I would ask, and strongly recommend, that all our colleagues vote in favor of this bill so we can pass it to the Senate and get on with our work.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3831, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, just to close, I agree 100 percent with my friend from California. I urge all our colleagues to support this important piece of legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TIBERI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3831, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 808) to establish the Surface Transportation Board as an independent establishment, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 808

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Surface Transportation Board Reauthorization Act of 2015''.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. References to title 49, United States Code.
Sec. 3. Establishment of Surface Transportation Board as an independent establishment.
Sec. 4. Surface Transportation Board membership.
Sec. 5. Nonpublic collaborative discussions.
Sec. 6. Reports.
Sec. 7. Authorization of appropriations.
Sec. 8. Agent in the District of Columbia.
Sec. 9. Department of Transportation Inspector General authority.
Sec. 10. Amendment to table of sections.
Sec. 11. Procedures for rate cases.
Sec. 12. Investigative authority.
Sec. 13. Arbitration of certain rail rates and practices disputes.
Sec. 14. Effect of proposals for rates from multiple origins and destinations.
Sec. 15. Reports.
Sec. 16. Criteria.
Sec. 17. Construction.

SEC. 2. REFERENCES TO TITLE 49, UNITED STATES CODE.

Except as otherwise expressly provided, wherever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of title 49, United States Code.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD AS AN INDEPENDENT ESTABLISHMENT.

(a) REDESIGNATION OF CHAPTER 7 OF TITLE 49, UNITED STATES CODE.—Title 49 is amended—

(1) by moving chapter 7 after chapter 11 in subtitle II;

(2) by redesignating chapter 7 as chapter 13;

(3) by redesignating sections 701 through 706 as sections 1301 through 1306, respectively;

(4) by striking sections 725 and 727;

(5) by redesignating sections 721 through 724 as sections 1321 through 1324, respectively; and

(6) by redesignating section 726 as section 1325.

(b) INDEPENDENT ESTABLISHMENT.—Section 1301, as redesignated by subsection (a)(3), is amended by striking subsection (a) and inserting the following:

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Surface Transportation Board is an independent establishment of the United States Government.''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.—Section 1303, as redesignated by subsection (a)(3), is amended—

(A) by striking subsections (a), (c), (f), and (g);

(B) by redesignating subsections (b), (d), and (e) as subsections (a), (b), and (c), respectively; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(d) SUBMISSION OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS TO CONGRESS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Board submits any budget estimate, budget request, supplemental budget estimate, or other budget information, legislative recommendation, prepared testimony for a congressional hearing, or comment on legislation to the President or to the Office of Management and Budget, the Board shall concurrently submit a copy of such document to—

''(A) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate; and

''(B) the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives.

''(2) NO APPROVAL REQUIRED.—No officer or agency of the United States has any authority to require the Board to submit budget estimates or requests, legislative recommendations, prepared testimony for congressional hearings, or comments on legislation to any officer or agency of the United States for approval, comments, or review before submitting such recommendations, testimony, or comments to Congress.''.

SEC. 4. SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD MEMBERSHIP.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1301(b), as redesignated by subsection 3(a), is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking ''3 members'' and inserting ''5 members''; and

(B) by striking ''2 members'' and inserting ''3 members''; and

(2) by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

''(2) At all times—

''(A) at least 3 members of the Board shall be individuals with professional standing and demonstrated knowledge in the fields of transportation, transportation regulation, or economic regulation; and

''(B) at least 2 members shall be individuals with professional or business experience (including agriculture) in the private sector.''.

(b) REPEAL OF OBSOLETE PROVISION.—Section 1301(b), as amended by this section, is further amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (4);

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (5), (6), and (7) as paragraphs (4), (5), and (6), respectively; and

(3) in paragraph (4), as redesignated, by striking ''who becomes a member of the Board pursuant to paragraph (4), or an individual''.

SEC. 5. NONPUBLIC COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSIONS.

Section 1303(a), as redesignated by subsections (a) and (c) of section 3, is amended to read as follows:

''(a) OPEN MEETINGS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall be deemed to be an agency for purposes of section 552b of title 5.

''(2) NONPUBLIC COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSIONS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 552b of title 5, a majority of the members may hold a meeting that is not open to public observation to discuss official agency business if—

''(i) no formal or informal vote or other official agency action is taken at the meeting;

''(ii) each individual present at the meeting is a member or an employee of the Board; and

''(iii) the General Counsel of the Board is present at the meeting.

''(B) DISCLOSURE OF NONPUBLIC COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSIONS.—Except as provided under subparagraph (C), not later than 2 business days after the conclusion of a meeting under subparagraph (A), the Board shall make available to the public, in a place easily accessible to the public—

''(i) a list of the individuals present at the meeting; and

''(ii) a summary of the matters discussed at the meeting, except for any matters the Board properly determines may be withheld from the public under section 552b(c) of title 5.

''(C) SUMMARY.—If the Board properly determines matters may be withheld from the public under section 555b(c) of title 5, the Board shall provide a summary with as much general information as possible on those matters withheld from the public.

''(D) ONGOING PROCEEDINGS.—If a discussion under subparagraph (A) directly relates to an ongoing proceeding before the Board, the Board shall make the disclosure under subparagraph (B) on the date of the final Board decision.

''(E) PRESERVATION OF OPEN MEETINGS REQUIREMENTS FOR AGENCY ACTION.—Nothing in this paragraph may be construed to limit the applicability of section 552b of title 5 with respect to a meeting of the members other than that described in this paragraph.

''(F) STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this paragraph may be construed—

''(i) to limit the applicability of section 552b of title 5 with respect to any information which is proposed to be withheld from the public under subparagraph (B)(ii); or

''(ii) to authorize the Board to withhold from any individual any record that is accessible to that individual under section 552a of title 5, United States Code.''.

SEC. 6. REPORTS.

(a) REPORTS.—Section 1304, as amended by section 3, is further amended—

(1) by striking the section heading and inserting the following:

''§ 1304. Reports'';

(2) by inserting ''(a) ANNUAL REPORT.—'' before ''The Board'';

(3) by striking ''on its activities.'' and inserting ''on its activities, including each instance in which the Board has initiated an investigation on its own initiative under this chapter or subtitle IV.''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) RATE CASE REVIEW METRICS.—

''(1) QUARTERLY REPORTS.—The Board shall post a quarterly report of rail rate review cases pending or completed by the Board during the previous quarter that includes—

''(A) summary information of the case, including the docket number, case name, commodity or commodities involved, and rate review guideline or guidelines used;

''(B) the date on which the rate review proceeding began;

''(C) the date for the completion of discovery;

''(D) the date for the completion of the evidentiary record;

''(E) the date for the submission of closing briefs;

''(F) the date on which the Board issued the final decision; and

''(G) a brief summary of the final decision;

''(2) WEBSITE POSTING.—Each quarterly report shall be posted on the Board's public website.''.

(b) COMPILATION OF COMPLAINTS AT SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1304, as amended by subsection (a), is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c) COMPLAINTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall establish and maintain a database of complaints received by the Board.

''(2) QUARTERLY REPORTS.—The Board shall post a quarterly report of formal and informal service complaints received by the Board during the previous quarter that includes—

''(A) the date on which the complaint was received by the Board;

''(B) a list of the type of each complaint;

''(C) the geographic region of each complaint; and

''(D) the resolution of each complaint, if appropriate.

''(3) WRITTEN CONSENT.—The quarterly report may identify a complainant that submitted an informal complaint only upon the written consent of the complainant.

''(4) WEBSITE POSTING.—Each quarterly report shall be posted on the Board's public website.''.

SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 1305, as redesignated by section 3, is amended by striking paragraphs (1) through (3) and inserting the following:

''(1) $33,000,000 for fiscal year 2016;

''(2) $35,000,000 for fiscal year 2017;

''(3) $35,500,000 for fiscal year 2018;

''(4) $35,500,000 for fiscal year 2019; and

''(5) $36,000,000 for fiscal year 2020.''.

SEC. 8. AGENT IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

(a) DESIGNATION OF AGENT AND SERVICE OF NOTICE.—Section 1323, as redesignated by section 3(a), is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''in the District of Columbia,''; and

(2) in subsection (c), by striking ''in the District of Columbia''.

(b) SERVICE OF PROCESS IN COURT PROCEEDINGS.—Section 1324(a), as redesignated by section 3(a), is amended by striking ''in the District of Columbia'' each place such phrase appears.

SEC. 9. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION INSPECTOR GENERAL AUTHORITY.

Subchapter II of chapter 13, as redesignated by section 3(a)(2), is amended by inserting after section 1325, as redesignated by section 3(a)(6), the following:

''§ 1326. Authority of the Inspector General

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Inspector General of the Department of Transportation, in accordance with the mission of the Inspector General to prevent and detect fraud and abuse, shall have authority to review only the financial management, property management, and business operations of the Surface Transportation Board, including internal accounting and administrative control systems, to determine the Board's compliance with applicable Federal laws, rules, and regulations.

''(b) DUTIES.—In carrying out this section, the Inspector General shall—

''(1) keep the Chairman of the Board, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives fully and currently informed about problems relating to administration of the internal accounting and administrative control systems of the Board;

''(2) issue findings and recommendations for actions to address the problems referred to in paragraph (1); and

''(3) submit periodic reports to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives that describe any progress made in implementing actions to address the problems referred to in paragraph (1).

''(c) ACCESS TO INFORMATION.—In carrying out this section, the Inspector General may exercise authorities granted to the Inspector General under subsections (a) and (b) of section 6 of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

''(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

''(1) FUNDING.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Transportation for use by the Inspector General of the Department of Transportation such sums as may be necessary to cover expenses associated with activities pursuant to the authority exercised under this section.

''(2) REIMBURSABLE AGREEMENT.—In the absence of an appropriation under this subsection for an expense referred to in paragraph (1), the Inspector General and the Board shall have a reimbursement agreement to cover such expense.''.

SEC. 10. AMENDMENT TO TABLE OF SECTIONS.

The table of sections for chapter 13, as redesignated by section 3(a), is amended to read as follows:

''CHAPTER 13—SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

''I—ESTABLISHMENT

''Sec.
''1301. Establishment of Board
''1302. Functions.
''1303. Administrative provisions.
''1304. Reports.
''1305. Authorization of appropriations.
''1306. Reporting official action.

''II—ADMINISTRATIVE

''1321. Powers.
''1322. Board action.
''1323. Service of notice in Board proceedings.
''1324. Service of process in court proceedings.
''1325. Railroad-Shipper Transportation Advisory Council.
''1326. Authority of the Inspector General.''.

SEC. 11. PROCEDURES FOR RATE CASES.

(a) SIMPLIFIED PROCEDURE.—Section 10701(d)(3) is amended to read as follows:

''(3) The Board shall maintain 1 or more simplified and expedited methods for determining the reasonableness of challenged rates in those cases in which a full stand-alone cost presentation is too costly, given the value of the case.''.

(b) EXPEDITED HANDLING; RATE REVIEW TIMELINES.—Section 10704(d) is amended—

(1) by striking ''(d) Within 9 months'' and all that follows through ''railroad rates.'' and inserting the following:

''(d)(1) The Board shall maintain procedures to ensure the expeditious handling of challenges to the reasonableness of railroad rates.''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(2)(A) Except as provided under subparagraph (B), in a stand-alone cost rate challenge, the Board shall comply with the following timeline:

''(i) Discovery shall be completed not later than 150 days after the date on which the challenge is initiated.

''(ii) The development of the evidentiary record shall be completed not later than 155 days after the date on which discovery is completed under clause (i).

''(iii) The closing brief shall be submitted not later than 60 days after the date on which the development of the evidentiary record is completed under clause (ii).

''(iv) A final Board decision shall be issued not later than 180 days after the date on which the evidentiary record is completed under clause (ii).

''(B) The Board may extend a timeline under subparagraph (A) after a request from any party or in the interest of due process.''.

(c) PROCEDURES.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Surface Transportation Board shall initiate a proceeding to assess procedures that are available to parties in litigation before courts to expedite such litigation and the potential application of any such procedures to rate cases.

(d) EXPIRED RAIL SERVICE CONTRACT LIMITATION.—Section 10709 is amended by striking subsection (h).

SEC. 12. INVESTIGATIVE AUTHORITY.

(a) AUTHORITY TO INITIATE INVESTIGATIONS.—Section 11701(a) is amended—

(1) by striking ''only on complaint'' and inserting ''on the Board's own initiative or upon receiving a complaint pursuant to subsection (b)''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following: ''If the Board finds a violation of this part in a proceeding brought on its own initiative, any remedy from such proceeding may only be applied prospectively.''.

(b) LIMITATIONS ON INVESTIGATIONS OF THE BOARD'S INITIATIVE.—Section 11701, as amended by subsection (a), is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(d) In any investigation commenced on the Board's own initiative, the Board shall—

''(1) not later than 30 days after initiating the investigation, provide written notice to the parties under investigation, which shall state the basis for such investigation;

''(2) only investigate issues that are of national or regional significance;

''(3) permit the parties under investigation to file a written statement describing any or all facts and circumstances concerning a matter which may be the subject of such investigation;

''(4) make available to the parties under investigation and Board members—

''(A) any recommendations made as a result of the investigation; and

''(B) a summary of the findings that support such recommendations;

''(5) to the extent practicable, separate the investigative and decisionmaking functions of staff;

''(6) dismiss any investigation that is not concluded by the Board with administrative finality within 1 year after the date on which it was commenced; and

''(7) not later than 90 days after receiving the recommendations and summary of findings under paragraph (4)—

''(A) dismiss the investigation if no further action is warranted; or

''(B) initiate a proceeding to determine if a provision under this part has been violated.

''(e)(1) Any parties to an investigation against whom a violation is found as a result of an investigation begun on the Board's own initiative may, not later than 60 days after the date of the order of the Board finding such a violation, institute an action in the United States court of appeals for the appropriate judicial circuit for de novo review of such order in accordance with chapter 7 of title 5.

''(2) The court—

''(A) shall have jurisdiction to enter a judgment affirming, modifying, or setting aside, in whole or in part, the order of the Board; and

''(B) may remand the proceeding to the Board for such further action as the court may direct.''.

(c) RULEMAKINGS FOR INVESTIGATIONS OF THE BOARD'S INITIATIVE.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Board shall issue rules, after notice and comment rulemaking, for investigations commenced on its own initiative that—

(1) comply with the requirements of section 11701(d) of title 49, United States Code, as added by subsection (b);

(2) satisfy due process requirements; and

(3) take into account ex parte constraints.

SEC. 13. ARBITRATION OF CERTAIN RAIL RATES AND PRACTICES DISPUTES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 117 is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 11708. Voluntary arbitration of certain rail rates and practices disputes

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of the Surface Transportation Board Reauthorization Act of 2015, the Board shall promulgate regulations to establish a voluntary and binding arbitration process to resolve rail rate and practice complaints subject to the jurisdiction of the Board.

''(b) COVERED DISPUTES.—The voluntary and binding arbitration process established pursuant to subsection (a)—

''(1) shall apply to disputes involving—

''(A) rates, demurrage, accessorial charges, misrouting, or mishandling of rail cars; or

''(B) a carrier's published rules and practices as applied to particular rail transportation;

''(2) shall not apply to disputes—

''(A) to obtain the grant, denial, stay, or revocation of any license, authorization, or exemption;

''(B) to prescribe for the future any conduct, rules, or results of general, industry-wide applicability;

''(C) to enforce a labor protective condition; or

''(D) that are solely between 2 or more rail carriers; and

''(3) shall not prevent parties from independently seeking or utilizing private arbitration services to resolve any disputes the parties may have.

''(c) ARBITRATION PROCEDURES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Board—

''(A) may make the voluntary and binding arbitration process established pursuant to subsection (a) available only to the relevant parties;

''(B) may make the voluntary and binding arbitration process available only—

''(i) after receiving the written consent to arbitrate from all relevant parties; and

''(ii)(I) after the filing of a written complaint; or

''(II) through other procedures adopted by the Board in a rulemaking proceeding;

''(C) with respect to rate disputes, may make the voluntary and binding arbitration process available only to the relevant parties if the rail carrier has market dominance (as determined under section 10707); and

''(D) may initiate the voluntary and binding arbitration process not later than 40 days after the date on which a written complaint is filed or through other procedures adopted by the Board in a rulemaking proceeding.

''(2) LIMITATION.—Initiation of the voluntary and binding arbitration process shall preclude the Board from separately reviewing a complaint or dispute related to the same rail rate or practice in a covered dispute involving the same parties.

''(3) RATES.—In resolving a covered dispute involving the reasonableness of a rail carrier's rates, the arbitrator or panel of arbitrators, as applicable, shall consider the Board's methodologies for setting maximum lawful rates, giving due consideration to the need for differential pricing to permit a rail carrier to collect adequate revenues (as determined under section 10704(a)(2)).

''(d) ARBITRATION DECISIONS.—Any decision reached in an arbitration process under this section—

''(1) shall be consistent with sound principles of rail regulation economics;

''(2) shall be in writing;

''(3) shall contain findings of fact and conclusions;

''(4) shall be binding upon the parties; and

''(5) shall not have any precedential effect in any other or subsequent arbitration dispute.

''(e) TIMELINES.—

''(1) SELECTION.—An arbitrator or panel of arbitrators shall be selected not later than 14 days after the date of the Board's decision to initiate arbitration.

''(2) EVIDENTIARY PROCESS.—The evidentiary process of the voluntary and binding arbitration process shall be completed not later than 90 days after the date on which the arbitration process is initiated unless—

''(A) a party requests an extension; and

''(B) the arbitrator or panel of arbitrators, as applicable, grants such extension request.

''(3) DECISION.—The arbitrator or panel of arbitrators, as applicable, shall issue a decision not later than 30 days after the date on which the evidentiary record is closed.

''(4) EXTENSIONS.—The Board may extend any of the timelines under this subsection upon the agreement of all parties in the dispute.

''(f) ARBITRATORS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Unless otherwise agreed by all of the parties, an arbitration under this section shall be conducted by an arbitrator or panel of arbitrators, which shall be selected from a roster, maintained by the Board, of persons with rail transportation, economic regulation, professional or business experience, including agriculture, in the private sector.

''(2) INDEPENDENCE.—In an arbitration under this section, the arbitrators shall perform their duties with diligence, good faith, and in a manner consistent with the requirements of impartiality and independence.

''(3) SELECTION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If the parties cannot mutually agree on an arbitrator, or the lead arbitrator of a panel of arbitrators, the parties shall select the arbitrator or lead arbitrator from the roster by alternately striking names from the roster until only 1 name remains meeting the criteria set forth in paragraph (1).

''(B) PANEL OF ARBITRATORS.—If the parties agree to select a panel of arbitrators, instead of a single arbitrator, the panel shall be selected under this subsection as follows:

''(i) The parties to a dispute may mutually select 1 arbitrator from the roster to serve as the lead arbitrator of the panel of arbitrators.

''(ii) If the parties cannot mutually agree on a lead arbitrator, the parties shall select a lead arbitrator using the process described in subparagraph (A).

''(iii) In addition to the lead arbitrator selected under this subparagraph, each party to a dispute shall select 1 additional arbitrator from the roster, regardless of whether the other party struck out the arbitrator's name under subparagraph (A).

''(4) COST.—The parties shall share the costs incurred by the Board and arbitrators equally, with each party responsible for paying its own legal and other associated arbitration costs.

''(g) RELIEF.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the limitations set forth in paragraphs (2) and (3), an arbitral decision under this section may award the payment of damages or rate prescriptive relief.

''(2) PRACTICE DISPUTES.—The damage award for practice disputes may not exceed $2,000,000.

''(3) RATE DISPUTES.—

''(A) MONETARY LIMIT.—The damage award for rate disputes, including any rate prescription, may not exceed $25,000,000.

''(B) TIME LIMIT.—Any rate prescription shall be limited to not longer than 5 years from the date of the arbitral decision.

''(h) BOARD REVIEW.—If a party appeals a decision under this section to the Board, the Board may review the decision under this section to determine if—

''(1) the decision is consistent with sound principles of rail regulation economics;

''(2) a clear abuse of arbitral authority or discretion occurred;

''(3) the decision directly contravenes statutory authority; or

''(4) the award limitation under subsection (g) was violated.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for chapter 117 is amended by adding at the end the following:

''11708. Voluntary arbitration of certain rail rates and practice disputes.''.

SEC. 14. EFFECT OF PROPOSALS FOR RATES FROM MULTIPLE ORIGINS AND DESTINATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall commence a study of rail transportation contract proposals containing multiple origin-to-destination movements.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after commencing the study required under subsection (a), the Comptroller General shall submit a report containing the results of the study to—

(1) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 15. REPORTS.

(a) REPORT ON RATE CASE METHODOLOGY.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Surface Transportation Board shall submit a report to the congressional committees referred to in section 14(b) that—

(1) indicates whether current large rate case methodologies are sufficient, not unduly complex, and cost effective;

(2) indicates whether alternative methodologies exist, or could be developed, to streamline, expedite, and address the complexity of large rate cases; and

(3) only includes alternative methodologies, which exist or could be developed, that are consistent with sound economic principles.

(b) QUARTERLY REPORTS.—Beginning not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Surface Transportation Board shall submit quarterly reports to the congressional committees referred to in section 14(b) that describes the Surface Transportation Board's progress toward addressing the issues raised in each unfinished regulatory proceeding, regardless of whether the proceeding is subject to a statutory or regulatory deadline.

SEC. 16. CRITERIA.

Section 10704(a)(2) is amended by inserting ''for the infrastructure and investment needed to meet the present and future demand for rail services and'' after ''management,''.

SEC. 17. CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act may be construed to affect any suit commenced by or against the Surface Transportation Board, or any proceeding or challenge pending before the Surface Transportation Board, before the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. CAPUANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on S. 808.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. DENHAM), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials.

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for giving me time to speak on the Surface Transportation Board Reauthorization Act of 2015.

This is an important piece of legislation that will reform the STB to work more efficiently to better regulate the railroads. This year is the 35th anniversary of the passage of the Staggers Rail Act of 1980, which saved the railroad industry from bankruptcy.

Earlier this year, my subcommittee held a hearing on the successes of the railroad deregulation. We heard how railroads were freed to act more like true businesses by charging market-driven rates and being able to right-size their operations along rail lines, which made economic sense.

This deregulation effort culminated in the creation of the STB in the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act of 1995. The STB is a small but significant agency that conducts the economic regulation of the railroads and has not been reauthorized since its creation.

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The bill we consider today would streamline and simplify regulatory activities, a hallmark of this Congress.

While the STB has successfully overseen a stronger railroad industry, this bill will help the rail industry better serve its customers:

First, it streamlines dispute resolution procedures and sets hard deadlines for completion of rate cases to reduce litigation costs;

Second, it provides greater transparency into complaints received by the STB and requires enhanced reporting by the agency;

Third, it rejects Big Government re-regulatory action that has been proposed in the past. Instead, it makes necessary reforms to the agency to improve its processes and procedures;

Finally, the bill has broad support from shipper groups across the country, including the National Grain and Feed Association, the American Chemistry Council, The Fertilizer Institute, and the American Farm Bureau Federation.

I am pleased to stand here today and support the STB Reauthorization Act. It is only fitting that we are considering this bill just over 35 years since Congress passed the Staggers Rail Act, which allowed the railroads to thrive. I believe this bill will continue to make the STB and the rail industry better for the Nation's rail shippers, and I urge my colleagues to support this critical legislation.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am getting sick and tired of agreeing with my colleagues. This is the way transportation issues are supposed to be: bipartisan, thoughtful, and relatively easy to pass.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to support S. 808, which reauthorizes the STB, as you have already heard. This Board has not been reauthorized since it was created by the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act of 1995. That is ridiculous. It is about time we do it, and I am happy that I am here today to participate in that.

For those who don't know, the Surface Transportation Board is currently a three-member, bipartisan agency within the Department of Transportation. They have regulatory jurisdiction over the rates freight railroads charge their customers, mergers between railroad companies, new rail line construction, abandonment and conversion of existing rail lines, and other such matters.

Though an agency very few Americans know about, the STB has a profound impact on the availability and cost of goods across our Nation. This bill makes a number of commonsense reforms to the Board.

It establishes the STB as an independent entity, rather than as part of the Department of Transportation, and expands Board membership from three to five. I know that sounds like a small matter, but by doing so, it allows members to actually talk to each other without breaking certain laws of members being unable to talk for obvious open government purposes.

The bill requires the STB to streamline their processes for certain rate cases; sets rate review timelines for full, standalone cost rate challenges; and requires the STB to initiate a proceeding to develop other methods to expedite rate cases.

For the first time, the STB will be able to initiate their own investigations on different allegations. Right now, current law requires someone to bring a complaint before they can initiate a review. This is a major improvement.

The bill requires the STB to establish a voluntary and binding arbitration process to resolve rail rate and service complaints, and it requires the STB to evaluate whether current large rate case methodologies are sufficient, cost-effective, and are not unduly complex.

S. 808 is an important step forward on an important, if not widely known, issue. I urge Members to support this bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. DEFAZIO, and, of course, our colleagues in the Senate for bringing this bill forward.

I think Mr. CAPUANO said it accurately: Transportation and infrastructure bills should come to the floor in a bipartisan way, figuring these things out, because this is good for America. It has nothing to do with Republicans or Democrats. It has to do with what is good for the American people, what is good for the American economy.

The Surface Transportation Board is the Federal economic regulator of the Nation's freight system, and that has been a real success story. Since the Staggers Rail Act was passed, I believe, as the gentleman from Massachusetts mentioned, in 1980, our freight rail system is the envy of the world. It is strong. It is vibrant. It does a great job. But I know the STB reauthorization and making some of these significant changes is going to be beneficial to everybody.

I think the gentleman from California ticked off a list of different outside groups or stakeholders and people that utilize rail that are in favor of this. Again, they sat down and worked it out. This will allow the STB to run

more efficiently and, ultimately, again, as I said, improve the Nation's economy.

I am not going to go through all the description—Mr. CAPUANO did a great job of that—of the changes that it makes and the authorities it gives them. It is going to streamline this and get these rate cases to the STB faster and get us through that process quicker. That is extremely important. So I believe this legislation is a crucial step for the railroad industry, the folks that use it on a day-to-day basis, and the American economy.

As mentioned, the Senate passed this bill with broad support, and I am pleased that we are moving this forward today.

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

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), my friend, the ranking member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member of the subcommittee for yielding. He has already explained in detail what is important about this legislation: the first reauthorization since the creation of the agency, the streamlining of rate dispute processes, the potential of arbitration in the future, and enlarging the Board so they can be more facile in terms of making decisions without violating public meetings laws. All those things are very important. I am just going to add a little bit of what this means to me kind of stuff for anybody who might be interested.

When I was a relatively junior Member of Congress—I think I am probably the only Member of Congress who has testified twice before the Surface Transportation Board—we had a huge crisis in the West—I think it was after the UP–SP merger—where my Christmas tree growers couldn't get railcars. So I famously made the ''How the Grinch Stole Christmas'' presentation to the Surface Transportation Board. We did, not too long thereafter, get some railcars delivered and got those trees to families all across the Western United States. That was important to an important little industry that we have in Oregon.

More importantly, I went to the Surface Transportation Board again. We had something called RailAmerica, which was an accumulation of many, many short line railroads across the country. It was bought by and being managed by one of those wonderful Wall Street hedge funds, who were driving both our rail line and other rail lines into the ground. They didn't have the slightest bit of interest in being in the rail business. They were just trying to drain what money they could out of those railroads.

One bright, sunny day, they decided to abandon the Coos Bay Railroad. It runs from the Willamette Valley all the way down to Coos Bay, Oregon, and back up to Coquille. It covers about 150 miles. It was the only rail to the coast and to a major port in Oregon, the Port of Coos Bay, North Bend.

They managed to get their equipment back, but they stranded railcars full of lumber and other goods by saying: ''Sorry, it is done. We are done.'' They didn't notify anybody. No proper procedures were filed. ''We are abandoning the line, and we are going to rip it up, and we are going to sell the rails to the Chinese for scrap.''

Well, that didn't come to pass. I got together with the then-Governor and we brought some legal clout to the table. We partnered with the Port of Coos Bay, North Bend, and said what if we can get Federal and State money and buy this railroad? The hedge fund said they weren't interested. They thought they could make more money by ripping it up, selling the right-of-way, and selling the scrap steel to China.

So I went to the Surface Transportation Board. The Surface Transportation Board made the hedge fund sell the railroad as a railroad. As decrepit as it was, it was an incredibly critical piece of infrastructure.

I took one of those horrible earmarks that we don't do around here anymore that I had gotten to improve the rail bridge over the harbor and got that converted in a technical correction to money to help purchase the railroad from this rotten hedge fund. The State partnered. The port became the operator.

Last year, the Coos Bay Rail Link got the Short Line Operator of the Year award. It is providing a tremendous economic benefit and future for the south coast of my district. And absent the regulators—we all want to carry on about how bad regulators are, but when you have abusers out there like hedge funds that buy up critical infrastructure and couldn't give a damn about them—we need people like the Surface Transportation Board to preserve critical assets for our communities.

So I am thrilled to be here today to reauthorize, for the first time, the Surface Transportation Board, streamline them, and enhance their capabilities so that in the future, other aggrieved communities or business sectors can go to the STB and get a quick judgment when they need and deserve it.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a list of over 160 organizations that support S. 808. They are users of the railroad system, from agriculture interests to chemical, auto, pipe manufacturers, and energy companies.

Agribusiness Association of Iowa, Agribusiness Council of Indiana, Agricultural Retailers Association, Agriculture Transportation Coalition, Alabama Crop Management Association, Alliance for Rail Competition, Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, American Chemistry Council, American Farm Bureau Federation, American Forest & Paper Association, American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers, American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers Association, American Iron and Steel Institute, American Malting Barley Association, Inc., American Public Power Association, American Soybean Association, Auto Care Association, Chemical Industry Council of Delaware, Chemical Industry Council of Illinois, Chemistry Council of Missouri.

Chemistry Council of New Jersey, Colorado Association of Wheat Growers, Connecticut Business & Industry Association, Corn Refiners Association, Edison Electric Institute, Florida Fertilizer & Agrichemical Association, Foundry Association of Michigan, Freight Rail Customer Alliance, Georgia Agribusiness Council, Georgia Chemistry Council, Glass Packaging Institute, Grain and Feed Association of Illinois, Green Coffee Association, Grocery Manufacturers Association, Growth Energy, Idaho Barley Commission, Idaho Grain Producers Association.

Idaho Wheat Commission, Illinois Fertilizer & Chemical Association, Indiana Corn Growers Association, Indiana Farm Bureau, Indiana Soybean Alliance, Institute of Makers of Explosives, Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Inc., Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils, International Liquid Terminals Association, International Warehouse Logistics Association, Kansas Grain and Feed Association, Louisiana Chemical Association, Manufacture Alabama, Manufacturers Association of Florida, Massachusetts Chemistry & Technology Alliance, Michigan Agri-Business Association, Michigan Bean Shippers, Michigan Chemistry Council.

Midwest Food Processors Association, Minnesota AgriGrowth Council, Minnesota Crop Production Retailers, Minnesota Grain and Feed Association, Mississippi Manufacturers Association, Missouri Agribusiness Association, Missouri Forest Products Association, Montana Agricultural Business Association, Montana Farmers Union, Montana Grain Elevators Association, Motorcycle Industry Council, National Association of Chemical Distributors, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, National Association of Wheat Growers, National Barley Growers Association, National Corn Growers Association, National Cotton Council of America, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, National Farmers Union.

National Grain and Feed Association, National Industrial Transportation League, National Oilseed Processors Association, National Onion Association, National Pasta Association, National Retail Federation, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, National Shippers Strategic Transportation Council, National Sunflower Association, Nebraska Agri-Business Association, Inc., Nebraska Grain and Feed Association, Nebraska Soybean Association, Nebraska Wheat Board, Nebraska Wheat Growers Association, New York State Agribusiness Association, New York State Chemistry Council, North American Millers' Association, North Carolina Manufacturers Alliance.

North Dakota Grain Dealers Association, Northeast Agribusiness and Feed Alliance, Ohio Agribusiness Association, Ohio Chemistry Technology Council, Oklahoma Agribusiness Retailers Association, Oklahoma Grain and Feed Association, Oregon Wheat Growers League, Outdoor Power Equipment Association, Inc., Pennsylvania Chemical Industry Council, Plastic Pipe and Fittings Association, Plastics Pipe and Fittings Association, Portland Cement Association, Promotional Products Association International, PVC Pipe Association, Rail Customer Coalition, Renewable Fuels Association, Rocky Mountain Agribusiness Association.

Society of Chemical Manufacturers and Affiliates, South Carolina Fertilizer and Agrichemicals Association, South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance, South Dakota Farmers Union, South Dakota Grain & Feed Association, South Dakota Wheat Inc., SPI: The Plastics Industry Trade Association, Steel Manufacturers Association, Texas Ag Industries Association, Texas Chemical Council, Texas Grain & Feed Association, Texas Wheat Producers Association, The Chlorine Institute, The Fertilizer Institute, The National Industrial Transportation League, The Sulphur Institute, The Vinyl Institute.

United States Fashion Industry Association, US Canola Association, US Dry Bean Council, US Dry Pea & Lentil Council, USA Rice Federation, Vinyl Building Council, Vinyl Siding Institute, Inc., Washington Association of Wheat Growers, Washington Grain Commission, West Virginia Manufacturers Association, Western Fuels Association, Western Governors' Association, Western Plant Health Association, Wisconsin Agri-Business Association, Wisconsin Corn Growers Association, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association, Wyoming Ag Business Association, Wyoming Wheat Marketing Commission.

Mr. SHUSTER. Again, I would just urge all my colleagues to support this important reauthorization and reform to the Surface Transportation Board.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 808.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

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

H.R. 2250. An act making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4188) to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal years 2016 and 2017, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4188

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 ''Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title.
Sec. 2. Table of contents.

TITLE I—AUTHORIZATIONS

Sec. 101. Authorizations.
Sec. 102. Conforming amendments.

TITLE II—COAST GUARD

Sec. 201. Vice Commandant.
Sec. 202. Vice admirals.
Sec. 203. Coast Guard remission of indebtedness.
Sec. 204. Acquisition reform.
Sec. 205. Auxiliary jurisdiction.
Sec. 206. Coast Guard communities.
Sec. 207. Polar icebreakers.
Sec. 208. Air facility closures.
Sec. 209. Technical corrections to title 14, United States Code.
Sec. 210. Discontinuance of an aid to navigation.
Sec. 211. Mission performance measures.
Sec. 212. Communications.
Sec. 213. Coast Guard graduate maritime operations education.
Sec. 214. Professional development.
Sec. 215. Senior enlisted member continuation boards.
Sec. 216. Coast Guard member pay.
Sec. 217. Transfer of funds necessary to provide medical care.
Sec. 218. Participation of the Coast Guard Academy in Federal, State, or other educational research grants.
Sec. 219. National Coast Guard Museum.
Sec. 220. Investigations.
Sec. 221. Clarification of eligibility of members of the Coast Guard for combat-related special compensation.
Sec. 222. Leave policies for the Coast Guard.

TITLE III—SHIPPING AND NAVIGATION

Sec. 301. Survival craft.
Sec. 302. Vessel replacement.
Sec. 303. Model years for recreational vessels.
Sec. 304. Merchant mariner credential expiration harmonization.
Sec. 305. Safety zones for permitted marine events.
Sec. 306. Technical corrections.
Sec. 307. Recommendations for improvements of marine casualty reporting.
Sec. 308. Recreational vessel engine weights.
Sec. 309. Merchant mariner medical certification reform.
Sec. 310. Atlantic Coast port access route study.
Sec. 311. Certificates of documentation for recreational vessels.
Sec. 312. Program guidelines.
Sec. 313. Repeals.
Sec. 314. Maritime drug law enforcement.
Sec. 315. Examinations for merchant mariner credentials.
Sec. 316. Higher volume port area regulatory definition change.
Sec. 317. Recognition of port security assessments conducted by other entities.
Sec. 318. Fishing vessel and fish tender vessel certification.
Sec. 319. Interagency Coordinating Committee on Oil Pollution Research.
Sec. 320. International port and facility inspection coordination.

TITLE IV—FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSION

Sec. 401. Authorization of appropriations.
Sec. 402. Duties of the Chairman.
Sec. 403. Prohibition on awards.

TITLE V—CONVEYANCES

Subtitle A—Miscellaneous Conveyances

Sec. 501. Conveyance of Coast Guard property in Point Reyes Station, California.
Sec. 502. Conveyance of Coast Guard property in Tok, Alaska.

Subtitle B—Pribilof Islands

Sec. 521. Short title.
Sec. 522. Transfer and disposition of property.
Sec. 523. Notice of certification.
Sec. 524. Redundant capability.

Subtitle C—Conveyance of Coast Guard Property at Point Spencer, Alaska

Sec. 531. Findings.
Sec. 532. Definitions.
Sec. 533. Authority to convey land in Point Spencer.
Sec. 534. Environmental compliance, liability, and monitoring.
Sec. 535. Easements and access.
Sec. 536. Relationship to Public Land Order 2650.
Sec. 537. Archeological and cultural resources.
Sec. 538. Maps and legal descriptions.
Sec. 539. Chargeability for land conveyed.
Sec. 540. Redundant capability.
Sec. 541. Port Coordination Council for Point Spencer.

TITLE VI—MISCELLANEOUS

Sec. 601. Modification of reports.
Sec. 602. Safe vessel operation in the Great Lakes.
Sec. 603. Use of vessel sale proceeds.
Sec. 604. National Academy of Sciences cost assessment.
Sec. 605. Penalty wages.
Sec. 606. Recourse for noncitizens.
Sec. 607. Coastwise endorsements.
Sec. 608. International Ice Patrol.
Sec. 609. Assessment of oil spill response and cleanup activities in the Great Lakes.
Sec. 610. Report on status of technology detecting passengers who have fallen overboard.
Sec. 611. Venue.
Sec. 612. Disposition of infrastructure related to E–LORAN.
Sec. 613. Parking.

TITLE I—AUTHORIZATIONS

SEC. 101. AUTHORIZATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title 14, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"PART III—COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATIONS AND REPORTS TO CONGRESS

''Chap. Sec.
"27. Authorizations 2701
"29. Reports 2901

"CHAPTER 27—AUTHORIZATIONS

''Sec.
''2702. Authorization of appropriations.
''2704. Authorized levels of military strength and training.

"§ 2702. Authorization of appropriations

''Funds are authorized to be appropriated for each of fiscal years 2016 and 2017 for necessary expenses of the Coast Guard as follows:

''(1) For the operation and maintenance of the Coast Guard, not otherwise provided for—

''(A) $6,981,036,000 for fiscal year 2016; and

''(B) $6,981,036,000 for fiscal year 2017.

''(2) For the acquisition, construction, renovation, and improvement of aids to navigation, shore facilities, vessels, and aircraft, including equipment related thereto, and for maintenance, rehabilitation, lease, and operation of facilities and equipment—

''(A) $1,945,000,000 for fiscal year 2016; and

''(B) $1,945,000,000 for fiscal year 2017.

''(3) For the Coast Guard Reserve program, including operations and maintenance of the program, personnel and training costs, equipment, and services—

''(A) $140,016,000 for fiscal year 2016; and

''(B) $140,016,000 for fiscal year 2017.

''(4) For the environmental compliance and restoration functions of the Coast Guard under chapter 19 of this title—

''(A) $16,701,000 for fiscal year 2016; and

''(B) $16,701,000 for fiscal year 2017.

''(5) To the Commandant of the Coast Guard for research, development, test, and evaluation of technologies, materials, and human factors directly related to improving the performance of the Coast Guard's mission with respect to search and rescue, aids to navigation, marine safety, marine environmental protection, enforcement of laws and treaties, ice operations, oceanographic research, and defense readiness, and for maintenance, rehabilitation, lease, and operation of facilities and equipment—

''(A) $19,890,000 for fiscal year 2016; and

''(B) $19,890,000 for fiscal year 2017.

''§ 2704. Authorized levels of military strength and training

''(a) ACTIVE DUTY STRENGTH.—The Coast Guard is authorized an end-of-year strength for active duty personnel of 43,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 and 2017.

''(b) MILITARY TRAINING STUDENT LOADS.—The Coast Guard is authorized average military training student loads for each of fiscal years 2016 and 2017 as follows:

''(1) For recruit and special training, 2,500 student years.

''(2) For flight training, 165 student years.

''(3) For professional training in military and civilian institutions, 350 student years.

''(4) For officer acquisition, 1,200 student years.

''CHAPTER 29—REPORTS

''Sec.

''2904. Manpower requirements plan.

''§ 2904. Manpower requirements plan

''(a) IN GENERAL.—On the date on which the President submits to the Congress a budget for fiscal year 2017 under section 1105 of title 31, on the date on which the President submits to the Congress a budget for fiscal year 2019 under such section, and every 4 years thereafter, the Commandant shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a manpower requirements plan.

''(b) SCOPE.—A manpower requirements plan submitted under subsection (a) shall include for each mission of the Coast Guard—

''(1) an assessment of all projected mission requirements for the upcoming fiscal year and for each of the 3 fiscal years thereafter;

''(2) the number of active duty, reserve, and civilian personnel assigned or available to fulfill such mission requirements—

''(A) currently; and

''(B) as projected for the upcoming fiscal year and each of the 3 fiscal years thereafter;

''(3) the number of active duty, reserve, and civilian personnel required to fulfill such mission requirements—

''(A) currently; and

''(B) as projected for the upcoming fiscal year and each of the 3 fiscal years thereafter;

''(4) an identification of any capability gaps between mission requirements and mission performance caused by deficiencies in the numbers of personnel available—

''(A) currently; and

''(B) as projected for the upcoming fiscal year and each of the 3 fiscal years thereafter; and

''(5) an identification of the actions the Commandant will take to address capability gaps identified under paragraph (4).

''(c) CONSIDERATION.—In composing a manpower requirements plan for submission under subsection (a), the Commandant shall consider—

''(1) the marine safety strategy required under section 2116 of title 46;

''(2) information on the adequacy of the acquisition workforce included in the most recent report under section 2903 of this title; and

''(3) any other Federal strategic planning effort the Commandant considers appropriate.''.

(b) REQUIREMENT FOR PRIOR AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 662 of title 14, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating such section as section 2701;

(2) by transferring such section to appear before section 2702 of such title (as added by subsection (a) of this section); and

(3) by striking paragraphs (1) through (5) and inserting the following:

''(1) For the operation and maintenance of the Coast Guard, not otherwise provided for.

''(2) For the acquisition, construction, renovation, and improvement of aids to navigation, shore facilities, vessels, and aircraft, including equipment related thereto, and for maintenance, rehabilitation, lease, and operation of facilities and equipment.

''(3) For the Coast Guard Reserve program, including operations and maintenance of the program, personnel and training costs, equipment, and services.

''(4) For the environmental compliance and restoration functions of the Coast Guard under chapter 19 of this title.

''(5) For research, development, test, and evaluation of technologies, materials, and human factors directly related to improving the performance of the Coast Guard.

''(6) For alteration or removal of bridges over navigable waters of the United States constituting obstructions to navigation, and for personnel and administrative costs associated with the Alteration of Bridges Program.''.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF PERSONNEL END STRENGTHS.—Section 661 of title 14, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating such section as section 2703; and

(2) by transferring such section to appear before section 2704 of such title (as added by subsection (a) of this section).

(d) REPORTS.—

(1) TRANSMISSION OF ANNUAL COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION REQUEST.—Section 662a of title 14, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by redesignating such section as section 2901;

(B) by transferring such section to appear before section 2904 of such title (as added by subsection (a) of this section); and

(C) in subsection (b)—

(i) in paragraph (1) by striking ''described in section 661'' and inserting ''described in section 2703''; and

(ii) in paragraph (2) by striking ''described in section 662'' and inserting ''described in section 2701''.

(2) CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN.—Section 663 of title 14, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by redesignating such section as section 2902; and

(B) by transferring such section to appear after section 2901 of such title (as so redesignated and transferred by paragraph (1) of this subsection).

(3) MAJOR ACQUISITIONS.—Section 569a of title 14, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by redesignating such section as section 2903;

(B) by transferring such section to appear after section 2902 of such title (as so redesignated and transferred by paragraph (2) of this subsection); and

(C) in subsection (c)(2) by striking ''of this subchapter''.

(e) ICEBREAKERS.—

(1) ICEBREAKING ON THE GREAT LAKES.—For fiscal years 2016 and 2017, the Commandant of the Coast Guard may use funds made available pursuant to section 2702(2) of title 14, United States Code (as added by subsection (a) of this section), for the selection of a design for and the construction of an icebreaker that is capable of buoy tending to enhance icebreaking capacity on the Great Lakes.

(2) POLAR ICEBREAKING.—Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated under section 2702(2) of title 14, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a), there is authorized to be appropriated to the Coast Guard $4,000,000 for fiscal year 2016 and $10,000,000 for fiscal year 2017 for preacquisition activities for a new polar icebreaker, including initial specification development and feasibility studies.

(f) ADDITIONAL SUBMISSIONS.—The Commandant of the Coast Guard shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives—

(1) each plan required under section 2904 of title 14, United States Code, as added by subsection (a) of this section;

(2) each plan required under section 2903(e) of title 14, United States Code, as added by section 206 of this Act;

(3) each plan required under section 2902 of title 14, United States Code, as redesignated by subsection (d) of this section; and

(4) each mission need statement required under section 569 of title 14, United States Code.

SEC. 102. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

(a) ANALYSIS FOR TITLE 14.—The analysis for title 14, United States Code, is amended by adding after the item relating to part II the following:

''III. Coast Guard Authorizations and Reports to Congress ..... 2701''.

(b) ANALYSIS FOR CHAPTER 15.—The analysis for chapter 15 of title 14, United States Code, is amended by striking the item relating to section 569a.

(c) ANALYSIS FOR CHAPTER 17.—The analysis for chapter 17 of title 14, United States Code, is amended by striking the items relating to sections 661, 662, 662a, and 663.

(d) ANALYSIS FOR CHAPTER 27.—The analysis for chapter 27 of title 14, United States Code, as added by section 101(a) of this Act, is amended by inserting—

(1) before the item relating to section 2702 the following:

''2701. Requirement for prior authorization of appropriations.'';

and

(2) before the item relating to section 2704 the following:

''2703. Authorization of personnel end strengths.''.

(e) ANALYSIS FOR CHAPTER 29.—The analysis for chapter 29 of title 14, United States Code, as added by section 101(a) of this Act, is amended by inserting before the item relating to section 2904 the following:

''2901. Transmission of annual Coast Guard authorization request.

''2902. Capital investment plan.

''2903. Major acquisitions.''.

(f) MISSION NEED STATEMENT.—Section 569(b) of title 14, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2) by striking ''in section 569a(e)'' and inserting ''in section 2903''; and

(2) in paragraph (3) by striking ''under section 663(a)(1)'' and inserting ''under section 2902(a)(1)''.

TITLE II—COAST GUARD

SEC. 201. VICE COMMANDANT.

(a) GRADES AND RATINGS.—Section 41 of title 14, United States Code, is amended by striking ''an admiral,'' and inserting ''admirals (two);''.

(b) VICE COMMANDANT; APPOINTMENT.—Section 47 of title 14, United States Code, is amended by striking ''vice admiral'' and inserting ''admiral''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 51 of title 14, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a) by inserting ''admiral or'' before ''vice admiral,'';

(2) in subsection (b) by inserting ''admiral or'' before ''vice admiral,'' each place it appears; and

(3) in subsection (c) by inserting ''admiral or'' before ''vice admiral,''.

SEC. 202. VICE ADMIRALS.

Section 50 of title 14, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

''(1) The President may—

''(A) designate, within the Coast Guard, no more than five positions of importance and responsibility that shall be held by officers who, while so serving—

''(i) shall have the grade of vice admiral, with the pay and allowances of that grade; and

''(ii) shall perform such duties as the Commandant may prescribe, except that if the President designates five such positions, one position shall be the Chief of Staff of the Coast Guard; and

''(B) designate, within the executive branch, other than within the Coast Guard or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, positions of importance and responsibility that shall be held by officers who, while so serving, shall have the grade of vice admiral, with the pay and allowances of that grade.''; and

(B) in paragraph (3)(A) by striking ''under paragraph (1)'' and inserting ''under paragraph (1)(A)''; and

(2) in subsection (b)(2)—

(A) in subparagraph (B) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (D); and

(C) by inserting after subparagraph (B) the following:

''(C) at the discretion of the Secretary, while awaiting orders after being relieved from the position, beginning on the day the officer is relieved from the position, but not for more than 60 days; and''.

SEC. 203. COAST GUARD REMISSION OF INDEBTEDNESS.

(a) EXPANSION OF AUTHORITY TO REMIT INDEBTEDNESS.—Section 461 of title 14, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 461. Remission of indebtedness

''The Secretary may have remitted or cancelled any part of a person's indebtedness to the United States or any instrumentality of the United States if—

''(1) the indebtedness was incurred while the person served on active duty as a member of the Coast Guard; and

''(2) the Secretary determines that remitting or cancelling the indebtedness is in the best interest of the United States.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for chapter 13 of title 14, United States Code, is amended by striking the item relating to section 461 and inserting the following:

''461. Remission of indebtedness.''.

SEC. 204. ACQUISITION REFORM.

(a) MINIMUM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS.—Section 572(d)(3) of title 14, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (C) through (H) as subparagraphs (E) through (J), respectively;

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as subparagraph (C);

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following:

''(B) the performance data to be used to determine whether the key performance parameters have been resolved;''; and

(4) by inserting after subparagraph (C), as redesignated by paragraph (2) of this subsection, the following:

''(D) the results during test and evaluation that will be required to demonstrate that a capability, asset, or subsystem meets performance requirements;''.

(b) CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN.—Section 2902 of title 14, United States Code, as redesignated and otherwise amended by this Act, is further amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1)—

(A) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''completion;'' and inserting ''completion based on the proposed appropriations included in the budget;''; and

(B) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''at the projected funding levels;'' and inserting ''based on the proposed appropriations included in the budget;'';

(2) by redesignating subsection (b) as subsection (c), and inserting after subsection (a) the following:

''(b) NEW CAPITAL ASSETS.—In the fiscal year following each fiscal year for which appropriations are enacted for a new capital asset, the report submitted under subsection (a) shall include—

''(1) an estimated life-cycle cost estimate for the new capital asset;

''(2) an assessment of the impact the new capital asset will have on—

''(A) delivery dates for each capital asset;

''(B) estimated completion dates for each capital asset;

''(C) the total estimated cost to complete each capital asset; and

''(D) other planned construction or improvement projects; and

''(3) recommended funding levels for each capital asset necessary to meet the estimated completion dates and total estimated costs included in the such asset's approved acquisition program baseline.''; and

(3) by amending subsection (c), as so redesignated, to read as follows:

''(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

''(1) the term 'unfunded priority' means a program or mission requirement that—

''(A) has not been selected for funding in the applicable proposed budget;

''(B) is necessary to fulfill a requirement associated with an operational need; and

''(C) the Commandant would have recommended for inclusion in the applicable proposed budget had additional resources been available or had the requirement emerged before the budget was submitted; and

''(2) the term 'new capital asset' means—

''(A) an acquisition program that does not have an approved acquisition program baseline; or

''(B) the acquisition of a capital asset in excess of the number included in the approved acquisition program baseline.''.

(c) DAYS AWAY FROM HOMEPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall—

(1) implement a standard for tracking operational days at sea for Coast Guard cutters that does not include days during which such cutters are undergoing maintenance or repair; and

(2) notify the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate of the standard implemented under paragraph (1).

(d) FIXED WING AIRCRAFT FLEET MIX ANALYSIS.—Not later than September 30, 2016, the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a revised fleet mix analysis of Coast Guard fixed wing aircraft.

(e) LONG-TERM MAJOR ACQUISITIONS PLAN.—Section 2903 of title 14, United States Code, as redesignated and otherwise amended by this Act, is further amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (g); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (d) the following:

''(e) LONG-TERM MAJOR ACQUISITIONS PLAN.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include a plan that describes for the upcoming fiscal year, and for each of the 20 fiscal years thereafter—

''(1) the numbers and types of cutters and aircraft to be decommissioned;

''(2) the numbers and types of cutters and aircraft to be acquired to—

''(A) replace the cutters and aircraft identified under paragraph (1); or

''(B) address an identified capability gap; and

''(3) the estimated level of funding in each fiscal year required to—

''(A) acquire the cutters and aircraft identified under paragraph (2);

''(B) acquire related command, control, communications, computer, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems; and

''(C) acquire, construct, or renovate shoreside infrastructure.

''(f) QUARTERLY UPDATES ON RISKS OF PROGRAMS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 15 days after the end of each fiscal year quarter, the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall submit to the committees of Congress specified in subsection (a) an update setting forth a current assessment of the risks associated with all current major acquisition programs.

''(2) ELEMENTS.—Each update under this subsection shall set forth, for each current major acquisition program, the following:

''(A) The top five current risks to such program.

''(B) Any failure of such program to demonstrate a key performance parameter or threshold during operational test and evaluation conducted during the fiscal year quarter preceding such update.

''(C) Whether there has been any decision during such fiscal year quarter to order full-rate production before all key performance parameters or thresholds are met.

''(D) Whether there has been any breach of major acquisition program cost (as defined by the Major Systems Acquisition Manual) during such fiscal year quarter.

''(E) Whether there has been any breach of major acquisition program schedule (as so defined) during such fiscal year quarter.''.

SEC. 205. AUXILIARY JURISDICTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 822 of title 14, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''The purpose'' and inserting the following:

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The purpose''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) LIMITATION.—The Auxiliary may conduct a patrol of a waterway, or a portion thereof, only if—

''(1) the Commandant has determined such waterway, or portion thereof, is navigable for purposes of the jurisdiction of the Coast Guard; or

''(2) a State or other proper authority has requested such patrol pursuant to section 141 of this title or section 13109 of title 46.''.

(b) NOTIFICATION.—The Commandant of the Coast Guard shall—

(1) review the waterways patrolled by the Coast Guard Auxiliary in the most recently

completed fiscal year to determine whether such waterways are eligible or ineligible for patrol under section 822(b) of title 14, United States Code (as added by subsection (a)); and

(2) not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, provide to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a written notification of—

(A) any waterways determined ineligible for patrol under paragraph (1); and

(B) the actions taken by the Commandant to ensure Auxiliary patrols do not occur on such waterways.

SEC. 206. COAST GUARD COMMUNITIES.

Section 409 of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1998 (14 U.S.C. 639 note) is amended in the second sentence by striking ''90 days'' and inserting ''30 days''.

SEC. 207. POLAR ICEBREAKERS.

(a) INCREMENTAL FUNDING AUTHORITY FOR POLAR ICEBREAKERS.—In fiscal year 2016 and each fiscal year thereafter, the Commandant of the Coast Guard may enter into a contract or contracts for the acquisition of polar icebreakers and associated equipment using incremental funding.

(b) ''POLAR SEA'' MATERIEL CONDITION ASSESSMENT AND SERVICE LIFE EXTENSION.—Section 222 of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–213; 126 Stat. 1560) is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall—

''(1) complete a materiel condition assessment with respect to the Polar Sea;

''(2) make a determination of whether it is cost effective to reactivate the Polar Sea compared with other options to provide icebreaking services as part of a strategy to maintain polar icebreaking services; and

''(3) submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate—

''(A) the assessment required under paragraph (1); and

''(B) written notification of the determination required under paragraph (2).'';

(2) in subsection (b) by striking ''analysis'' and inserting ''written notification'';

(3) by striking subsection (c);

(4) by redesignating subsections (d) through (h) as subsections (c) through (g), respectively;

(5) in subsection (c) (as redesignated by paragraph (4) of this section)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in subparagraph (A) by striking ''based on the analysis required''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (C) by striking ''analysis'' and inserting ''written notification'';

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking ''analysis'' each place it appears and inserting ''written notification'';

(ii) by striking ''subsection (a)'' and inserting ''subsection (a)(3)(B)'';

(iii) by striking ''subsection (c)'' each place it appears and inserting ''that subsection''; and

(iv) by striking ''under subsection (a)(5)''; and

(C) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by striking ''in the analysis submitted under this section'';

(ii) by striking ''(a)(5)'' and inserting ''(a)'';

(iii) by striking ''then'' and all that follows through ''(A)'' and inserting ''then'';

(iv) by striking ''; or'' and inserting a period; and

(v) by striking subparagraph (B); and

(6) in subsection (d) (as redesignated by paragraph (4) of this subsection) by striking ''in subsection (d)'' and inserting ''in subsection (c)''.

SEC. 208. AIR FACILITY CLOSURES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 17 of title 14, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 676 the following:

''§ 676a. Air facility closures

''(a) PROHIBITION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Coast Guard may not—

''(A) close a Coast Guard air facility that was in operation on November 30, 2014; or

''(B) retire, transfer, relocate, or deploy an aviation asset from an air facility described in subparagraph (A) for the purpose of closing such facility.

''(2) SUNSET.—Paragraph (1) shall have no force or effect beginning on the later of—

''(A) January 1, 2018; or

''(B) the date on which the Secretary submits to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, and to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, rotary wing strategic plans prepared in accordance with section 208(b) of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015.

''(b) CLOSURES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on January 1, 2018, the Secretary may not close a Coast Guard air facility, except as specified by this section.

''(2) DETERMINATIONS.—The Secretary may not propose closing or terminating operations at a Coast Guard air facility unless the Secretary determines that—

''(A) remaining search and rescue capabilities maintain the safety of the maritime public in the area of the air facility;

''(B) regional or local prevailing weather and marine conditions, including water temperatures or unusual tide and current conditions, do not require continued operation of the air facility; and

''(C) Coast Guard search and rescue standards related to search and response times are met.

''(3) PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT.—Prior to closing an air facility, the Secretary shall provide opportunities for public comment, including the convening of public meetings in communities in the area of responsibility of the air facility with regard to the proposed closure or cessation of operations at the air facility.

''(4) NOTICE TO CONGRESS.—Prior to closure, cessation of operations, or any significant reduction in personnel and use of a Coast Guard air facility that is in operation on or after December 31, 2015, the Secretary shall—

''(A) submit to the Congress a proposal for such closure, cessation, or reduction in operations along with the budget of the President submitted to Congress under section 1105(a) of title 31 for the fiscal year in which the action will be carried out; and

''(B) not later than 7 days after the date a proposal for an air facility is submitted pursuant to subparagraph (A), provide written notice of such proposal to each of the following:

''(i) Each member of the House of Representatives who represents a district in which the air facility is located.

''(ii) Each member of the Senate who represents a State in which the air facility is located.

''(iii) Each member of the House of Representatives who represents a district in which assets of the air facility conduct search and rescue operations.

''(iv) Each member of the Senate who represents a State in which assets of the air facility conduct search and rescue operations.

''(v) The Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

''(vi) The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives.

''(vii) The Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

''(viii) The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

''(c) OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY.—The Secretary may implement any reasonable management efficiencies within the air station and air facility network, such as modifying the operational posture of units or reallocating resources as necessary to ensure the safety of the maritime public nationwide.''.

(b) ROTARY WING STRATEGIC PLANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall prepare the plans specified in paragraph (2) to adequately address contingencies arising from potential future aviation casualties or the planned or unplanned retirement of rotary wing airframes to avoid to the greatest extent practicable any substantial gap or diminishment in Coast Guard operational capabilities.

(2) ROTARY WING STRATEGIC PLANS.—

(A) ROTARY WING CONTINGENCY PLAN.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall develop and submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a contingency plan—

(i) to address the planned or unplanned losses of rotary wing airframes;

(ii) to reallocate resources as necessary to ensure the safety of the maritime public nationwide; and

(iii) to ensure the operational posture of Coast Guard units.

(B) ROTARY WING REPLACEMENT CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall develop and submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a capital investment plan for the acquisition of new rotary wing airframes to replace the Coast Guard's legacy helicopters and fulfil all existing mission requirements.

(ii) REQUIREMENTS.—The plan developed under this subparagraph shall provide—

(I) a total estimated cost for completion;

(II) a timetable for completion of the acquisition project and phased in transition to new airframes; and

(III) projected annual funding levels for each fiscal year.

(c) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) ANALYSIS FOR CHAPTER 17.—The analysis for chapter 17 of title 14, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 676 the following:

''676a. Air facility closures.''.

(2) REPEAL OF PROHIBITION.—Section 225 of the Howard Coble Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–281; 128 Stat. 3022) is amended—

(A) by striking subsection (b); and

(B) by striking ''(a) IN GENERAL.—''.

SEC. 209. TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO TITLE 14, UNITED STATES CODE.

Title 14, United States Code, as amended by this Act, is further amended—

(1) in the analysis for part I, by striking the item relating to chapter 19 and inserting the following:

''19. Environmental Compliance and Restoration Program ..... 690'';

(2) in section 46(a), by striking ''subsection'' and inserting ''section'';

(3) in section 47, in the section heading by striking ''**commandant**'' and inserting ''**Commandant**'';

(4) in section 93(f), by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

''(2) LIMITATION.—The Commandant may lease submerged lands and tidelands under paragraph (1) only if—

''(A) the lease is for cash exclusively;

''(B) the lease amount is equal to the fair market value of the use of the leased submerged lands or tidelands for the period during which such lands are leased, as determined by the Commandant;

''(C) the lease does not provide authority to or commit the Coast Guard to use or support any improvements to such submerged lands and tidelands, or obtain goods and services from the lessee; and

''(D) proceeds from the lease are deposited in the Coast Guard Housing Fund established under section 687.'';

(5) in the analysis for chapter 9, by striking the item relating to section 199 and inserting the following:

''199. Marine safety curriculum.'';

(6) in section 427(b)(2), by striking ''this chapter'' and inserting ''chapter 61 of title 10'';

(7) in the analysis for chapter 15 before the item relating to section 571, by striking the following:

''Sec.'';

(8) in section 581(5)(B), by striking ''$300,000,0000,'' and inserting ''$300,000,000,'';

(9) in section 637(c)(3), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) by inserting ''it is'' before ''any'';

(10) in section 641(d)(3), by striking ''Guard, installation'' and inserting ''Guard installation'';

(11) in section 691(c)(3), by striking ''state'' and inserting ''State'';

(12) in the analysis for chapter 21—

(A) by striking the item relating to section 709 and inserting the following:

''709. Reserve student aviation pilots; Reserve aviation pilots; appointments in commissioned grade.'';

and

(B) by striking the item relating to section 740 and inserting the following:

''740. Failure of selection and removal from an active status.'';

(13) in section 742(c), by striking ''subsection'' and inserting ''subsections'';

(14) in section 821(b)(1), by striking ''Chapter 26'' and inserting ''Chapter 171''; and

(15) in section 823a(b)(1), by striking ''Chapter 26'' and inserting ''Chapter 171''.

SEC. 210. DISCONTINUANCE OF AN AID TO NAVIGATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall establish a process for the discontinuance of an aid to navigation (other than a seasonal or temporary aid) established, maintained, or operated by the Coast Guard.

(b) REQUIREMENT.—The process established under subsection (a) shall include procedures to notify the public of any discontinuance of an aid to navigation described in that subsection.

(c) CONSULTATION.—In establishing a process under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consult with and consider any recommendations of the Navigation Safety Advisory Council.

(d) NOTIFICATION.—Not later than 30 days after establishing a process under subsection (a), the Secretary shall notify the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate of the process established.

SEC. 211. MISSION PERFORMANCE MEASURES.

Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate an assessment of the efficacy of the Coast Guard's Standard Operational Planning Process with respect to annual mission performance measures.

SEC. 212. COMMUNICATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary of Homeland Security determines that there are at least two communications systems described under paragraph (1)(B) and certified under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall establish and carry out a pilot program across not less than three components of the Department of Homeland Security to assess the effectiveness of a communications system that—

(1) provides for—

(A) multiagency collaboration and interoperability; and

(B) wide-area, secure, and peer-invitation- and acceptance-based multimedia communications;

(2) is certified by the Department of Defense Joint Interoperability Test Center; and

(3) is composed of commercially available, off-the-shelf technology.

(b) ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 6 months after the date on which the pilot program is completed, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Committee Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate an assessment of the pilot program, including the impacts of the program with respect to interagency and Coast Guard response capabilities.

(c) STRATEGY.—The pilot program shall be consistent with the strategy required by the Department of Homeland Security Interoperable Communications Act (Public Law 114–29).

(d) TIMING.—The pilot program shall commence within 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act or within 60 days after the completion of the strategy required by the Department of Homeland Security Interoperable Communications Act (Public Law 114–29), whichever is later.

SEC. 213. COAST GUARD GRADUATE MARITIME OPERATIONS EDUCATION.

Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall establish an education program, for members and employees of the Coast Guard, that—

(1) offers a master's degree in maritime operations;

(2) is relevant to the professional development of such members and employees;

(3) provides resident and distant education options, including the ability to utilize both options; and

(4) to the greatest extent practicable, is conducted using existing academic programs at an accredited public academic institution that—

(A) is located near a significant number of Coast Guard, maritime, and other Department of Homeland Security law enforcement personnel; and

(B) has an ability to simulate operations normally conducted at a command center.

SEC. 214. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

(a) MULTIRATER ASSESSMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 11 of title 14, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 428 the following:

''§ 429. Multirater assessment of certain personnel

''(a) MULTIRATER ASSESSMENT OF CERTAIN PERSONNEL.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Commencing not later than one year after the date of the enactment of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015, the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall develop and implement a plan to conduct every two years a multirater assessment for each of the following:

''(A) Each flag officer of the Coast Guard.

''(B) Each member of the Senior Executive Service of the Coast Guard.

''(C) Each officer of the Coast Guard nominated for promotion to the grade of flag officer.

''(2) POST-ASSESSMENT ELEMENTS.—Following an assessment of an individual pursuant to paragraph (1), the individual shall be provided appropriate post-assessment counseling and leadership coaching.

''(b) MULTIRATER ASSESSMENT DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'multirater assessment' means a review that seeks opinion from members senior to the reviewee and the peers and subordinates of the reviewee.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item related to section 428 the following:

''429. Multirater assessment of certain personnel.''.

(b) TRAINING COURSE ON WORKINGS OF CONGRESS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 3 of title 14, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 60. Training course on workings of Congress

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015, the Commandant, in consultation with the Superintendent of the Coast Guard Academy and such other individuals and organizations as the Commandant considers appropriate, shall develop a training course on the workings of the Congress and offer that training course at least once each year.

''(b) COURSE SUBJECT MATTER.—The training course required by this section shall provide an overview and introduction to the Congress and the Federal legislative process, including—

''(1) the history and structure of the Congress and the committee systems of the House of Representatives and the Senate, including the functions and responsibilities of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate;

''(2) the documents produced by the Congress, including bills, resolutions, committee reports, and conference reports, and the purposes and functions of those documents;

''(3) the legislative processes and rules of the House of Representatives and the Senate, including similarities and differences between the two processes and rules, including—

''(A) the congressional budget process;

''(B) the congressional authorization and appropriation processes;

''(C) the Senate advice and consent process for Presidential nominees; and

''(D) the Senate advice and consent process for treaty ratification;

''(4) the roles of Members of Congress and congressional staff in the legislative process; and

''(5) the concept and underlying purposes of congressional oversight within our governance framework of separation of powers.

''(c) LECTURERS AND PANELISTS.—

''(1) OUTSIDE EXPERTS.—The Commandant shall ensure that not less than 60 percent of the lecturers, panelists, and other individuals providing education and instruction as part of the training course required by this section are experts on the Congress and the Federal legislative process who are not employed by the executive branch of the Federal Government.

''(2) AUTHORITY TO ACCEPT PRO BONO SERVICES.—In satisfying the requirement under paragraph (1), the Commandant shall seek, and may accept, educational and instructional services of lecturers, panelists, and other individuals and organizations provided to the Coast Guard on a pro bono basis.

''(d) COMPLETION OF REQUIRED TRAINING.—

''(1) CURRENT FLAG OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES.—A Coast Guard flag officer appointed or assigned to a billet in the National Capital Region on the date of the enactment of this section, and a Coast Guard Senior Executive Service employee employed in the National Capital Region on the date of the enactment of this section, shall complete a training course that meets the requirements of this section within 60 days after the date on which the Commandant completes the development of the training course.

''(2) NEW FLAG OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES.—A Coast Guard flag officer who is newly appointed or assigned to a billet in the National Capital Region, and a Coast Guard Senior Executive Service employee who is newly employed in the National Capital Region, shall complete a training course that meets the requirements of this section not later than 60 days after reporting for duty.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following:

''60. Training course on workings of Congress.''.

(c) REPORT ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report on Coast Guard leadership development.

(2) CONTENTS.—The report shall include the following:

(A) An assessment of the feasibility of—

(i) all officers (other than officers covered by section 429(a) of title 14, United States Code, as amended by this section) completing a multirater assessment;

(ii) all members (other than officers covered by such section) in command positions completing a multirater assessment;

(iii) all enlisted members in a supervisory position completing a multirater assessment; and

(iv) members completing periodic multirater assessments.

(B) Such recommendations as the Commandant considers appropriate for the implementation or expansion of a multirater assessment in the personnel development programs of the Coast Guard.

(C) An overview of each of the current leadership development courses of the Coast Guard, an assessment of the feasibility of the expansion of any such course, and a description of the resources, if any, required to expand such courses.

(D) An assessment on the state of leadership training in the Coast Guard, and recommendations on the implementation of a policy to prevent leadership that has adverse effects on subordinates, the organization, or mission performance, including—

(i) a description of methods that will be used by the Coast Guard to identify, monitor, and counsel individuals whose leadership may have adverse effects on subordinates, the organization, or mission performance;

(ii) the implementation of leadership recognition training to recognize such leadership in one's self and others;

(iii) the establishment of procedures for the administrative separation of leaders whose leadership may have adverse effects on subordinates, the organization, or mission performance; and

(iv) a description of the resources needed to implement this section.

SEC. 215. SENIOR ENLISTED MEMBER CONTINUATION BOARDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 357 of title 14, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking subsections (a) through (h) and subsection (j); and

(2) in subsection (i), by striking ''(i)''.

(b) CONFORMING AND CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—

(1) HEADING AMENDMENT.—The heading of such section is amended to read as follows:

''§ 357. Retirement of enlisted members: increase in retired pay''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis at the beginning of chapter 11 of such title is amended by striking the item relating to such section and inserting the following:

''357. Retirement of enlisted members: increase in retired pay.''.

SEC. 216. COAST GUARD MEMBER PAY.

(a) ANNUAL AUDIT OF PAY AND ALLOWANCES OF MEMBERS UNDERGOING PERMANENT CHANGE OF STATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 13 of title 14, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 519. Annual audit of pay and allowances of members undergoing permanent change of station

''The Commandant shall conduct each calendar year an audit of member pay and allowances for the members who transferred to new units during such calendar year. The audit for a calendar year shall be completed by the end of the calendar year.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following:

''519. Annual audit of pay and allowances of members undergoing permanent change of station.''.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report on alternative methods for notifying members of the Coast Guard of their monthly earnings. The report shall include—

(1) an assessment of the feasibility of providing members a monthly notification of their earnings, categorized by pay and allowance type; and

(2) a description and assessment of mechanisms that may be used to provide members with notification of their earnings, categorized by pay and allowance type.

SEC. 217. TRANSFER OF FUNDS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE MEDICAL CARE.

(a) TRANSFER REQUIRED.—In lieu of the reimbursement required under section 1085 of title 10, United States Code, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall transfer to the Secretary of Defense an amount that represents the actuarial valuation of treatment or care—

(1) that the Department of Defense shall provide to members of the Coast Guard, former members of the Coast Guard, and dependents of such members and former members (other than former members and dependents of former members who are a Medicare-eligible beneficiary or for whom the payment for treatment or care is made from the Medicare-Eligible Retiree Health Care Fund) at facilities under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense or a military department; and

(2) for which a reimbursement would otherwise be made under section 1085.

(b) AMOUNT.—The amount transferred under subsection (a) shall be—

(1) in the case of treatment or care to be provided to members of the Coast Guard and their dependents, derived from amounts appropriated for the operating expenses of the Coast Guard;

(2) in the case of treatment or care to be provided former members of the Coast Guard and their dependents, derived from amounts appropriated for retired pay;

(3) determined under procedures established by the Secretary of Defense;

(4) transferred during the fiscal year in which treatment or care is provided; and

(5) subject to adjustment or reconciliation as the Secretaries determine appropriate during or promptly after such fiscal year in cases in which the amount transferred is determined excessive or insufficient based on the services actually provided.

(c) NO TRANSFER WHEN SERVICE IN NAVY.—No transfer shall be made under this section for any period during which the Coast Guard operates as a service in the Navy.

(d) RELATIONSHIP TO TRICARE.—This section shall not be construed to require a payment for, or the transfer of an amount that represents the value of, treatment or care provided under any TRICARE program.

SEC. 218. PARTICIPATION OF THE COAST GUARD ACADEMY IN FEDERAL, STATE, OR OTHER EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH GRANTS.

Section 196 of title 14, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(a) IN GENERAL.—'' before the first sentence; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) QUALIFIED ORGANIZATIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commandant of the Coast Guard may—

''(A) enter into a contract, cooperative agreement, lease, or licensing agreement with a qualified organization;

''(B) allow a qualified organization to use, at no cost, personal property of the Coast Guard; and

''(C) notwithstanding section 93, accept funds, supplies, and services from a qualified organization.

''(2) SOLE-SOURCE BASIS.—Notwithstanding chapter 65 of title 31 and chapter 137 of title 10, the Commandant may enter into a contract or cooperative agreement under paragraph (1)(A) on a sole-source basis.

''(3) MAINTAINING FAIRNESS, OBJECTIVITY, AND INTEGRITY.—The Commandant shall ensure that contributions under this subsection do not—

''(A) reflect unfavorably on the ability of the Coast Guard, any of its employees, or any member of the armed forces to carry out any responsibility or duty in a fair and objective manner; or

''(B) compromise the integrity or appearance of integrity of any program of the Coast Guard, or any individual involved in such a program.

''(4) LIMITATION.—For purposes of this subsection, employees or personnel of a qualified organization shall not be employees of the United States.

''(5) QUALIFIED ORGANIZATION DEFINED.—In this subsection the term 'qualified organization' means an organization—

''(A) described under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt

from taxation under section 501(a) of that Code; and

''(B) established by the Coast Guard Academy Alumni Association solely for the purpose of supporting academic research and applying for and administering Federal, State, or other educational research grants on behalf of the Coast Guard Academy.''.

SEC. 219. NATIONAL COAST GUARD MUSEUM.

Section 98(b) of title 14, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''any appropriated Federal funds for'' and insert ''any funds appropriated to the Coast Guard on''; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking ''artifacts.'' and inserting ''artifacts, including the design, fabrication, and installation of exhibits or displays in which such artifacts are included.''.

SEC. 220. INVESTIGATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 11 of title 14, United States Code, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 430. Investigations of flag officers and Senior Executive Service employees

''In conducting an investigation into an allegation of misconduct by a flag officer or member of the Senior Executive Service serving in the Coast Guard, the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security shall—

''(1) conduct the investigation in a manner consistent with Department of Defense policies for such an investigation; and

''(2) consult with the Inspector General of the Department of Defense.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis at the beginning of such chapter is further amended by inserting after the item related to section 429 the following:

''430. Investigations of flag officers and Senior Executive Service employees.''.

SEC. 221. CLARIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF MEMBERS OF THE COAST GUARD FOR COMBAT-RELATED SPECIAL COMPENSATION.

(a) CONSIDERATION OF ELIGIBILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the department is which the Coast Guard is operating shall issue procedures and criteria to use in determining whether the disability of a member of the Coast Guard is a combat-related disability for purposes of the eligibility of such member for combat-related special compensation under section 1413a of title 10, United States Code. Such procedures and criteria shall include the procedures and criteria prescribed by the Secretary of Defense pursuant to subsection (e)(2) of such section. Such procedures and criteria shall apply in determining whether the disability of a member of the Coast Guard is a combat-related disability for purposes of determining the eligibility of such member for combat-related special compensation under such section.

(2) DISABILITY FOR WHICH A DETERMINATION IS MADE.—For the purposes of this section, and in the case of a member of the Coast Guard, a disability under section 1413a(e)(2)(B) of title 10, United States Code, includes a disability incurred during aviation duty, diving duty, rescue swimmer or similar duty, and hazardous service duty onboard a small vessel (such as duty as a surfman)—

(A) in the performance of duties for which special or incentive pay was paid pursuant to section 301, 301a, 304, 307, 334, or 351 of title 37, United States Code;

(B) in the performance of duties related to—

(i) law enforcement, including drug or migrant interdiction;

(ii) defense readiness; or

(iii) search and rescue; or

(C) while engaged in a training exercise for the performance of a duty described in subparagraphs (A) and (B).

(b) APPLICABILITY OF GUIDANCE.—The guidance issued pursuant to subsection (a) shall apply to disabilities described in that subsection that are incurred on or after the effective date provided in section 636(a)(2) of the Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003 (Public Law 107–314; 116 Stat. 2574; 10 U.S.C. 1413a note).

(c) REAPPLICATION FOR COMPENSATION.—Any member of the Coast Guard who was denied combat-related special compensation under section 1413a of title 10, United States Code, during the period beginning on the effective date specified in subsection (b) and ending on the date of the issuance of the guidance required by subsection (a) may reapply for combat-related special compensation under such section on the basis of such guidance in accordance with such procedures as the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall specify.

SEC. 222. LEAVE POLICIES FOR THE COAST GUARD.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 11 of title 14, United States Code, is further amended by inserting after section 430 the following:

''§ 431. Leave policies for the Coast Guard

''Not later than 1 year after the date on which the Secretary of the Navy promulgates a new rule, policy, or memorandum pursuant to section 704 of title 10, United States Code, with respect to leave associated with the birth or adoption of a child, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall promulgate a similar rule, policy, or memorandum that provides leave to officers and enlisted members of the Coast Guard that is equal in duration and compensation to that provided by the Secretary of the Navy.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis at the beginning of such chapter is further amended by inserting after the item related to section 430 the following:

''431. Leave policies for the Coast Guard.''.

TITLE III—SHIPPING AND NAVIGATION

SEC. 301. SURVIVAL CRAFT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3104 of title 46, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 3104. Survival craft

''(a) REQUIREMENT TO EQUIP.—The Secretary shall require that a passenger vessel be equipped with survival craft that ensures that no part of an individual is immersed in water, if—

''(1) such vessel is built or undergoes a major conversion after January 1, 2016; and

''(2) operates in cold waters as determined by the Secretary.

''(b) HIGHER STANDARD OF SAFETY.—The Secretary may revise part 117 or part 180 of title 46, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect before January 1, 2016, if such revision provides a higher standard of safety than is provided by the regulations in effect on or before the date of the enactment of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015.

''(c) INNOVATIVE AND NOVEL DESIGNS.—The Secretary may, in lieu of the requirements set out in part 117 or part 180 of title 46, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on the date of the enactment of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015, allow a passenger vessel to be equipped with a life-saving appliance or arrangement of an innovative or novel design that—

''(1) ensures no part of an individual is immersed in water; and

''(2) provides an equal or higher standard of safety than is provided by such requirements as in effect before such date of the enactment.

''(d) BUILT DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'built' has the meaning that term has under section 4503(e).''.

(b) REVIEW; REVISION OF REGULATIONS.—

(1) REVIEW.—Not later than December 31, 2016, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a review of—

(A) the number of casualties for individuals with disabilities, children, and the elderly as a result of immersion in water, reported to the Coast Guard over the preceding 30-year period, by vessel type and area of operation;

(B) the risks to individuals with disabilities, children, and the elderly as a result of immersion in water, by passenger vessel type and area of operation;

(C) the effect that carriage of survival craft that ensure that no part of an individual is immersed in water has on—

(i) passenger vessel safety, including stability and safe navigation;

(ii) improving the survivability of individuals, including individuals with disabilities, children, and the elderly; and

(iii) the costs, the incremental cost difference to vessel operators, and the cost effectiveness of requiring the carriage of such survival craft to address the risks to individuals with disabilities, children, and the elderly;

(D) the efficacy of alternative safety systems, devices, or measures in improving survivability of individuals with disabilities, children, and the elderly; and

(E) the number of small businesses and nonprofit vessel operators that would be affected by requiring the carriage of such survival craft on passenger vessels to address the risks to individuals with disabilities, children, and the elderly.

(2) REVISION.—Based on the review conducted under paragraph (1), the Secretary may revise regulations concerning the carriage of survival craft pursuant to section 3104(c) of title 46, United States Code.

SEC. 302. VESSEL REPLACEMENT.

(a) LOANS AND GUARANTEES.—Chapter 537 of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in section 53701—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (8) through (14) as paragraphs (9) through (15), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (7) the following:

''(8) HISTORICAL USES.—The term 'historical uses' includes—

''(A) refurbishing, repairing, rebuilding, or replacing equipment on a fishing vessel, without materially increasing harvesting capacity;

''(B) purchasing a used fishing vessel;

''(C) purchasing, constructing, expanding, or reconditioning a fishery facility;

''(D) refinancing existing debt;

''(E) reducing fishing capacity; and

''(F) making upgrades to a fishing vessel, including upgrades in technology, gear, or equipment, that improve—

''(i) collection and reporting of fishery-dependent data;

''(ii) bycatch reduction or avoidance;

''(iii) gear selectivity;

''(iv) adverse impacts caused by fishing gear; or

''(v) safety.''; and

(2) in section 53702(b), by adding at the end the following:

''(3) MINIMUM OBLIGATIONS AVAILABLE FOR HISTORIC USES.—Of the direct loan obligations issued by the Secretary under this

chapter, the Secretary shall make a minimum of $59,000,000 available each fiscal year for historic uses.

''(4) USE OF OBLIGATIONS IN LIMITED ACCESS FISHERIES.—In addition to the other eligible purposes and uses of direct loan obligations provided for in this chapter, the Secretary may issue direct loan obligations for the purpose of—

''(A) financing the construction or reconstruction of a fishing vessel in a fishery managed under a limited access system; or

''(B) financing the purchase of harvesting rights in a fishery that is federally managed under a limited access system.''.

(b) LIMITATION ON APPLICATION TO CERTAIN FISHING VESSELS OF PROHIBITION UNDER VESSEL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM.—Section 302(b)(2) of the Fisheries Financing Act (title III of Public Law 104–297; 46 U.S.C. 53706 note) is amended—

(1) in the second sentence—

(A) by striking ''or in'' and inserting '', in''; and

(B) by inserting before the period the following: '', in fisheries that are under the jurisdiction of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and managed under a fishery management plan issued under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), or in the Pacific whiting fishery that is under the jurisdiction of the Pacific Fishery Management Council and managed under a fishery management plan issued under that Act''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following: ''Any fishing vessel operated in fisheries under the jurisdiction of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and managed under a fishery management plan issued under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), or in the Pacific whiting fishery under the jurisdiction of the Pacific Fishery Management Council and managed under a fishery management plan issued under that Act, and that is replaced by a vessel that is constructed or rebuilt with a loan or loan guarantee provided by the Federal Government may not be used to harvest fish in any fishery under the jurisdiction of any regional fishery management council, other than a fishery under the jurisdiction of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council or the Pacific Fishery Management Council.''.

SEC. 303. MODEL YEARS FOR RECREATIONAL VESSELS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 4302 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(e)(1) If in prescribing regulations under this section the Secretary establishes a model year for recreational vessels and associated equipment, such model year shall, except as provided in paragraph (2)—

''(A) begin on June 1 of a year and end on July 31 of the following year; and

''(B) be designated by the year in which it ends.

''(2) Upon the request of a recreational vessel manufacturer to which this chapter applies, the Secretary may alter a model year for a model of recreational vessel of the manufacturer and associated equipment, by no more than 6 months from the model year described in paragraph (1).''.

(b) APPLICATION.—This section shall only apply with respect to recreational vessels and associated equipment constructed or manufactured, respectively, on or after June 1, 2015.

(c) GUIDANCE.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall publish guidance to implement section 4302(d)(2) of title 46, United States Code.

SEC. 304. MERCHANT MARINER CREDENTIAL EXPIRATION HARMONIZATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (c) and not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall establish a process to harmonize the expiration dates of merchant mariner credentials, mariner medical certificates, and radar observer endorsements for individuals applying to the Secretary for a new merchant mariner credential or for renewal of an existing merchant mariner credential.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary shall ensure that the process established under subsection (a)—

(1) does not require an individual to renew a merchant mariner credential earlier than the date on which the individual's current credential expires; and

(2) results in harmonization of expiration dates for merchant mariner credentials, mariner medical certificates, and radar observer endorsements for all individuals by not later than 6 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) EXCEPTION.—The process established under subsection (a) does not apply to individuals—

(1) holding a merchant mariner credential with—

(A) an active Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping endorsement; or

(B) Federal first-class pilot endorsement; or

(2) who have been issued a time-restricted medical certificate.

SEC. 305. SAFETY ZONES FOR PERMITTED MARINE EVENTS.

Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall establish and implement a process to—

(1) account for the number of safety zones established for permitted marine events;

(2) differentiate whether the event sponsor who requested a permit for such an event is—

(A) an individual;

(B) an organization; or

(C) a government entity; and

(3) account for Coast Guard resources utilized to enforce safety zones established for permitted marine events, including for—

(A) the number of Coast Guard or Coast Guard Auxiliary vessels used; and

(B) the number of Coast Guard or Coast Guard Auxiliary patrol hours required.

SEC. 306. TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.

(a) TITLE 46.—Title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in section 103, by striking ''(33 U.S.C. 151).'' and inserting ''(33 U.S.C. 151(b)).'';

(2) in section 2118—

(A) in subsection (a), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''title,'' and inserting ''subtitle,''; and

(B) in subsection (b), by striking ''title'' and inserting ''subtitle'';

(3) in the analysis for chapter 35—

(A) by adding a period at the end of the item relating to section 3507; and

(B) by adding a period at the end of the item relating to section 3508;

(4) in section 3715(a)(2), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(5) in section 4506, by striking ''(a)'';

(6) in section 8103(b)(1)(A)(iii), by striking ''Academy.'' and inserting ''Academy; and'';

(7) in section 11113(c)(1)(A)(i), by striking ''under this Act'';

(8) in the analysis for chapter 701—

(A) by adding a period at the end of the item relating to section 70107A;

(B) in the item relating to section 70112, by striking ''security advisory committees.'' and inserting ''Security Advisory Committees.''; and

(C) in the item relating to section 70122, by striking ''watch program.'' and inserting ''Watch Program.'';

(9) in section 70105(c)—

(A) in paragraph (1)(B)(xv)—

(i) by striking ''18, popularly'' and inserting ''18 (popularly''; and

(ii) by striking ''Act'' and inserting ''Act)''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''(D) paragraph'' and inserting ''(D) of paragraph'';

(10) in section 70107—

(A) in subsection (b)(2), by striking ''5121(j)(8)),'' and inserting ''5196(j)(8)),''; and

(B) in subsection (m)(3)(C)(iii), by striking ''that is'' and inserting ''that the applicant'';

(11) in section 70122, in the section heading, by striking ''**watch program**'' and inserting ''**Watch Program**''; and

(12) in the analysis for chapter 705, by adding a period at the end of the item relating to section 70508.

(b) GENERAL BRIDGE STATUTES.—

(1) ACT OF MARCH 3, 1899.—The Act of March 3, 1899, popularly known as the Rivers and Harbors Appropriations Act of 1899, is amended—

(A) in section 9 (33 U.S.C. 401), by striking ''Secretary of Transportation'' each place it appears and inserting ''Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating''; and

(B) in section 18 (33 U.S.C. 502), by striking ''Secretary of Transportation'' each place it appears and inserting ''Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating''.

(2) ACT OF MARCH 23, 1906.—The Act of March 23, 1906, popularly known as the Bridge Act of 1906, is amended—

(A) in the first section (33 U.S.C. 491), by striking ''Secretary of Transportation'' and inserting ''Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating'';

(B) in section 4 (33 U.S.C. 494), by striking ''Secretary of Homeland Security'' each place it appears and inserting ''Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating''; and

(C) in section 5 (33 U.S.C. 495), by striking ''Secretary of Transportation'' each place it appears and inserting ''Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating''.

(3) ACT OF AUGUST 18, 1894.—Section 5 of the Act entitled ''An Act making appropriations for the construction, repair, and preservation of certain public works on rivers and harbors, and for other purposes'', approved August 18, 1894 (33 U.S.C. 499), is amended by striking ''Secretary of Transportation'' each place it appears and inserting ''Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating''.

(4) ACT OF JUNE 21, 1940.—The Act of June 21, 1940, popularly known as the Truman-Hobbs Act, is amended—

(A) in section 1 (33 U.S.C. 511), by striking ''Secretary of Transportation'' and inserting ''Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating'';

(B) in section 4 (33 U.S.C. 514), by striking ''Secretary of Transportation'' and inserting ''Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating'';

(C) in section 7 (33 U.S.C. 517), by striking ''Secretary of Transportation'' each place it appears and inserting ''Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating''; and

(D) in section 13 (33 U.S.C. 523), by striking ''Secretary of Transportation'' and inserting ''Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating''.

(5) GENERAL BRIDGE ACT OF 1946.—The General Bridge Act of 1946 is amended—

(A) in section 502(b) (33 U.S.C. 525(b)), by striking ''Secretary of Transportation'' and inserting ''Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating''; and

(B) in section 510 (33 U.S.C. 533), by striking ''Secretary of Transportation'' each place it appears and inserting ''Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating''.

(6) INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE ACT OF 1972.—The International Bridge Act of 1972 is amended—

(A) in section 5 (33 U.S.C. 535c), by striking ''Secretary of Transportation'' and inserting ''Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating'';

(B) in section 8 (33 U.S.C. 535e), by striking ''Secretary of Transportation'' each place it appears and inserting ''Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating''; and

(C) by striking section 11 (33 U.S.C. 535h).

SEC. 307. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS OF MARINE CASUALTY REPORTING.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall notify the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate of the actions the Commandant will take to implement recommendations on improvements to the Coast Guard's marine casualty reporting requirements and procedures included in—

(1) the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General report entitled ''Marine Accident Reporting, Investigations, and Enforcement in the United States Coast Guard'', released on May 23, 2013; and

(2) the Towing Safety Advisory Committee report entitled ''Recommendations for Improvement of Marine Casualty Reporting'', released on March 26, 2015.

SEC. 308. RECREATIONAL VESSEL ENGINE WEIGHTS.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall issue regulations amending table 4 to subpart H of part 183 of title 33, Code of Federal Regulations (relating to Weights (Pounds) of Outboard Motor and Related Equipment for Various Boat Horsepower Ratings), as appropriate to reflect ''Standard 30–Outboard Engine and Related Equipment Weights'' published by the American Boat and Yacht Council, as in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 309. MERCHANT MARINER MEDICAL CERTIFICATION REFORM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 75 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 7509. Medical certification by trusted agents

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law and pursuant to regulations prescribed by the Secretary, a trusted agent may issue a medical certificate to an individual who—

''(1) must hold such certificate to qualify for a license, certificate of registry, or merchant mariner's document, or endorsement thereto under this part; and

''(2) is qualified as to sight, hearing, and physical condition to perform the duties of such license, certificate, document, or endorsement, as determined by the trusted agent.

''(b) PROCESS FOR ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATES BY SECRETARY.—A final rule implementing this section shall include a process for—

''(1) the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating to issue medical certificates to mariners who submit applications for such certificates to the Secretary; and

''(2) a trusted agent to defer to the Secretary the issuance of a medical certificate.

''(c) TRUSTED AGENT DEFINED.—In this section the term 'trusted agent' means a medical practitioner certified by the Secretary to perform physical examinations of an individual for purposes of a license, certificate of registry, or merchant mariner's document under this part.''.

(b) DEADLINE.—Not later than 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall issue a final rule implementing section 7509 of title 46, United States Code, as added by this section.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following:

''7509. Medical certification by trusted agents.''.

SEC. 310. ATLANTIC COAST PORT ACCESS ROUTE STUDY.

(a) ATLANTIC COAST PORT ACCESS ROUTE STUDY.—Not later than April 1, 2016, the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall conclude the Atlantic Coast Port Access Route Study and submit the results of such study to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

(b) NANTUCKET SOUND.—Not later than December 1, 2016, the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall complete and submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a port access route study of Nantucket Sound using the standards and methodology of the Atlantic Coast Port Access Route Study, to determine whether the Coast Guard should revise existing regulations to improve navigation safety in Nantucket Sound due to factors such as increased vessel traffic, changing vessel traffic patterns, weather conditions, or navigational difficulty in the vicinity.

SEC. 311. CERTIFICATES OF DOCUMENTATION FOR RECREATIONAL VESSELS.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall issue regulations that—

(1) make certificates of documentation for recreational vessels effective for 5 years; and

(2) require the owner of such a vessel—

(A) to notify the Coast Guard of each change in the information on which the issuance of the certificate of documentation is based, that occurs before the expiration of the certificate; and

(B) apply for a new certificate of documentation for such a vessel if there is any such change.

SEC. 312. PROGRAM GUIDELINES.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall—

(1) develop guidelines to implement the program authorized under section 304(a) of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2006 (Public Law 109–241), including specific actions to ensure the future availability of able and credentialed United States licensed and unlicensed seafarers including—

(A) incentives to encourage partnership agreements with operators of foreign-flag vessels that carry liquified natural gas, that provide no less than one training billet per vessel for United States merchant mariners in order to meet minimum mandatory sea service requirements;

(B) development of appropriate training curricula for use by public and private maritime training institutions to meet all United States merchant mariner license, certification, and document laws and requirements under the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978; and

(C) steps to promote greater outreach and awareness of additional job opportunities for sea service veterans of the United States Armed Forces; and

(2) submit such guidelines to the Committee Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

SEC. 313. REPEALS.

(a) REPEALS, MERCHANT MARINE ACT, 1936.—Sections 601 through 606, 608 through 611, 613 through 616, 802, and 809 of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936 (46 U.S.C. 53101 note) are repealed.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Chapter 575 of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in section 57501, by striking ''titles V and VI'' and inserting ''title V''; and

(2) in section 57531(a), by striking ''titles V and VI'' and inserting ''title V''.

(c) TRANSFER FROM MERCHANT MARINE ACT, 1936.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 801 of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936 (46 U.S.C. 53101 note)—

(A) is redesignated as section 57522 of title 46, United States Code, and transferred to appear after section 57521 of such title; and

(B) as so redesignated and transferred, is amended—

(i) by striking so much as precedes the first sentence and inserting the following:

''§ 57522. Books and records, balance sheets, and inspection and auditing'';

(ii) by striking ''the provision of title VI or VII of this Act'' and inserting ''this chapter''; and

(iii) by striking '': *Provided*, That'' and all that follows through ''Commission''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for chapter 575, of title 46, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 57521 the following:

''57522. Books and records, balance sheets, and inspection and auditing.''.

(d) REPEALS, TITLE 46, U.S.C.—Section 8103 of title 46, United States Code, is amended in subsections (c) and (d) by striking ''or operating'' each place it appears.

SEC. 314. MARITIME DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT.

(a) PROHIBITIONS.—Section 70503(a) of title 46, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(a) PROHIBITIONS.—While on board a covered vessel, an individual may not knowingly or intentionally—

''(1) manufacture or distribute, or possess with intent to manufacture or distribute, a controlled substance;

''(2) destroy (including jettisoning any item or scuttling, burning, or hastily cleaning a vessel), or attempt or conspire to destroy, property that is subject to forfeiture under section 511(a) of the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970 (21 U.S.C. 881(a)); or

''(3) conceal, or attempt or conspire to conceal, more than $100,000 in currency or other monetary instruments on the person of such individual or in any conveyance, article of luggage, merchandise, or other container, or compartment of or aboard the covered vessel if that vessel is outfitted for smuggling.''.

(b) COVERED VESSEL DEFINED.—Section 70503 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(e) COVERED VESSEL DEFINED.—In this section the term 'covered vessel' means—

''(1) a vessel of the United States or a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States; or

''(2) any other vessel if the individual is a citizen of the United States or a resident alien of the United States.''.

(c) PENALTIES.—Section 70506 of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''A person violating section 70503'' and inserting ''A person violating paragraph (1) of section 70503(a)''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(d) PENALTY.—A person violating paragraph (2) or (3) of section 70503(a) shall be fined in accordance with section 3571 of title 18, imprisoned not more than 15 years, or both.''.

(d) SEIZURE AND FORFEITURE.—Section 70507(a) of title 46, United States Code, is amended by striking ''section 70503'' and inserting ''section 70503 or 70508''.

(e) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—

(1) The heading of section 70503 of title 46, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 70503. Prohibited acts''.

(2) The analysis for chapter 705 of title 46, United States Code, is further amended by striking the item relating to section 70503 and inserting the following:

''70503. Prohibited acts.''.

SEC. 315. EXAMINATIONS FOR MERCHANT MARINER CREDENTIALS.

(a) DISCLOSURE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 75 of title 46, United States Code, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 7510. Examinations for merchant mariner credentials

''(a) DISCLOSURE NOT REQUIRED.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary is not required to disclose to the public—

''(1) a question from any examination for a merchant mariner credential;

''(2) the answer to such a question, including any correct or incorrect answer that may be presented with such question; and

''(3) any quality or characteristic of such a question, including—

''(A) the manner in which such question has been, is, or may be selected for an examination;

''(B) the frequency of such selection; and

''(C) the frequency that an examinee correctly or incorrectly answered such question.

''(b) EXCEPTION FOR CERTAIN QUESTIONS.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), the Secretary may, for the purpose of preparation by the general public for examinations required for merchant mariner credentials, release an examination question and answer that the Secretary has retired or is not presently on or part of an examination, or that the Secretary determines is appropriate for release.

''(c) EXAM REVIEW.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015, and once every two years thereafter, the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall commission a working group to review new questions for inclusion in examinations required for merchant mariner credentials, composed of—

''(A) 1 subject matter expert from the Coast Guard;

''(B) representatives from training facilities and the maritime industry, of whom—

''(i) one-half shall be representatives from approved training facilities; and

''(ii) one-half shall be representatives from the appropriate maritime industry;

''(C) at least 1 representative from the Merchant Marine Personnel Advisory Committee;

''(D) at least 2 representatives from the State maritime academies, of whom one shall be a representative from the deck training track and one shall be a representative of the engine license track;

''(E) representatives from other Coast Guard Federal advisory committees, as appropriate, for the industry segment associated with the subject examinations;

''(F) at least 1 subject matter expert from the Maritime Administration; and

''(G) at least 1 human performance technology representative.

''(2) INCLUSION OF PERSONS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT EXAMINATION TYPE.—The working group shall include representatives knowledgeable about the examination type under review.

''(3) LIMITATION.—The requirement to convene a working group under paragraph (1) does not apply unless there are new examination questions to review.

''(4) BASELINE REVIEW.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Within 1 year after the date of the enactment of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015, the Secretary shall convene the working group to complete a baseline review of the Coast Guard's Merchant Mariner Credentialing Examination, including review of—

''(i) the accuracy of examination questions;

''(ii) the accuracy and availability of examination references;

''(iii) the length of merchant mariner examinations; and

''(iv) the use of standard technologies in administering, scoring, and analyzing the examinations.

''(B) PROGRESS REPORT.—The Coast Guard shall provide a progress report to the appropriate congressional committees on the review under this paragraph.

''(5) FULL MEMBERSHIP NOT REQUIRED.—The Coast Guard may convene the working group without all members present if any non-Coast-Guard representative is present.

''(6) NONDISCLOSURE AGREEMENT.—The Secretary shall require all members of the working group to sign a nondisclosure agreement with the Secretary.

''(7) TREATMENT OF MEMBERS AS FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—A member of the working group who is not a Federal Government employee shall not be considered a Federal employee in the service or the employment of the Federal Government, except that such a member shall be considered a special government employee, as defined in section 202(a) of title 18 for purposes of sections 203, 205, 207, 208, and 209 of such title and shall be subject to any administrative standards of conduct applicable to an employee of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating.

''(8) FORMAL EXAM REVIEW.—The Secretary shall ensure that the Coast Guard Performance Technology Center—

''(A) prioritizes the review of examinations required for merchant mariner credentials; and

''(B) not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015, completes a formal review, including an appropriate analysis, of the topics and testing methodology employed by the National Maritime Center for merchant seamen licensing.

''(9) FACA.—The Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to any working group created under this section to review the Coast Guard's merchant mariner credentialing examinations.

''(d) MERCHANT MARINER CREDENTIAL DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'merchant mariner credential' means a merchant seaman license, certificate, or document that the Secretary is authorized to issue pursuant to this title.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for such chapter is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''7510. Examinations for merchant mariner credentials.''.

(b) EXAMINATIONS FOR MERCHANT MARINER CREDENTIALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 71 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 7116. Examinations for merchant mariner credentials

''(a) REQUIREMENT FOR SAMPLE EXAMS.—The Secretary shall develop a sample merchant mariner credential examination and outline of merchant mariner examination topics on an annual basis.

''(b) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—Each sample examination and outline of topics developed under subsection (a) shall be readily available to the public.

''(c) MERCHANT MARINER CREDENTIAL DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'merchant mariner credential' has the meaning that term has in section 7510.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following:

''7116. Examinations for merchant mariner credentials.''.

(c) DISCLOSURE TO CONGRESS.—Nothing in this section may be construed to authorize the withholding of information from an appropriate inspector general, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, or the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 316. HIGHER VOLUME PORT AREA REGULATORY DEFINITION CHANGE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 710 of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–281; 124 Stat. 2986) is amended to read as follows:

''(a) HIGHER VOLUME PORTS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the requirements of subparts D, F, and G of part 155 of title 33, Code of Federal Regulations, that apply to the higher volume port area for the Strait of Juan de Fuca at Port Angeles, Washington (including any water area within 50 nautical miles seaward), to and including Puget Sound, shall apply, in the same manner, and to the same extent, to the Strait of Juan de Fuca at Cape Flattery, Washington (including any water area within 50 nautical miles seaward), to and including Puget Sound.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Subsection (b) of such section is amended by striking ''the modification of the higher volume port area definition required by subsection (a).'' and inserting ''higher volume port requirements made applicable under subsection (a).''.

SEC. 317. RECOGNITION OF PORT SECURITY ASSESSMENTS CONDUCTED BY OTHER ENTITIES.

Section 70108 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(f) RECOGNITION OF ASSESSMENT CONDUCTED BY OTHER ENTITIES.—

''(1) CERTIFICATION AND TREATMENT OF ASSESSMENTS.—For the purposes of this section and section 70109, the Secretary may treat an assessment that a foreign government (including, for the purposes of this subsection, an entity of or operating under the auspices of the European Union) or international organization has conducted as an assessment that the Secretary has conducted for the purposes of subsection (a), provided that the Secretary certifies that the foreign government or international organization has—

''(A) conducted the assessment in accordance with subsection (b); and

''(B) provided the Secretary with sufficient information pertaining to its assessment (including, but not limited to, information on the outcome of the assessment).

''(2) AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT.—For the purposes of this section and section 70109, the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of State, may enter into an agreement with a foreign government (including, for the purposes of this subsection, an entity of or operating under the auspices of the European Union) or international organization, under which parties to the agreement—

''(A) conduct an assessment, required under subsection (a);

''(B) share information pertaining to such assessment (including, but not limited to, information on the outcome of the assessment); or

''(C) both.

''(3) LIMITATIONS.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to—

''(A) require the Secretary to recognize an assessment that a foreign government or an international organization has conducted; or

''(B) limit the discretion or ability of the Secretary to conduct an assessment under this section.

''(4) NOTIFICATION TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 30 days before entering into an agreement or arrangement with a foreign government under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall notify the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate of the proposed terms of such agreement or arrangement.''.

SEC. 318. FISHING VESSEL AND FISH TENDER VESSEL CERTIFICATION.

(a) ALTERNATIVE SAFETY COMPLIANCE PROGRAMS.—Section 4503 of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''this section'' and inserting ''this subsection'';

(2) in subsection (b), by striking ''This section'' and inserting ''Except as provided in subsection (d), subsection (a)'';

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) by striking ''This section'' and inserting ''(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), subsection (a)''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) Subsection (a) does not apply to a fishing vessel or fish tender vessel to which section 4502(b) of this title applies, if the vessel—

''(A) is at least 50 feet overall in length, and not more than 79 feet overall in length; and

''(B)(i) is built after January 1, 2016, and complies with the alternative safety compliance program established under subsection (e); or

''(ii) is built after the date of the enactment of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015 and before the establishment of the alternative safety compliance program required under subsection (e), and complies with the requirements described in subsection (f).''; and

(4) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (g), and inserting after subsection (d) the following:

''(e)(1) Not later than 5 years after the date of the enactment of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015, the Secretary shall establish an alternative safety compliance program for fishing vessels or fish tender vessels (or both) that are described in subparagraphs (A) and (B)(i) of subsection (c)(2).

''(2) The alternative safety compliance program established under paragraph (1) shall include requirements for—

''(A) vessel construction;

''(B) a vessel stability test;

''(C) vessel stability and loading instructions;

''(D) an assigned vessel loading mark;

''(E) a vessel condition survey at least biennially;

''(F) an out-of-water vessel survey at least once every 5 years;

''(G) maintenance of records to demonstrate compliance with the program, and the availability of such records for inspection; and

''(H) such other aspects of vessel safety as the Secretary considers appropriate.

''(f) The requirements referred to in subsection (c)(2)(B)(ii) are the following:

''(1) The vessel is designed by an individual licensed by a State as a naval architect or marine engineer, and the design incorporates standards equivalent to those prescribed by a classification society to which the Secretary has delegated authority under section 3316 or another qualified organization approved by the Secretary for purposes of this paragraph.

''(2) Construction of the vessel is overseen and certified as being in accordance with its design by a marine surveyor of an organization accepted by the Secretary.

''(3) The vessel—

''(A) completes a stability test performed by a qualified individual;

''(B) has written stability and loading instructions from a qualified individual that are provided to the owner or operator; and

''(C) has an assigned loading mark.

''(4) The vessel is not substantially modified or changed without the review and approval of an individual licensed by a State as a naval architect or marine engineer before the beginning of such substantial modification or change.

''(5) The vessel undergoes a condition survey at least biennially to the satisfaction of a marine surveyor of an organization accepted by the Secretary.

''(6) The vessel undergoes an out-of-water survey at least once every 5 years to the satisfaction of a certified marine surveyor of an organization accepted by the Secretary.

''(7) Once every 5 years and at the time of a modification or substantial change to such vessel, compliance of the vessel with the requirements of paragraph (3) is reviewed and updated as necessary.

''(8) For the life of the vessel, the owner of the vessel maintains records to demonstrate compliance with this subsection and makes such records readily available for inspection by an official authorized to enforce this chapter.''.

(b) GAO REPORT ON COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSEL SAFETY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 12 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on commercial fishing vessel safety. The report shall include—

(A) national and regional trends that can be identified with respect to rates of marine causalities, human injuries, and deaths aboard or involving fishing vessels greater than 79 feet in length that operate beyond the 3-nautical-mile demarcation line;

(B) a comparison of United States regulations for classification of fishing vessels to those established by other countries, including the vessel length at which such regulations apply;

(C) the additional costs imposed on vessel owners as a result of the requirement in section 4503(a) of title 46, United States Code, and how the those costs vary in relation to vessel size and from region to region;

(D) savings that result from the application of the requirement in section 4503(a) of title 46, United States Code, including reductions in insurance rates or reduction in the number of fishing vessels or fish tender vessels lost to major safety casualties, nationally and regionally;

(E) a national and regional comparison of the additional costs and safety benefits associated with fishing vessels or fish tender vessels that are built and maintained to class through a classification society to the additional costs and safety benefits associated with fishing vessels or fish tender vessels that are built to standards equivalent to classification society construction standards and maintained to standards equivalent to classification society standards with verification by independent surveyors; and

(F) the impact on the cost of production and availability of qualified shipyards, nationally and regionally, resulting from the application of the requirement in section 4503(a) of title 46, United States Code.

(2) CONSULTATION REQUIREMENT.—In preparing the report under paragraph (1), the Comptroller General shall—

(A) consult with owners and operators of fishing vessels or fish tender vessels, classification societies, shipyards, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the National Transportation Safety Board, the Coast Guard, academics, and marine safety nongovernmental organizations; and

(B) obtain relevant data from the Coast Guard including data collected from enforcement actions, boardings, investigations of marine casualties, and serious marine incidents.

(3) TREATMENT OF DATA.—In preparing the report under paragraph (1), the Comptroller General shall—

(A) disaggregate data regionally for each of the regions managed by the regional fishery management councils established under section 302 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1852), the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission; and

(B) include qualitative data on the types of fishing vessels or fish tender vessels included in the report.

SEC. 319. INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON OIL POLLUTION RESEARCH.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7001(a)(3) of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (33 U.S.C. 2761(a)(3)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''Minerals Management Service'' and inserting ''Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management,''; and

(2) by inserting ''the United States Arctic Research Commission,'' after ''National Aeronautics and Space Administration,''.

(b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—Section 7001 of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (33 U.S.C. 2761) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(2), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''Department of Transportation'' and inserting ''department in which the Coast Guard is operating''; and

(2) in subsection (c)(8)(A), by striking ''(1989)'' and inserting ''(2010)''.

SEC. 320. INTERNATIONAL PORT AND FACILITY INSPECTION COORDINATION.

Section 825(a) of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 (6 U.S.C. 945 note; Public Law 111–281) is amended in the matter preceding paragraph (1)—

(1) by striking ''the department in which the Coast Guard is operating'' and inserting ''Homeland Security''; and

(2) by striking ''they are integrated and conducted by the Coast Guard'' and inserting ''the assessments are coordinated between

the Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection''.

TITLE IV—FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSION

SEC. 401. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 3 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 308. Authorization of appropriations

''There is authorized to be appropriated to the Federal Maritime Commission $24,700,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 and 2017 for the activities of the Commission authorized under this chapter and subtitle IV.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for chapter 3 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''308. Authorization of appropriations.''.

SEC. 402. DUTIES OF THE CHAIRMAN.

Section 301(c)(3)(A) of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in clause (ii) by striking ''units, but only after consultation with the other Commissioners;'' and inserting ''units (with such appointments subject to the approval of the Commission);'';

(2) in clause (iv) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(3) in clause (v) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(vi) prepare and submit to the President and the Congress requests for appropriations for the Commission (with such requests subject to the approval of the Commission).''.

SEC. 403. PROHIBITION ON AWARDS.

Section 307 of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''The Federal Maritime Commission'' and inserting the following:

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Federal Maritime Commission''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) PROHIBITION.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), the Federal Maritime Commission may not expend any funds appropriated or otherwise made available to it to a non-Federal entity to issue an award, prize, commendation, or other honor that is not related to the purposes set forth in section 40101.''.

TITLE V—CONVEYANCES

Subtitle A—Miscellaneous Conveyances

SEC. 501. CONVEYANCE OF COAST GUARD PROPERTY IN POINT REYES STATION, CALIFORNIA.

(a) CONVEYANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commandant of the Coast Guard shall convey to the County of Marin, California, all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the covered property—

(A) for fair market value, as provided in paragraph (2);

(B) subject to the conditions required by this section; and

(C) subject to any other term or condition that the Commandant considers appropriate and reasonable to protect the interests of the United States.

(2) FAIR MARKET VALUE.—The fair market value of the covered property shall be—

(A) determined by a real estate appraiser who has been selected by the County and is licensed to practice in California; and

(B) approved by the Commandant.

(3) PROCEEDS.—The Commandant shall deposit the proceeds from a conveyance under paragraph (1) in the Coast Guard Housing Fund established by section 687 of title 14, United States Code.

(b) CONDITION OF CONVEYANCE.—As a condition of any conveyance of the covered property under this section, the Commandant shall require that all right, title, and interest in and to the covered property shall revert to the United States if the covered property or any part thereof ceases to be used for affordable housing, as defined by the County and the Commandant at the time of conveyance, or to provide a public benefit approved by the County.

(c) SURVEY.—The exact acreage and legal description of the covered property shall be determined by a survey satisfactory to the Commandant.

(d) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section may be construed to affect or limit the application of or obligation to comply with any environmental law, including section 120(h) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9620(h)).

(e) COVERED PROPERTY DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''covered property'' means the approximately 32 acres of real property (including all improvements located on the property) that are—

(1) located in Point Reyes Station in the County of Marin, California;

(2) under the administrative control of the Coast Guard; and

(3) described as ''Parcel A, Tract 1'', ''Parcel B, Tract 2'', ''Parcel C'', and ''Parcel D'' in the Declaration of Taking (Civil No. C 71–1245 SC) filed June 28, 1971, in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California.

(f) EXPIRATION.—The authority to convey the covered property under this section shall expire on the date that is four years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 502. CONVEYANCE OF COAST GUARD PROPERTY IN TOK, ALASKA.

(a) CONVEYANCE AUTHORIZED.—The Commandant of the Coast Guard may convey to the Tanana Chiefs' Conference all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the covered property, upon payment to the United States of the fair market value of the covered property.

(b) SURVEY.—The exact acreage and legal description of the covered property shall be determined by a survey satisfactory to the Commandant.

(c) FAIR MARKET VALUE.—The fair market value of the covered property shall be—

(1) determined by appraisal; and

(2) subject to the approval of the Commandant.

(d) COSTS OF CONVEYANCE.—The responsibility for all reasonable and necessary costs, including real estate transaction and environmental documentation costs, associated with a conveyance under this section shall be determined by the Commandant and the purchaser.

(e) ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The Commandant may require such additional terms and conditions in connection with a conveyance under this section as the Commandant considers appropriate and reasonable to protect the interests of the United States.

(f) DEPOSIT OF PROCEEDS.—Any proceeds received by the United States from a conveyance under this section shall be deposited in the Coast Guard Housing Fund established under section 687 of title 14, United States Code.

(g) COVERED PROPERTY DEFINED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In this section, the term ''covered property'' means the approximately 3.25 acres of real property (including all improvements located on the property) that are—

(A) located in Tok, Alaska;

(B) under the administrative control of the Coast Guard; and

(C) described in paragraph (2).

(2) DESCRIPTION.—The property described in this paragraph is the following:

(A) Lots 11, 12 and 13, block ''G'', Second Addition to Hartsell Subdivision, Section 20, Township 18 North, Range 13 East, Copper River Meridian, Alaska as appears by Plat No. 72–39 filed in the Office of the Recorder for the Fairbanks Recording District of Alaska, bearing seal dated 25 September 1972, all containing approximately 1.25 acres and commonly known as 2–PLEX – Jackie Circle, Units A and B.

(B) Beginning at a point being the SE corner of the SE ¼ of the SE ¼ Section 24, Township 18 North, Range 12 East, Copper River Meridian, Alaska; thence running westerly along the south line of said SE ¼ of the NE ¼ 260 feet; thence northerly parallel to the east line of said SE ¼ of the NE ¼ 335 feet; thence easterly parallel to the south line 260 feet; then south 335 feet along the east boundary of Section 24 to the point of beginning; all containing approximately 2.0 acres and commonly known as 4–PLEX – West ''C'' and Willow, Units A, B, C and D.

(h) EXPIRATION.—The authority to convey the covered property under this section shall expire on the date that is 4 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

Subtitle B—Pribilof Islands

SEC. 521. SHORT TITLE.

This subtitle may be cited as the ''Pribilof Island Transition Completion Act of 2015''.

SEC. 522. TRANSFER AND DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY.

(a) TRANSFER.—To further accomplish the settlement of land claims under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.), the Secretary of Commerce shall, subject to paragraph (2), and notwithstanding section 105(a) of the Pribilof Islands Transition Act (16 U.S.C. 1161 note; Public Law 106–562), convey all right, title, and interest in the following property to the Alaska native village corporation for St. Paul Island:

(1) Lots 4, 5, and 6A, Block 18, Tract A, U.S. Survey 4943, Alaska, the plat of which was Officially Filed on January 20, 2004, aggregating 13,006 square feet (0.30 acres).

(2) On the termination of the license described in subsection (b)(3), T. 35 S., R. 131 W., Seward Meridian, Alaska, Tract 43, the plat of which was Officially Filed on May 14, 1986, containing 84.88 acres.

(b) FEDERAL USE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating may operate, maintain, keep, locate, inspect, repair, and replace any Federal aid to navigation located on the property described in subsection (a) as long as the aid is needed for navigational purposes.

(2) ADMINISTRATION.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary may enter the property, at any time for as long as the aid is needed for navigational purposes, without notice to the extent that it is not practicable to provide advance notice.

(3) LICENSE.—The Secretary of the Department in which the Coast Guard is operating may maintain a license in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act with respect to the real property and improvements under subsection (a) until the termination of the license.

(4) REPORTS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act and not less than once every 2 years thereafter, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on—

(A) efforts taken to remediate contaminated soils on tract 43 described in subsection (a)(2);

(B) a schedule for the completion of contaminated soil remediation on tract 43; and

(C) any use of tract 43 to carry out Coast Guard navigation activities.

(c) AGREEMENT ON TRANSFER OF OTHER PROPERTY ON ST. PAUL ISLAND.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In addition to the property transferred under subsection (a), not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Commerce and the presiding officer of the Alaska native village corporation for St. Paul Island shall enter into an agreement to exchange of property on Tracts 50 and 38 on St. Paul Island and to finalize the recording of deeds, to reflect the boundaries and ownership of Tracts 50 and 38 as depicted on a survey of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to be filed with the Office of the Recorder for the Department of Natural Resources for the State of Alaska.

(2) EASEMENTS.—The survey described in subsection (a) shall include respective easements granted to the Secretary and the Alaska native village corporation for the purpose of utilities, drainage, road access, and salt lagoon conservation.

SEC. 523. NOTICE OF CERTIFICATION.

Section 105 of the Pribilof Islands Transition Act (16 U.S.C. 1161 note; Public Law 106–562) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking ''The Secretary'' and inserting ''Notwithstanding paragraph (2) and effective beginning on the date the Secretary publishes the notice of certification required by subsection (b)(5), the Secretary'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)(A), by striking ''section 205 of the Fur Seal Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 1165)'' and inserting ''section 205(a) of the Fur Seal Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 1165(a))''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(5) NOTICE OF CERTIFICATION.—The Secretary shall promptly publish and submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate notice that the certification described in paragraph (2) has been made.'';

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''makes the certification described in subsection (b)(2)'' and inserting ''publishes the notice of certification required by subsection (b)(5)''; and

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking ''Section 205'' and inserting ''Subsections (a), (b), (c), and (d) of section 205'';

(4) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (g); and

(5) by inserting after subsection (d) the following:

''(e) NOTIFICATIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the Secretary makes a determination under subsection (f) that land on St. Paul Island, Alaska, not specified for transfer in the document entitled 'Transfer of Property on the Pribilof Islands: Descriptions, Terms and Conditions' or section 522 of the Pribilof Island Transition Completion Act of 2015 is in excess of the needs of the Secretary and the Federal Government, the Secretary shall notify the Alaska native village corporation for St. Paul Island of the determination.

''(2) ELECTION TO RECEIVE.—Not later than 60 days after the date receipt of the notification of the Secretary under subsection (a), the Alaska native village corporation for St. Paul Island shall notify the Secretary in writing whether the Alaska native village corporation elects to receive all right, title, and interest in the land or a portion of the land.

''(3) TRANSFER.—If the Alaska native village corporation provides notice under paragraph (2) that the Alaska native village corporation elects to receive all right, title and interest in the land or a portion of the land, the Secretary shall transfer all right, title, and interest in the land or portion to the Alaska native village corporation at no cost.

''(4) OTHER DISPOSITION.—If the Alaska native village corporation does not provide notice under paragraph (2) that the Alaska native village corporation elects to receive all right, title, and interest in the land or a portion of the land, the Secretary may dispose of the land in accordance with other applicable law.

''(f) DETERMINATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this subsection and not less than once every 5 years thereafter, the Secretary shall determine whether property located on St. Paul Island and not transferred to the Natives of the Pribilof Islands is in excess of the smallest practicable tract enclosing land—

''(A) needed by the Secretary for the purposes of carrying out the Fur Seal Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 1151 et seq.);

''(B) in the case of land withdrawn by the Secretary on behalf of other Federal agencies, needed for carrying out the missions of those agencies for which land was withdrawn; or

''(C) actually used by the Federal Government in connection with the administration of any Federal installation on St. Paul Island.

''(2) REPORT OF DETERMINATION.—When a determination is made under subsection (a), the Secretary shall report the determination to—

''(A) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives;

''(B) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate; and

''(C) the Alaska native village corporation for St. Paul Island.''.

SEC. 524. REDUNDANT CAPABILITY.

(a) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Except as provided in subsection (b), section 681 of title 14, United States Code, as amended by this Act, shall not be construed to prohibit any transfer or conveyance of lands under this subtitle or any actions that involve the dismantling or disposal of infrastructure that supported the former LORAN system that are associated with the transfer or conveyance of lands under section 522.

(b) REDUNDANT CAPABILITY.—If, within the 5-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating determines that a facility on Tract 43, if transferred under this subtitle, is subsequently required to provide a positioning, navigation, and timing system to provide redundant capability in the event GPS signals are disrupted, the Secretary may—

(1) operate, maintain, keep, locate, inspect, repair, and replace such facility; and

(2) in carrying out the activities described in paragraph (1), enter, at any time, the facility without notice to the extent that it is not possible to provide advance notice, for as long as such facility is needed to provide such capability.

Subtitle C—Conveyance of Coast Guard Property at Point Spencer, Alaska

SEC. 531. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds as follows:

(1) Major shipping traffic is increasing through the Bering Strait, the Bering and Chukchi Seas, and the Arctic Ocean, and will continue to increase whether or not development of the Outer Continental Shelf of the United States is undertaken in the future, and will increase further if such Outer Continental Shelf development is undertaken.

(2) There is a compelling national, State, Alaska Native, and private sector need for permanent infrastructure development and for a presence in the Arctic region of Alaska by appropriate agencies of the Federal Government, particularly in proximity to the Bering Strait, to support and facilitate search and rescue, shipping safety, economic development, oil spill prevention and response, protection of Alaska Native archaeological and cultural resources, port of refuge, arctic research, and maritime law enforcement on the Bering Sea, the Chukchi Sea, and the Arctic Ocean.

(3) The United States owns a parcel of land, known as Point Spencer, located between the Bering Strait and Port Clarence and adjacent to some of the best potential deepwater port sites on the coast of Alaska in the Arctic.

(4) Prudent and effective use of Point Spencer may be best achieved through marshaling the energy, resources, and leadership of the public and private sectors.

(5) It is in the national interest to develop infrastructure at Point Spencer that would aid the Coast Guard in performing its statutory duties and functions in the Arctic on a more permanent basis and to allow for public and private sector development of facilities and other infrastructure to support purposes that are of benefit to the United States.

SEC. 532. DEFINITIONS.

In this subtitle:

(1) ARCTIC.—The term ''Arctic'' has the meaning given that term in section 112 of the Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984 (15 U.S.C. 4111).

(2) BSNC.—The term ''BSNC'' means the Bering Straits Native Corporation authorized under section 7 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1606).

(3) COUNCIL.—The term ''Council'' means the Port Coordination Council established under section 541.

(4) PLAN.—The term ''Plan'' means the Port Management Coordination Plan developed under section 541.

(5) POINT SPENCER.—The term ''Point Spencer'' means the land known as ''Point Spencer'' located in Townships 2, 3, and 4 South, Range 40 West, Kateel River Meridian, Alaska, between the Bering Strait and Port Clarence and withdrawn by Public Land Order 2650 (published in the Federal Register on April 12, 1962).

(6) SECRETARY.—Except as otherwise specifically provided, the term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating.

(7) STATE.—The term ''State'' means the State of Alaska.

(8) TRACT.—The term ''Tract'' or ''Tracts'' means any of Tract 1, Tract 2, Tract 3, Tract 4, Tract 5, or Tract 6, as appropriate, or any portion of such Tract or Tracts.

(9) TRACTS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, AND 6.—The terms ''Tract 1'', ''Tract 2'', ''Tract 3'', ''Tract 4'', ''Tract 5'', and ''Tract 6'' each mean the land generally depicted as Tract 1, Tract 2, Tract 3, Tract 4, Tract 5, or Tract 6, respectively, on the map entitled the ''Point Spencer Land Retention and Conveyance Map'', dated January 2015, and on file with the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of the Interior.

SEC. 533. AUTHORITY TO CONVEY LAND IN POINT SPENCER.

(a) AUTHORITY TO CONVEY TRACTS 1, 3, AND 4.—Within 1 year after the Secretary notifies the Secretary of the Interior that the Coast Guard no longer needs to retain jurisdiction of Tract 1, Tract 3, or Tract 4 and subject to section 534, the Secretary of the Interior shall convey to BSNC or the State, subject to valid existing rights, all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the surface and subsurface estates of that Tract in accordance with subsection (d).

(b) AUTHORITY TO CONVEY TRACTS 2 AND 5.—Within 1 year after the date of the enactment of this section and subject to section 534, the Secretary of the Interior shall convey, subject to valid existing rights, all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the surface and subsurface estates of Tract 2 and Tract 5 in accordance with subsection (d).

(c) AUTHORITY TO TRANSFER TRACT 6.—Within one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and subject to sections 534 and 535, the Secretary of the Interior shall convey, subject to valid existing rights, all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the surface and subsurface estates of Tract 6 in accordance with subsection (e).

(d) ORDER OF OFFER TO CONVEY TRACT 1, 2, 3, 4, OR 5.—

(1) DETERMINATION AND OFFER.—

(A) TRACT 1, 3, OR 4.—If the Secretary makes the determination under subsection (a) and subject to section 534, the Secretary of the Interior shall offer Tract 1, Tract 3, or Tract 4 for conveyance to BSNC under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.).

(B) TRACT 2 AND 5.—Subject to section 534, the Secretary of the Interior shall offer Tract 2 and Tract 5 to BSNC under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.).

(2) OFFER TO BSNC.—

(A) ACCEPTANCE BY BSNC.—If BSNC chooses to accept an offer of conveyance of a Tract under paragraph (1), the Secretary of the Interior shall consider Tract 6 as within BSNC's entitlement under section 14(h)(8) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1613(h)(8)) and shall convey such Tract to BSNC.

(B) DECLINE BY BSNC.—If BSNC declines to accept an offer of conveyance of a Tract under paragraph (1), the Secretary of the Interior shall offer such Tract for conveyance to the State under the Act of July 7, 1958 (commonly known as the ''Alaska Statehood Act'') (48 U.S.C. note prec. 21; Public Law 85–508).

(3) OFFER TO STATE.—

(A) ACCEPTANCE BY STATE.—If the State chooses to accept an offer of conveyance of a Tract under paragraph (2)(B), the Secretary of the Interior shall consider such Tract as within the State's entitlement under the Act of July 7, 1958 (commonly known as the ''Alaska Statehood Act'') (48 U.S.C. note prec. 21; Public Law 85–508) and shall convey such Tract to the State.

(B) DECLINE BY STATE.—If the State declines to accept an offer of conveyance of a Tract offered under paragraph (2)(B), such Tract shall be disposed of pursuant to applicable public land laws.

(e) ORDER OF OFFER TO CONVEY TRACT 6.—

(1) OFFER.—Subject to section 534, the Secretary of the Interior shall offer Tract 6 for conveyance to the State.

(2) OFFER TO STATE.—

(A) ACCEPTANCE BY STATE.—If the State chooses to accept an offer of conveyance of Tract 6 under paragraph (1), the Secretary of the Interior shall consider Tract 6 as within the State's entitlement under the Act of July 7, 1958 (commonly known as the ''Alaska Statehood Act'') (48 U.S.C. note prec. 21; Public Law 85–508) and shall convey Tract 6 to the State.

(B) DECLINE BY STATE.—If the State declines to accept an offer of conveyance of Tract 6 under paragraph (1), the Secretary of the Interior shall offer Tract 6 for conveyance to BSNC under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.).

(3) OFFER TO BSNC.—

(A) ACCEPTANCE BY BSNC.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause (ii), if BSNC chooses to accept an offer of conveyance of Tract 6 under paragraph (2)(B), the Secretary of the Interior shall consider Tract 6 as within BSNC's entitlement under section 14(h)(8) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1613(h)(8)) and shall convey Tract 6 to BSNC.

(ii) LEASE BY THE STATE.—The conveyance of Tract 6 to BSNC shall be subject to BSNC negotiating a lease of Tract 6 to the State at no cost to the State, if the State requests such a lease.

(B) DECLINE BY BSNC.—If BSNC declines to accept an offer of conveyance of Tract 6 under paragraph (2)(B), the Secretary of the Interior shall dispose of Tract 6 pursuant to the applicable public land laws.

SEC. 534. ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE, LIABILITY, AND MONITORING.

(a) ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE.—Nothing in this Act or any amendment made by this Act may be construed to affect or limit the application of or obligation to comply with any applicable environmental law, including section 120(h) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9620(h)).

(b) LIABILITY.—A person to which a conveyance is made under this subtitle shall hold the United States harmless from any liability with respect to activities carried out on or after the date of the conveyance of the real property conveyed. The United States shall remain responsible for any liability with respect to activities carried out before such date on the real property conveyed.

(c) MONITORING OF KNOWN CONTAMINATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To the extent practicable and subject to paragraph (2), any contamination in a Tract to be conveyed to the State or BSNC under this subtitle that—

(A) is identified in writing prior to the conveyance; and

(B) does not pose an immediate or long-term risk to human health or the environment,

may be routinely monitored and managed by the State or BSNC, as applicable, through institutional controls.

(2) INSTITUTIONAL CONTROLS.—Institutional controls may be used if—

(A) the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Governor of the State concur that such controls are protective of human health and the environment; and

(B) such controls are carried out in accordance with Federal and State law.

SEC. 535. EASEMENTS AND ACCESS.

(a) USE BY COAST GUARD.—The Secretary of the Interior shall make each conveyance of any relevant Tract under this subtitle subject to an easement granting the Coast Guard, at no cost to the Coast Guard—

(1) use of all existing and future landing pads, airstrips, runways, and taxiways that are located on such Tract; and

(2) the right to access such landing pads, airstrips, runways, and taxiways.

(b) USE BY STATE.—For any Tract conveyed to BSNC under this subtitle, BSNC shall provide to the State, if requested and pursuant to negotiated terms with the State, an easement granting to the State, at no cost to the State—

(1) use of all existing and future landing pads, airstrips, runways, and taxiways located on such Tract; and

(2) a right to access such landing pads, airstrips, runways, and taxiways.

(c) RIGHT OF ACCESS OR RIGHT OF WAY.—If the State requests a right of access or right of way for a road from the airstrip to the southern tip of Point Spencer, the location of such right of access or right of way shall be determined by the State, in consultation with the Secretary and BSNC, so that such right of access or right of way is compatible with other existing or planned infrastructure development at Point Spencer.

(d) ACCESS EASEMENT ACROSS TRACTS 2, 5, AND 6.—In conveyance documents to the State and BSNC under this subtitle, the Coast Guard shall retain an access easement across Tracts 2, 5, and 6 reasonably necessary to afford the Coast Guard with access to Tracts 1, 3, and 4 for its operations.

(e) ACCESS.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Coast Guard shall provide to the State and BSNC, access to Tracts for planning, design, and engineering related to remediation and use of and construction on those Tracts.

(f) PUBLIC ACCESS EASEMENTS.—No public access easements may be reserved to the United States under section 17(b) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1616(b)) with respect to the land conveyed under this subtitle.

SEC. 536. RELATIONSHIP TO PUBLIC LAND ORDER 2650.

(a) TRACTS NOT CONVEYED.—Any Tract that is not conveyed under this subtitle shall remain withdrawn pursuant to Public Land Order 2650 (published in the Federal Register on April 12, 1962).

(b) TRACTS CONVEYED.—For any Tract conveyed under this subtitle, Public Land Order 2650 shall automatically terminate upon issuance of a conveyance document issued pursuant to this subtitle for such Tract.

SEC. 537. ARCHEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES.

Conveyance of any Tract under this subtitle shall not affect investigations, criminal jurisdiction, and responsibilities regarding theft or vandalism of archeological or cultural resources located in or on such Tract that took place prior to conveyance under this subtitle.

SEC. 538. MAPS AND LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS.

(a) PREPARATION OF MAPS AND LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS.—As soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior in consultation with the Secretary shall prepare maps and legal descriptions of Tract 1, Tract 2, Tract 3, Tract 4, Tract 5, and Tract 6. In doing so, the Secretary of the Interior may use metes and bounds legal descriptions based upon the official survey plats of Point Spencer accepted by the Bureau of Land Management on December 6, 1978, and on information provided by the Secretary.

(b) SURVEY.—Not later than 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall survey Tracts conveyed under this subtitle and patent the Tracts in accordance with the official plats of survey.

(c) LEGAL EFFECT.—The maps and legal descriptions prepared under subsection (a) and the surveys prepared under subsection (b) shall have the same force and effect as if the maps and legal descriptions were included in this Act.

(d) CORRECTIONS.—The Secretary of the Interior may correct any clerical and typographical errors in the maps and legal descriptions prepared under subsection (a) and the surveys prepared under subsection (b).

(e) AVAILABILITY.—Copies of the maps and legal descriptions prepared under subsection (a) and the surveys prepared under subsection (b) shall be available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of—

(1) the Bureau of Land Management; and

(2) the Coast Guard.

SEC. 539. CHARGEABILITY FOR LAND CONVEYED.

(a) CONVEYANCES TO ALASKA.—The Secretary of the Interior shall charge any conveyance of land conveyed to the State of

Alaska pursuant to this subtitle against the State's remaining entitlement under section 6(b) of the Act of July 7, 1958 (commonly known as the ''Alaska Statehood Act''; Public Law 85–508; 72 Stat. 339).

(b) CONVEYANCES TO BSNC.—The Secretary of the Interior shall charge any conveyance of land conveyed to BSNC pursuant to this subtitle, against BSNC's remaining entitlement under section 14(h)(8) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1613(h)(8)).

SEC. 540. REDUNDANT CAPABILITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (b), section 681 of title 14, United States Code, as amended by this Act, shall not be construed to prohibit any transfer or conveyance of lands under this subtitle or any actions that involve the dismantling or disposal of infrastructure that supported the former LORAN system that are associated with the transfer or conveyance of lands under this subtitle.

(b) CONTINUED ACCESS TO AND USE OF FACILITIES.—If the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating determines, within the 5-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, that a facility on any of Tract 1, Tract 3, or Tract 4 that is transferred under this subtitle is subsequently required to provide a positioning, navigation, and timing system to provide redundant capability in the event GPS signals are disrupted, the Secretary may, for as long as such facility is needed to provide redundant capability—

(1) operate, maintain, keep, locate, inspect, repair, and replace such facility; and

(2) in carrying out the activities described in paragraph (1), enter, at any time, the facility without notice to the extent that it is not possible to provide advance notice.

SEC. 541. PORT COORDINATION COUNCIL FOR POINT SPENCER.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a Port Coordination Council for the Port of Point Spencer.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—The Council shall consist of a representative appointed by each of the following:

(1) The State.

(2) BSNC.

(c) DUTIES.—The duties of the Council are as follows:

(1) To develop a Port Management Coordination Plan to help coordinate infrastructure development and operations at the Port of Point Spencer, that includes plans for—

(A) construction;

(B) funding eligibility;

(C) land use planning and development; and

(D) public interest use and access, emergency preparedness, law enforcement, protection of Alaska Native archaeological and cultural resources, and other matters that are necessary for public and private entities to function in proximity together in a remote location.

(2) Update the Plan annually for the first 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act and biennially thereafter.

(3) Facilitate coordination among BSNC, the State, and the Coast Guard, on the development and use of the land and coastline as such development relates to activities at the Port of Point Spencer.

(4) Assess the need, benefits, efficacy, and desirability of establishing in the future a port authority at Point Spencer under State law and act upon that assessment, as appropriate, including taking steps for the potential formation of such a port authority.

(d) PLAN.—In addition to the requirements under subsection (c)(1) to the greatest extent practicable, the Plan developed by the Council shall facilitate and support the statutory missions and duties of the Coast Guard and operations of the Coast Guard in the Arctic.

(e) COSTS.—Operations and management costs for airstrips, runways, and taxiways at Point Spencer shall be determined pursuant to provisions of the Plan, as negotiated by the Council.

TITLE VI—MISCELLANEOUS

SEC. 601. MODIFICATION OF REPORTS.

(a) DISTANT WATER TUNA FLEET.—Section 421(d) of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2006 (46 U.S.C. 8103 note) is amended by striking ''On March 1, 2007, and annually thereafter'' and inserting ''Not later than July 1 of each year''.

(b) ANNUAL UPDATES ON LIMITS TO LIABILITY.—Section 603(c)(3) of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2006 (33 U.S.C. 2704 note) is amended by striking ''on an annual basis.'' and inserting ''not later than January 30 of the year following each year in which occurs an oil discharge from a vessel or nonvessel source that results or is likely to result in removal costs and damages (as those terms are defined in section 1001 of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (33 U.S.C. 2701)) that exceed liability limits established under section 1004 of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (33 U.S.C. 2704).''.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall submit to the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating a report detailing the specifications and capabilities for interoperable communications the Commandant determines are necessary to allow the Coast Guard to successfully carry out its missions that require communications with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and nongovernmental entities.

SEC. 602. SAFE VESSEL OPERATION IN THE GREAT LAKES.

The Howard Coble Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–281) is amended—

(1) in section 610, by—

(A) striking the section enumerator and heading and inserting the following:

''SEC. 610. SAFE VESSEL OPERATION IN THE GREAT LAKES.'';

(B) striking ''existing boundaries and any future expanded boundaries of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve'' and inserting ''boundaries of any national marine sanctuary that preserves shipwrecks or maritime heritage in the Great Lakes''; and

(C) inserting before the period at the end the following: '', unless the designation documents for such sanctuary do not allow taking up or discharging ballast water in such sanctuary''; and

(2) in the table of contents in section 2, by striking the item relating to such section and inserting the following:

''Sec. 610. Safe vessel operation in the Great Lakes.''.

SEC. 603. USE OF VESSEL SALE PROCEEDS.

(a) AUDIT.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct an audit of funds credited in each fiscal year after fiscal year 2004 to the Vessel Operations Revolving Fund that are attributable to the sale of obsolete vessels in the National Defense Reserve Fleet that were scrapped or sold under sections 57102, 57103, and 57104 of title 46, United States Code, including—

(1) a complete accounting of all vessel sale proceeds attributable to the sale of obsolete vessels in the National Defense Reserve Fleet that were scrapped or sold under sections 57102, 57103, and 57104 of title 46, United States Code, in each fiscal year after fiscal year 2004;

(2) the annual apportionment of proceeds accounted for under paragraph (1) among the uses authorized under section 308704 of title 54, United States Code, in each fiscal year after fiscal year 2004, including—

(A) for National Maritime Heritage Grants, including a list of all annual National Maritime Heritage Grant grant and subgrant awards that identifies the respective grant and subgrant recipients and grant and subgrant amounts;

(B) for the preservation and presentation to the public of maritime heritage property of the Maritime Administration;

(C) to the United States Merchant Marine Academy and State maritime academies, including a list of annual awards; and

(D) for the acquisition, repair, reconditioning, or improvement of vessels in the National Defense Reserve Fleet; and

(3) an accounting of proceeds, if any, attributable to the sale of obsolete vessels in the National Defense Reserve Fleet that were scrapped or sold under sections 57102, 57103, and 57104 of title 46, United States Code, in each fiscal year after fiscal year 2004, that were expended for uses not authorized under section 308704 of title 54, United States Code.

(b) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit the audit conducted in subsection (a) to the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Natural Resources, and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

SEC. 604. NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES COST ASSESSMENT.

(a) COST ASSESSMENT.—The Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall seek to enter into an arrangement with the National Academy of Sciences under which the Academy, by no later than 365 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate an assessment of the costs incurred by the Federal Government to carry out polar icebreaking missions. The assessment shall—

(1) describe current and emerging requirements for the Coast Guard's polar icebreaking capabilities, taking into account the rapidly changing ice cover in the Arctic environment, national security considerations, and expanding commercial activities in the Arctic and Antarctic, including marine transportation, energy development, fishing, and tourism;

(2) identify potential design, procurement, leasing, service contracts, crewing, and technology options that could minimize lifecycle costs and optimize efficiency and reliability of Coast Guard polar icebreaker operations in the Arctic and Antarctic; and

(3) examine—

(A) Coast Guard estimates of the procurement and operating costs of a Polar icebreaker capable of carrying out Coast Guard maritime safety, national security, and stewardship responsibilities including—

(i) economies of scale that might be achieved for construction of multiple vessels; and

(ii) costs of renovating existing polar class icebreakers to operate for a period of no less than 10 years.

(B) the incremental cost to augment the design of such an icebreaker for multiuse capabilities for scientific missions;

(C) the potential to offset such incremental cost through cost-sharing agreements with other Federal departments and agencies; and

(D) United States polar icebreaking capability in comparison with that of other Arctic nations, and with nations that conduct research in the Arctic.

(b) INCLUDED COSTS.—For purposes of subsection (a), the assessment shall include costs incurred by the Federal Government for—

(1) the lease or operation and maintenance of the vessel or vessels concerned;

(2) disposal of such vessels at the end of the useful life of the vessels;

(3) retirement and other benefits for Federal employees who operate such vessels; and

(4) interest payments assumed to be incurred for Federal capital expenditures.

(c) ASSUMPTIONS.—For purposes of comparing the costs of such alternatives, the Academy shall assume that—

(1) each vessel under consideration is—

(A) capable of breaking out McMurdo Station and conducting Coast Guard missions in the Antarctic, and in the United States territory in the Arctic (as that term is defined in section 112 of the Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984 (15 U.S.C. 4111)); and

(B) operated for a period of 30 years;

(2) the acquisition of services and the operation of each vessel begins on the same date; and

(3) the periods for conducting Coast Guard missions in the Arctic are of equal lengths.

(d) USE OF INFORMATION.—In formulating cost pursuant to subsection (a), the National Academy of Sciences may utilize information from other Coast Guard reports, assessments, or analyses regarding existing Coast Guard Polar class icebreakers or for the acquisition of a polar icebreaker for the Federal Government.

SEC. 605. PENALTY WAGES.

(a) FOREIGN AND INTERCOASTAL VOYAGES.—Section 10313(g) of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by striking ''all claims in a class action suit by seamen'' and inserting ''each claim by a seaman''; and

(B) by striking ''the seamen'' and inserting ''the seaman''; and

(2) in paragraph (3)—

(A) by striking ''class action''; and

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking '', by a seaman who is a claimant in the suit,'' and inserting ''by the seaman''.

(b) COASTWISE VOYAGES.—Section 10504(c) of such title is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by striking ''all claims in a class action suit by seamen'' and inserting ''each claim by a seaman''; and

(B) by striking ''the seamen'' and inserting ''the seaman''; and

(2) in paragraph (3)—

(A) by striking ''class action''; and

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking '', by a seaman who is a claimant in the suit,'' and inserting ''by the seaman''.

SEC. 606. RECOURSE FOR NONCITIZENS.

Section 30104 of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(a) IN GENERAL.—'' before the first sentence; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) RESTRICTION ON RECOVERY FOR NONRESIDENT ALIENS EMPLOYED ON FOREIGN PASSENGER VESSELS.—A claim for damages or expenses relating to personal injury, illness, or death of a seaman who is a citizen of a foreign nation, arising during or from the engagement of the seaman by or for a passenger vessel duly registered under the laws of a foreign nation, may not be brought under the laws of the United States if—

''(1) such seaman was not a permanent resident alien of the United States at the time the claim arose;

''(2) the injury, illness, or death arose outside the territorial waters of the United States; and

''(3) the seaman or the seaman's personal representative has or had a right to seek compensation for the injury, illness, or death in, or under the laws of—

''(A) the nation in which the vessel was registered at the time the claim arose; or

''(B) the nation in which the seaman maintained citizenship or residency at the time the claim arose.

''(c) COMPENSATION DEFINED.—As used in subsection (b), the term 'compensation' means—

''(1) a statutory workers' compensation remedy that complies with Standard A4.2 of Regulation 4.2 of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006; or

''(2) in the absence of the remedy described in paragraph (1), a legal remedy that complies with Standard A4.2 of Regulation 4.2 of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, that permits recovery for lost wages, pain and suffering, and future medical expenses.''.

SEC. 607. COASTWISE ENDORSEMENTS.

(a) ''ELETTRA III''.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding sections 12112 and 12132, of title 46, United States Code, and subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating may issue a certificate of documentation with a coastwise endorsement for the vessel M/V Elettra III (United States official number 694607).

(2) LIMITATION ON OPERATION.—Coastwise trade authorized under a certificate of documentation issued under paragraph (1) shall be limited to the carriage of passengers and equipment in association with the operation of the vessel in the Puget Sound region to support marine and maritime science education.

(3) TERMINATION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF CERTIFICATE.—A certificate of documentation issued under paragraph (1) shall expire on the earlier of—

(A) the date of the sale of the vessel or the entity that owns the vessel;

(B) the date any repairs or alterations are made to the vessel outside of the United States; or

(C) the date the vessel is no longer operated as a vessel in the Puget Sound region to support the marine and maritime science education.

(b) ''F/V RONDYS''.—Notwithstanding section 12132 of title 46, United States Code, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating may issue a certificate of documentation with a coastwise endorsement for the F/V Rondys (O.N. 291085)

SEC. 608. INTERNATIONAL ICE PATROL.

(a) REQUIREMENT FOR REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report that describes the current operations to perform the International Ice Patrol mission and on alternatives for carrying out that mission, including satellite surveillance technology.

(b) ALTERNATIVES.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include whether an alternative—

(1) provides timely data on ice conditions with the highest possible resolution and accuracy;

(2) is able to operate in all weather conditions or any time of day; and

(3) is more cost effective than the cost of current operations.

SEC. 609. ASSESSMENT OF OIL SPILL RESPONSE AND CLEANUP ACTIVITIES IN THE GREAT LAKES.

(a) ASSESSMENT.—The Commandant of the Coast Guard, in consultation with the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the head of any other agency the Commandant determines appropriate, shall conduct an assessment of the effectiveness of oil spill response activities specific to the Great Lakes. Such assessment shall include—

(1) an evaluation of new research into oil spill impacts in fresh water under a wide range of conditions; and

(2) an evaluation of oil spill prevention and clean up contingency plans, in order to improve understanding of oil spill impacts in the Great Lakes and foster innovative improvements to safety technologies and environmental protection systems.

(b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall submit to the Congress a report on the results of the assessment required by subsection (a).

SEC. 610. REPORT ON STATUS OF TECHNOLOGY DETECTING PASSENGERS WHO HAVE FALLEN OVERBOARD.

Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall submit a report to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives that—

(1) describes the status of technology for immediately detecting passengers who have fallen overboard;

(2) includes a recommendation to cruise lines on the feasibility of implementing technology that immediately detects passengers who have fallen overboard, factoring in cost and the risk of false positives;

(3) includes data collected from cruise lines on the status of the integration of the technology described in paragraph (2) on cruise ships, including—

(A) the number of cruise ships that have the technology to capture images of passengers who have fallen overboard; and

(B) the number of cruise lines that have tested technology that can detect passengers who have fallen overboard; and

(4) includes information on any other available technologies that cruise ships could integrate to assist in facilitating the search and rescue of a passenger who has fallen overboard.

SEC. 611. VENUE.

Section 311(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1861(d)) is amended by striking the second sentence and inserting ''In the case of Hawaii or any possession of the United States in the Pacific Ocean, the appropriate court is the United States District Court for the District of Hawaii, except that in the case of Guam and Wake Island, the appropriate court is the United States District Court for the District of Guam, and in the case of the Northern Mariana Islands, the appropriate court is the United States District Court for the District of the Northern Mariana Islands.''.

SEC. 612. DISPOSITION OF INFRASTRUCTURE RELATED TO E–LORAN.

(a) DISPOSITION OF INFRASTRUCTURE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 17 of title 14, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 681. Disposition of infrastructure related to E–LORAN

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may not carry out activities related to the dismantling or disposal of infrastructure comprising

the LORAN–C system until the date on which the Secretary provides to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate notice of a determination by the Secretary that such infrastructure is not required to provide a positioning, navigation, and timing system to provide redundant capability in the event the Global Positioning System signals are disrupted.

''(b) EXCEPTION.—Subsection (a) does not apply to activities necessary for the safety of human life.

''(c) DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—On any date after the notification is made under subsection (a), the Administrator of General Services, acting on behalf of the Secretary, may, notwithstanding any other provision of law, sell any real and personal property under the administrative control of the Coast Guard and used for the LORAN–C system, subject to such terms and conditions that the Secretary believes to be necessary to protect government interests and program requirements of the Coast Guard.

''(2) AVAILABILITY OF PROCEEDS.—

''(A) AVAILABILITY OF PROCEEDS.—The proceeds of such sales, less the costs of sale incurred by the General Services Administration, shall be deposited as offsetting collections into the Coast Guard 'Environmental Compliance and Restoration' account and, without further appropriation, shall be available until expended for—

''(i) environmental compliance and restoration purposes associated with the LORAN–C system;

''(ii) the costs of securing and maintaining equipment that may be used as a backup to the Global Positioning System or to meet any other Federal navigation requirement;

''(iii) the demolition of improvements on such real property; and

''(iv) the costs associated with the sale of such real and personal property, including due diligence requirements, necessary environmental remediation, and reimbursement of expenses incurred by the General Services Administration.

''(B) OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND RESTORATION ACTIVITIES.—After the completion of activities described in subparagraph (A), the unexpended balances of such proceeds shall be available for any other environmental compliance and restoration activities of the Coast Guard.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following:

''681. Disposition of infrastructure related to E–LORAN.''.

(3) CONFORMING REPEALS.—

(A) Section 229 of the Howard Coble Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–281; 128 Stat. 3040), and the item relating to that section in section 2 of such Act, are repealed.

(B) Subsection 559(e) of the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2010 (Public Law 111–83; 123 Stat. 2180) is repealed.

(b) AGREEMENTS TO DEVELOP BACKUP POSITIONING, NAVIGATION, AND TIMING SYSTEM.—Section 93(a) of title 14, United States Code, is amended by striking ''and'' after the semicolon at the end of paragraph (23), by striking the period at the end of paragraph (24) and inserting ''; and'', and by adding at the end the following the following:

''(25) enter into cooperative agreements, contracts, and other agreements with Federal entities and other public or private entities, including academic entities, to develop a positioning, navigation, and timing system to provide redundant capability in the event Global Positioning System signals are disrupted, which may consist of an enhanced LORAN system.''.

SEC. 613. PARKING.

Section 611(a) of the Howard Coble Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–281; 128 Stat. 3064) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(3) REIMBURSEMENT.—Through September 30, 2017, additional parking made available under paragraph (2) shall be made available at no cost to the Coast Guard or members and employees of the Coast Guard.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4188.

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 4188, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015, is a product of bipartisan efforts to reauthorize the Coast Guard through fiscal year 2017. The House passed similar legislation by a voice vote in May.

The bill makes several reforms to Coast Guard authorities, as well as laws governing shipping and navigation. Specifically, the bill supports Coast Guard servicemembers, improves Coast Guard mission effectiveness, enhances oversight of the Coast Guard programs, encourages job growth in the maritime sector by cutting regulatory burdens on job creators, strengthens maritime drug enforcement laws, and increases coordination with partner nations, further strengthening port security. It does all this in a way that allows this to be brought under suspension in a bipartisan way.

I want to commend Ranking Members DEFAZIO and GARAMENDI for their efforts in getting us to this point and, of course, the leadership of Chairman SHUSTER.

I also want to thank the men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard for the tremendous job they do for our Nation. Coast Guard servicemembers place their lives at risk on a daily basis to save those in danger, ensure the safety and security of our ports and waterways, and protect our environmental resources.

□ 1515

They do all this on aging, obsolete cutters, and aircraft, some of which were first commissioned in World War II.

Passing H.R. 4188 will help rebuild and strengthen the Coast Guard. It will also demonstrate the strong support Congress has for the men and women of the Coast Guard and the deep appreciation we have for the sacrifices that they make for our Nation.

I urge all Members to support H.R. 4188.

I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY,
Washington, DC, December 10, 2015.

Hon. BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing concerning H.R. 4188, the ''Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015,'' which was introduced on December 8, 2015.

H.R. 4188 contains provisions within the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology's rule X jurisdiction. As a result of your having consulted with the Committee and in order to expedite this bill for floor consideration, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology will forgo action on the bill. This is being done on the basis of our mutual understanding that doing so will in no way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology with respect to the appointment of conferees, or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation.

I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding, and would request that you include a copy of this letter and your response in the Congressional Record during the floor consideration of this bill. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 10, 2015.

Hon. LAMAR SMITH
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 4188, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015. I appreciate your cooperation in expediting the consideration of this legislation on the House floor.

As you know, the Parliamentarians were not able to render an official decision as to the jurisdictional claim the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology may have had. I agree that the absence of a decision on this bill will not prejudice any claim the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology may have had or may have to this or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on the bill be necessary, I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving provisions in this legislation on which the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology has a valid jurisdictional claim.

I will include our letters on H.R. 4188 in the Congressional Record during House floor consideration of the bill. Again, I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation, and I look forward to working with the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology as the bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman.

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

I am pleased to be here again at the end of another year to rise and join Chairman HUNTER, for whom I have great respect. We have been able to get some stuff done.

I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) for bringing this bill to the floor today to authorize the funding of the United States Coast Guard and to advance new policy initiatives to strengthen the prospects for the U.S. flag and U.S. maritime industry.

H.R. 4188, the Coast Guard Reauthorization Act of 2015, is carefully crafted bipartisan legislation developed over the course of several months of negotiation within this House and with that other body. It is deserving of robust support from Members of both sides of the aisle. I urge its quick passage by the House today.

I want to thank Chairman HUNTER for all the leadership and the cooperative spirit in working with me and our other Democratic Members. He addressed our concerns. They were handled and taken care of in the bill.

The willingness of Chairman HUNTER and his outstanding staff and members of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee to collaborate and work through the several nettlesome issues is very, very much appreciated.

That is not to say this bill does not contain some items which I might have some lingering concerns about, but they are few. As is the case with every piece of legislation I don't personally draft all by myself, this bill has those minor issues.

I am sure, if the chairman were to draft it all by himself, it would be perfect, also. But we did it together, and it came out quite well.

I am extremely pleased that this legislation would provide stable and sufficient authorized funding levels for the Coast Guard for the next 2 years. The importance of budget stability cannot be overstated. The Coast Guard is pressed daily to meet the demands of its 11 statutory missions.

The last thing the Coast Guard needs is to face recurrent budget uncertainties, a circumstance which would leave the service's leadership unable to know exactly what resources and capabilities they have available to address port and harbor security, illegal drug interdiction, search and rescue, and law enforcement actions, along with many other important activities.

I am also pleased this legislation continues to move the ball down the field in the effort to strengthen and recapitalize a new fleet of Polar-class heavy icebreakers for the Coast Guard, and a cheer goes up between the chairman and myself if we can get that done.

It is clear that we are at the advent of Arctic operations for the Coast Guard, and it is vital that the service has the icebreaking capabilities it will need to operate safely and effectively in this very unforgiving maritime environment.

The bill will advance the completion of the materiel assessment of the Polar Sea to determine, finally, if this heavy icebreaker can be returned to service.

Additionally, this legislation authorized funding to allow the Coast Guard to maintain progress in developing requirements and preliminary design for a new heavy icebreaker. So we will figure out, hopefully, this next year which way we will go.

I am also pleased that this legislation includes language that will continue to preserve the remaining LORAN–C infrastructure until such time as the administration makes a final decision on whether or not to build out an enhanced LORAN or e-LORAN infrastructure to provide a reliable, land-based, low-frequency backup navigation timing signal to back up GPS, the Global Positioning System.

For several years, we have known that the relatively weak, high-frequency GPS signal is fairly easy to corrupt, to degrade, or altogether disrupt, stop.

For this reason, the Secretary of Defense, Ash Carter, has called GPS a potential single source of failure for important national defense assets. It is also a major liability across 16 sectors of critical infrastructure.

If Russia, China, and the EU have land-based GPS backup systems, the question is: Why does the United States not have one?

This administration needs to make a decision now. At least language in this legislation ensures that we will have available the option of re-purposing what remains of the LORAN–C infrastructure for an e-LORAN system of the future.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I have already said it twice. I will say it a third time. To Chairman HUNTER and his staff, we like working with you and we like you, too.

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

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I enjoy working with the gentleman from California as well. It is a strange situation when we actually get stuff done. It is a California thing.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from California (Mr. HUNTER), the chairman of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee, for yielding me time. I also want to thank both him and the Transportation Committee chairman himself, BILL SHUSTER, for their work on this legislation.

This bill ensures the safety and security of our maritime borders and maritime interests around the globe.

The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology shares jurisdiction with the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee over important research and development programs carried out by the Coast Guard.

These programs improve search and rescue, navigation, marine safety, marine environmental protection enforcement of laws and treaties, ice operations, oceanographic research, and defense readiness.

The bill also authorizes funding to help acquire a new Polar icebreaker and requires a study of alternatives for conducting icebreaking operations.

The Coast Guard's icebreakers are critical to the United States missions in the polar regions, which include important research supported by the National Science Foundation.

I look forward to the results of the study this bill calls for on cost-effective alternatives for icebreaking. This will help us ensure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and efficiently.

Again, I thank Chairman HUNTER and Chairman SHUSTER for taking the initiative with this critical legislation.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume, as long as it is less than 3 minutes, to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), the ranking member of the committee.

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

I want to congratulate Chairman HUNTER, Ranking Member GARAMENDI, and talk just briefly about how important this legislation is.

The Coast Guard, first off, is now going to get 2 years of budget certainty. That has been a real problem. It is pretty hard to run a military organization that large on something that creates short-term uncertainty with your budget, particularly when they have to begin to plan for acquiring more major assets with larger ships.

In particular, we have just been talking about the icebreakers. I went up to Seattle to visit the Polar Sea in its decrepitude. But the interesting thing I found is that it is an absolutely unique hull design. The ice band contains materials that are no longer manufactured. They are superior to current technologies.

There is substantial thought that this ship could be renovated using the existing hull with a modern ship, modern engines, and electronics. The ship has now been hulled. The hull is being evaluated, and we are going to do a cost-benefit analysis.

If we were to go down that path—and I believe it will prove to be the best path—then that would provide additional spare parts for its sister ship, which is the only one we have got working, and then would set a template for rehabilitating that ship later.

The Russians have about two dozen icebreakers. Five, I believe, are nuclear powered.

The Chinese are building two large icebreakers. The United States of America is down to one 45-year-old heavy icebreaker, which has an Antarctic mission, which means, for the

next 6 months after it comes back, it is in dry dock and being repaired.

We do not have any longer the capability of deploying north and south with heavy icebreakers, despite the fact that the Northwest Passage long dreamed of is about to open.

So for the United States of America maritime power to not have at least two heavy icebreakers, if not a half a dozen, is absolutely absurd, penny-wise, pound-foolish stupidity, on the part of former Congresses. I am glad that this Congress has seen the light and we are beginning to move forward to re-institute that program.

The gentleman from California has been particularly persistent and outspoken about the LORAN–C system. I believe it is absolutely critical that we maintain this infrastructure until we know what alternatives we are going to have. I think it is a critical national security asset.

And then, finally, to the more everyday national security-oriented duties of the Coast Guard in this bill, there is a particular provision that is incredibly important to the State of Oregon and the State of South Carolina and to hundreds of people who make their living on the ocean out of those two ports.

The Port of Newport, mid-coast Oregon, has an air rescue facility. They do half the rescues in the mid-coast. Oregon has extremely cold water year-round. We have some of the roughest bar entrances in the United States, and rescue time is critical in terms of saving lives.

The Coast Guard has been underfunded by Congress, and we are beginning to rectify that. But in a budget-cutting mode last year, with no discussion with anyone, they proposed to close Newport and close Charleston.

Last year, in the omnibus bill at the end of the year, we put in place a 1-year prohibition on the closure. This bill extends the statutory prohibition on closing either of those two stations for 2 years and then puts in place a very different and meaningful process, should they ever wish to think about closing critical air rescue stations in the future.

First, it requires them to develop a program to manage their airframes and learn about and figure about how we are going to replace our helicopter fleets, which are about at the same point as these icebreakers. So they need that plan. They have to develop that.

Then, if they wish to close an individual station, the Secretary of Homeland Security will have to make a number of findings, that it wouldn't jeopardize life and safety and degrade rescue capabilities, a pretty long list.

Then, if the Secretary makes that determination, the Secretary would have to go forward in a public process to take input from those communities.

Then, if the Secretary further decided, after going through that, that this was necessary and prudent and wouldn't jeopardize lives and safety at sea, that future Secretary would have to submit the proposal to the Congress.

So we have effectively safeguarded the Newport and the Charleston stations in this legislation, and I believe we have safeguarded them for all time.

I believe, also, Congress should give the Coast Guard adequate funding so they can replenish and rebuild their air fleet and they don't have to struggle and close stations that they know could potentially lead to loss of life.

So there are many, many things to recommend in this legislation. I would expect Congress to nearly, if not totally, unanimously improve it on this side. And then, hopefully, we can get the Senate to finally act because we need this done by January 1.

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

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN).

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman and ranking member for their work in moving the Coast Guard bill forward.

Transportation is one of the most bipartisan bills in this Congress. I am just so proud that we are really moving this Congress forward and putting the American people back to work.

The Coast Guard personnel serve this country and do a wonderful job, and I truly appreciate the hard work and dedication of these fine servicemembers.

The Coast Guard has been protecting our shores for more than 200 years and has done an outstanding job. The Coast Guard was the first agency to react to the terrorist attacks on September 11 and provide critical assistance during the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. This bill provides the resources and policy provisions that the Coast Guard needs to continue their critical mission.

Assisting migrants and stopping drug shipments at sea, search-and-rescue missions, monitoring our ports, and protecting our homeland are just a few of the vital services that the Coast Guard provides, all of which is critical to my home State of Florida, where 14 deepwater ports and 1,200 miles of coastline are the gateway to America.

□ 1530

This legislation also includes important provisions I have long championed that bring maritime laws into the modern era and recognize the positive changes that have taken place in employment rights.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the men and women serving the Coast Guard for their hard work and their vigilance in protecting our country. This is a good bill, and it will allow the Coast Guard to continue protecting our Nation.

I strongly encourage its passing in both the House and the Senate and for the President to sign it into law.

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

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time remains.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) has 7 minutes remaining.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY), my colleague.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, as a co-chairman of the House Coast Guard Caucus and the Representative from southeastern Connecticut with a deep connection to the Coast Guard, I rise in strong support of the Coast Guard authorization bill and the hard work of Chairman HUNTER and Ranking Member GARAMENDI.

Every single day, the men and women of our Coast Guard are operating around the country and around the world to enforce our laws and protect our country. This bill provides them the tools and support they need to do this important work.

In particular, I want to highlight a specific provision in this bill, section 219, that I was pleased to work with my colleague from Connecticut, Senator BLUMENTHAL, and committee staff to bolster the National Coast Guard Museum.

Despite a history that reaches back to the founding of our Nation, the Coast Guard is the only armed service without a national museum to highlight its heritage. Indeed, the Coast Guard this year is celebrating its 225th anniversary, and it is actually older than the U.S. Navy. Thankfully, efforts are underway to change this.

The nonprofit National Coast Guard Museum Association is building national support and funding for a new museum in New London, Connecticut. When completed, Mr. Speaker, this facility will be a tribute to all who have served and those who serve today in the Coast Guard, and I am proud to support their efforts.

Section 219 ensures that the Coast Guard can provide support to preserve and display its historical artifacts that will be a key part of the museum. This language opens the vault of the Coast Guard's rich treasure of maritime artifacts from America's oldest maritime fleet to be displayed for learning and understanding by the American public and the world.

This is a huge boost to the effort to create a long-overdue museum and sends a powerful signal that this effort has the backing of Congress, the Federal Government, and the Coast Guard.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Commandant Admiral Zukunft; former Commandant Papp, who is his predecessor; Joann Burdian; Brittany Panetta; and Kent Reinhold in the Coast Guard legislative office for the work that they have done with my office on this and other critical Coast Guard issues and, above all else, for their service to our Nation.

I congratulate Chairman HUNTER and Ranking Member GARAMENDI for their strong advocacy for our Coast Guard and our Nation's maritime industry.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the bill.

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

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, to my colleague Mr. HUNTER and those who have assisted in the drafting of the bill, particularly our staff, I want to thank you for making all of this possible.

This bill, which does extend the authorization for the Coast Guard, also provides very, very important elements, most of which you have heard here today. I would urge its passing.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Ranking Member GARAMENDI and all the staff who worked so hard on this, and, again, the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. DEFAZIO, and Chairman SHUSTER for their help, leadership, and support on this.

Explanation of Sec. 310. Atlantic Coast Port Access Route Study. This section would require the Coast Guard to complete its ongoing Atlantic Coast Port Access Route Study (PARS) by April 2016. This provision was included in H.R. 1987 because the House was concerned about the impacts on navigation safety from the construction of certain offshore renewable energy projects. The Study will assist the federal government, as well as stakeholders, to understand potential impacts and whether the siting of these projects could pose hazards to safe navigation, especially projects built in or near vessel traffic routes.

The Coast Guard's Atlantic Coast PARS working group has developed standards and a methodology for assessing potential impacts on navigation safety including high, medium and low or minimal impacts. The purpose of the study and the reason for developing standards and methodologies is to assist in future determinations of waterway suitability for proposed development projects.

When the Atlantic Coast PARS began, it excluded the waters in and around Nantucket Sound. These waters are heavily traveled by commercial vessels, fishing and recreational vessels as well as passenger and freight ferries. Because of increased vessel traffic and the potential impacts to navigation from any future development, this section would direct the Coast Guard to complete a separate port access route study of Nantucket Sound using the new standards and methodologies developed by the Coast Guard's working group. The Atlantic Coast PARS will help the Coast Guard determine whether they should revise current regulations to improve navigation safety by establishing safety fairways, traffic separation zones or new vessel routing. The Nantucket Sound PARS is intended to guide decision-makers to ensure that any future development in Nantucket Sound will have minimal impact and low risk to navigational safety. This section would require the completion of the Nantucket Sound PARS by December

I urge the passage of H.R. 4188.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4188.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 3094

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I am a cosponsor of H.R. 3094, and I ask unanimous consent that my name be withdrawn as a cosponsor of H.R. 3094.

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

There was no objection.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY CBRNE DEFENSE ACT OF 2015

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3875) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish within the Department of Homeland Security a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives Office, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3875

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Department of Homeland Security CBRNE Defense Act of 2015''.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; Table of contents.
Sec. 2. CBRNE Office.
Sec. 3. Chemical Division.
Sec. 4. Biological Division.
Sec. 5. Nuclear Division.
Sec. 6. Explosives Division.
Sec. 7. Savings provisions.
Sec. 8. Clerical amendments.

SEC. 2. CBRNE OFFICE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended by adding at the end the following new title:

''TITLE XXII—CBRNE OFFICE

''Subtitle A—Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives Office

''SEC. 2201. CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL, NUCLEAR, AND EXPLOSIVES OFFICE.

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Department a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives Office (referred to in this title as the 'CBRNE Office'). The CBRNE Office shall be comprised of the Chemical Division, the Biological Division, the Nuclear Division, and the Explosives Division. The CBRNE Office may include a Health Division.

''(b) MISSION OF OFFICE.—The mission of the CBRNE Office is to coordinate, strengthen, and provide chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives (CBRNE) capabilities in support of homeland security.

''(c) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The Office shall be headed by an Assistant Secretary for the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives Office (referred to in this title as the 'Assistant Secretary'), who shall be appointed by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

''(d) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Assistant Secretary shall—

''(1) develop, coordinate, and maintain overall CBRNE strategy and policy for the Department;

''(2) develop, coordinate, and maintain for the Department periodic CBRNE risk assessments;

''(3) serve as the primary Department representative for coordinating CBRNE activities with other Federal departments and agencies;

''(4) provide oversight for the Department's preparedness for CBRNE threats;

''(5) provide support for operations during CBRNE threats or incidents; and

''(6) carry out such other responsibilities as the Secretary determines appropriate, consistent with this title.

''(e) OTHER OFFICERS.—The Director of the Chemical Division, the Director of the Biological Division, the Director of the Nuclear Division, and the Director of the Explosives Division shall report directly to the Assistant Secretary.

''SEC. 2202. COMPOSITION OF THE CBRNE OFFICE.

''The Secretary shall transfer to the CBRNE Office, the functions, personnel, budget authority, and assets of the following:

''(1) The Office of Health Affairs as in existence on the day before the date of the enactment of this title, including the Chief Medical Officer authorized under section 516, and the National Biosurveillance Integration Center authorized under section 316.

''(2) The Domestic Nuclear Detection Office authorized under title XIX, as in existence on the date before the date of the enactment of this title (and redesignated as the Nuclear Division).

''(3) CBRNE threat awareness and risk assessment activities of the Science and Technology Directorate.

''(4) The CBRNE functions of the Office of Policy and the Office of Operations Coordination.

''(5) The Office for Bombing Prevention of the National Protection and Programs Directorate, as in existence on the day before the date of the enactment of this title.

''SEC. 2203. HIRING AUTHORITY.

''In hiring personnel for the CBRNE Office, the Secretary shall have the hiring and management authorities provided in section 1101 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (5 U.S.C. 3104 note; Public Law 105–261), except that the term of appointments for employees under subsection (c)(1) of such section may not exceed five years before granting any extension under subsection (c)(2) of such section.

''SEC. 2204. GRANTS, COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS, AND OTHER TRANSACTIONS AND CONTRACTS.

''The Assistant Secretary, in carrying out the responsibilities under this title, may distribute funds through grants, cooperative agreements, and other transactions and contracts.

''SEC. 2205. TERRORISM RISK ASSESSMENTS.

''(a) TERRORISM RISK ASSESSMENTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Assistant Secretary shall, in coordination with relevant Department components and other appropriate Federal departments and agencies, develop, coordinate, and update periodically terrorism risk assessments of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats.

''(2) COMPARISON.—The Assistant Secretary shall develop, coordinate, and update periodically an integrated terrorism risk assessment that assesses all of the threats referred to in paragraph (1) and, as appropriate, explosives threats, and compares each such threat against one another according to their relative risk.

''(3) INCLUSION IN ASSESSMENT.—Each terrorism risk assessment under this subsection shall include a description of the methodology used for each such assessment.

''(4) UPDATES.—Each terrorism risk assessment under this subsection shall be updated not less often than once every two years.

''(5) PROVISION TO CONGRESS.—The Assistant Secretary shall provide a copy of each risk assessment under this subsection to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate not later than 30 days after completion of each such assessment.

''(b) METHODOLOGY.—In developing the terrorism risk assessments under subsection (a), the Assistant Secretary, in consultation with appropriate Federal departments and agencies, shall—

''(1) assess the proposed methodology to be used for such assessments; and

''(2) consider the evolving threat to the United States as indicated by the intelligence community (as such term is defined in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4))).

''(c) USAGE.—The terrorism risk assessments required under subsection (a) shall be used to inform and guide allocation of resources for chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threat activities of the Department.

''(d) INPUT AND SHARING.—The Assistant Secretary shall, for each terrorism risk assessment under subsection (a)—

''(1) seek input from national stakeholders and other Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial officials involved in efforts to counter chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats;

''(2) ensure that written procedures are in place to guide the development of such assessments, including for input, review, and implementation purposes, among relevant Federal partners;

''(3) share such assessments with Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial officials with appropriate security clearances and a need for the information in the classified versions of such assessments; and

''(4) to the maximum extent practicable, make available an unclassified version of such assessments for Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial officials involved in prevention and preparedness for chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear events.

''SEC. 2206. CBRNE COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC MESSAGING.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary, shall develop an overarching risk communication strategy for terrorist attacks and other high consequence events utilizing chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear agents or explosives that pose a high risk to homeland security, and shall—

''(1) develop threat-specific risk communication plans, in coordination with appropriate Federal departments and agencies;

''(2) develop risk communication messages, including pre-scripted messaging to the extent practicable;

''(3) develop clearly defined interagency processes and protocols to assure coordinated risk and incident communications and information sharing during incident response;

''(4) engage private and nongovernmental entities in communications planning, as appropriate;

''(5) identify ways to educate and engage the public about CBRNE threats and consequences;

''(6) develop strategies for communicating using social and new media; and

''(7) provide guidance on risk and incident communications for CBRNE events to State, local, tribal, and territorial governments, and other stakeholders, as appropriate.

''(b) COMMUNICATION DURING RESPONSE.—The Secretary shall provide appropriate timely, accurate information to the public, governmental partners, the private sector, and other appropriate stakeholders in the event of a suspected or confirmed terrorist attack or other high consequence event utilizing chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear agents or explosives that pose a high risk to homeland security.

''(c) REPORTS.—

''(1) DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this title, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on current and future efforts of the Department to develop the communication strategy required under subsection (a).

''(2) FINALIZATION.—Not later than two years after the date the report required under paragraph (1) is submitted, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate the communication strategy required under subsection (a).

''SEC. 2207. CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL, NUCLEAR, AND EXPLOSIVES INTELLIGENCE AND INFORMATION SHARING.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary of Intelligence and Analysis of the Department shall—

''(1) support homeland security-focused intelligence analysis of terrorist actors, their claims, and their plans to conduct attacks involving chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear materials or explosives against the United States;

''(2) support homeland security-focused intelligence analysis of global infectious diseases, public health, food, agricultural, and veterinary issues;

''(3) support homeland security-focused risk analysis and risk assessments of the homeland security hazards described in paragraphs (1) and (2) by providing relevant quantitative and nonquantitative threat information;

''(4) leverage existing and emerging homeland security intelligence capabilities and structures to enhance prevention, protection, response, and recovery efforts with respect to a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosives attack;

''(5) share appropriate information regarding such threats to appropriate State, local, tribal, and territorial authorities, as well as other national biosecurity and biodefense stakeholders; and

''(6) perform other responsibilities, as assigned by the Secretary.

''(b) COORDINATION.—Where appropriate, the Under Secretary of Intelligence and Analysis shall coordinate with the heads of other relevant Department components, including the Assistant Secretary, members of the intelligence community, including the National Counter Proliferation Center and the National Counterterrorism Center, and other Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial authorities, including officials from high-threat areas, to enable such entities to provide recommendations on optimal information sharing mechanisms, including expeditious sharing of classified information, and on how such entities can provide information to the Department.

''(c) REPORT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this section and annually thereafter for five years, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on—

''(A) the intelligence and information sharing activities under subsections (a) and (b) and of all relevant entities within the Department to prevent, protect against, prepare for, respond to, mitigate, and recover from terrorist attacks and other high consequence events utilizing chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear agents or explosives that pose a high risk to homeland security; and

''(B) the Department's activities in accordance with relevant intelligence strategies.

''(2) ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION.—Each report required under paragraph (1) shall also include—

''(A) a description of methods established to assess progress of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis in implementing this section; and

''(B) such assessment of such progress.

''(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.—The term 'intelligence community' has the meaning given such term in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4)).

''(2) NATIONAL BIOSECURITY AND BIODEFENSE STAKEHOLDERS.—The term 'national biosecurity and biodefense stakeholders' means officials from Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial authorities and individuals from the private sector who are involved in efforts to prevent, protect against, prepare for, respond to, mitigate, and recover from a biological attack or other phenomena that may have serious health consequences for the United States, including infectious disease outbreaks.''.

(b) AFTER ACTION AND EFFICIENCIES REVIEW.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security, acting through the Assistant Secretary for the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives Office of the Department of Homeland Security (established pursuant to section 2201 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as added by subsection (a) of this section), shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report that—

(1) reviews the functions and responsibilities of the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives Office of the Department (established pursuant to section 2201 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as added by subsection (a) of this section) to identify and eliminate areas of unnecessary duplication;

(2) provides a detailed accounting of the management and administrative expenditures and activities of the Office, including expenditures related to the establishment of the CBRNE Office, such as expenditures associated with the utilization of the Secretary's authority to award retention bonuses pursuant to Federal law;

(3) identifies any potential cost savings and efficiencies within the CBRNE Office or its divisions; and

(4) identifies opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of the management and administration of the CBRNE Office to improve operational impact and enhance efficiencies.

(c) CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL, NUCLEAR AND EXPLOSIVES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall assess the organizational structure of the management and execution of the Department of Homeland Security's chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives research and development activities, and shall develop and submit to the Committee on Homeland Security, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate at the time the President submits the budget under section 1105 of title 31, United States Code, for the fiscal year that follows the issuance of the Comptroller General review required pursuant to subsection (d) a proposed organizational structure for the management and execution of such chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives research and development activities.

(2) ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTIFICATION.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall include in the assessment required under paragraph (1) a thorough justification and rationalization for the proposed organizational structure for management and execution of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives research and development activities, including the following:

(A) A discussion of the methodology for determining such proposed organizational structure.

(B) A comprehensive inventory of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives research and development activities of the Department of Homeland Security and where each such activity will be located within or outside such proposed organizational structure.

(C) Information relating to how such proposed organizational structure will facilitate and promote coordination and requirements generation with customers.

(D) Information relating to how such proposed organizational structure will support the development of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives research and development priorities across the Department.

(E) If the chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives research and development activities of the Department are not co-located in such proposed organizational structure, a justification for such separation.

(F) The strategy for coordination between the Under Secretary for Science and Technology and the Assistant Secretary for the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives Office on chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives research and development activities.

(G) Recommendations for necessary statutory changes.

(3) LIMITATION ON ACTION.—The Secretary of Homeland Security may not take any action to reorganize the structure referred to in paragraph (1) unless the Secretary receives prior authorization from the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate permitting any such action.

(d) GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE REVIEW OF CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL, NUCLEAR, AND EXPLOSIVES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a review of the organizational structure of the Department of Homeland Security's management and execution of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives research and development activities.

(2) SCOPE.—The review required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) An assessment of the organizational structure for the management and execution of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives research and development activities of the Department of Homeland Security, including identification of any overlap or duplication of effort.

(B) Recommendations to streamline and improve the organizational structure of the Department's management and execution of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives research and development activities.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on the review required under this subsection.

(e) DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ANALYZED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY TO STATE, LOCAL, TRIBAL, AND PRIVATE ENTITIES WITH RESPONSIBILITIES RELATING TO HOMELAND SECURITY.—Paragraph (8) of section 201(d) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 121(d)) is amended by striking ''and to agencies of State'' and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting ''to State, local, tribal, territorial, and appropriate private entities with such responsibilities, and, as appropriate, to the public, in order to assist in preventing, protecting against, preparing for, responding to, mitigating, and recovering from terrorist attacks against the United States.''.

(f) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—The Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2) of section 103(a) (6 U.S.C. 113(a)), by striking ''Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs, the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, or the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs,'' and inserting ''Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs or the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs,'';

(2) in section 302 (6 U.S.C. 182)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (13) and (14) as paragraphs (14) and (15), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (12) the following new paragraph:

''(13) collaborating with the Assistant Secretary for the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives Office on all chemical, biological, and explosives research and development activities;'';

(3) in subsection (b) of section 307 (6 U.S.C. 187), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(8) CBRNE DEFENSE.—The Director shall coordinate with the Assistant Secretary for the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives Office on all chemical, biological, and explosives research and development activities.''; and

(4) in subsection (c) of section 516 (6 U.S.C. 321e)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting '', including the health impacts of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear agents and explosives'' after ''natural disasters'';

(B) by amending paragraph (2) to read as follows:

''(2) coordinating the Department's policy, strategy, and preparedness for pandemics and emerging infectious diseases;''; and

(C) in paragraph (6), by striking ''Under Secretary for Science and Technology'' and inserting ''Assistant Secretary for the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives Office''.

SEC. 3. CHEMICAL DIVISION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title XXII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as added by section 2 of this Act, is amended by adding at the end the following new subtitle:

"Subtitle B—Chemical Division

"SEC. 2211. CHEMICAL DIVISION.

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the CBRNE Office a Chemical Division, headed by a Director of the Chemical Division (in this subtitle referred to as the 'Director').

''(b) MISSION AND RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Director shall be responsible for coordinating departmental strategy and policy relating to terrorist attacks and other high-consequence events utilizing chemical agents that pose a high risk to homeland security, including the following:

''(1) Developing and maintaining the Department's strategy against chemical threats.

''(2) Serving as the Department representative for chemical threats and related activities with other Federal departments and agencies.

''(3) Providing oversight of the Department's preparedness, including operational requirements, for chemical threats.

''(4) Enhancing the capabilities of Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial governments, and private entities as appropriate, against chemical threats.

''(5) Evaluating and providing guidance to Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial governments, and private entities as appropriate, on detection and communication technology that could be effective in terrorist attacks and other high-consequence events utilizing chemical agents.

''(6) Supporting and enhancing the effective sharing and use of appropriate information generated by the intelligence community (as such term is defined in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4))), law enforcement agencies, other Federal, State, local tribal, and territorial governments, and foreign governments, on chemical threats.

"SEC. 2212. DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Director may, subject to the availability of appropriations for such purpose, partner with high-risk urban areas or facilities to conduct demonstration projects to enhance, through Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial governments, and private entities, capabilities of the United States to counter terrorist attacks and other high-consequence events utilizing chemical agents that pose a high risk to homeland security.

''(b) GOALS.—The Director may provide guidance and evaluations for all situations and venues at risk of terrorist attacks and other high-consequence events utilizing chemical agents, such as at ports, areas of mass gathering, and transit facilities, and may—

''(1) ensure all high-risk situations and venues are studied; and

''(2) ensure key findings and best practices are made available to State, local, tribal, and territorial governments and the private sector.

''(c) CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION.—The Director shall notify the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate not later than 30 days before initiating a new demonstration project.''.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate an assessment of the Department of Homeland Security's programs and activities related to terrorist attacks and other high-consequence events utilizing chemical agents that pose a high risk to homeland security.

SEC. 4. BIOLOGICAL DIVISION.

Title XXII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as added by section 2 of this Act and as amended by section 3 of this Act, is further amended by adding at the end the following new subtitle:

"Subtitle C—Biological Division

"SEC. 2221. BIOLOGICAL DIVISION.

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the CBRNE Office a Biological Division, headed by a Director of the Biological Division (in this subtitle referred to as the 'Director').

''(b) MISSION AND RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Office shall be responsible for coordinating departmental strategy and policy relating to terrorist attacks and other high-consequence events utilizing biological agents that pose a high risk to homeland security, including the following:

''(1) Developing and maintaining the Department's strategy against biological threats.

''(2) Serving as the Department representative for biological threats and related activities with other Federal departments and agencies.

''(3) Providing oversight for the Department's preparedness, including operational requirements, for biological threats.

''(4) Enhancing the capabilities of Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial governments, and private entities as appropriate, against biological threats.

''(5) Supporting and enhancing the effective sharing and use of appropriate information generated by the intelligence community (as such term is defined in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4))), law enforcement agencies, other Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial governments, and foreign governments, on biological threats.

''(6) Achieving a biological detection program.

''(7) Maintaining the National Biosurveillance Integration Center, authorized under section 316.''.

SEC. 5. NUCLEAR DIVISION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title XXII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as added by section 2 of this Act and as amended by sections 3 and 4 of this Act, is further amended by adding at the end the following new subtitle:

"Subtitle D—Nuclear Division

"SEC. 2231. NUCLEAR DIVISION.

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall include within the CBRNE Office the Nuclear Division under title XIX, headed by the Director of the Nuclear Division (in this subtitle referred to as the 'Director') pursuant to section 1901.

''(b) MISSION AND RESPONSIBILITIES.—In addition to the responsibilities specified in title XIX, the Director shall also be responsible for coordinating departmental strategy and policy relating to terrorist attacks and other high-consequence events utilizing nuclear or other radiological materials, and for coordinating Federal efforts to detect and protect against the unauthorized importation, possession, storage, transportation, development, or use of a nuclear explosive device, fissile material, or radiological material in the United States, and to protect against an attack using such devices or materials against the people, territory, or interests of the United States, in accordance with title XIX.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Title XIX of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended—

(1) in the title heading, by striking ''**DOMESTIC NUCLEAR DETECTION OFFICE**'' and inserting ''**NUCLEAR DIVISION**'';

(2) in section 1901 (6 U.S.C. 591)—

(A) in the heading, by striking ''**DOMESTIC NUCLEAR DETECTION OFFICE**'' and inserting ''**NUCLEAR DIVISION**'';

(B) in subsection (a), by striking ''There shall be established in the Department a Domestic Nuclear Detection Office'' and inserting ''There is in the Department a Nuclear Division, located in the CBRNE Office''; and

(C) in subsection (b), by striking ''Director for Domestic Nuclear Detection, who shall be appointed by the President'' and inserting ''Director of the Nuclear Division'';

(3) in subsection (a) of section 1902 (6 U.S.C. 592)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1)—

(i) by inserting after ''responsible for'' the following: ''coordinating departmental strategy and policy relating to terrorist attacks and other high-consequence events utilizing nuclear or other radiological materials, and for''; and

(ii) by striking ''to protect'' and inserting ''protecting''; and

(B) in paragraph (11), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''Domestic Nuclear Detection Office'' and inserting ''Nuclear Division'';

(4) by repealing section 1903 (6 U.S.C. 593);

(5) in section 1906 (6 U.S.C. 596)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''Domestic Nuclear Detection'' and inserting ''the Nuclear Division''; and

(ii) by striking ''paragraphs (6) and (7) of''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''paragraphs (6) and (7) of'';

(6) in section 1907 (6 U.S.C. 596a)—

(A) by striking ''Annual'' each place it appears and inserting ''Biennial'';

(B) by striking ''each year'' each place it appears and inserting ''every two years'';

(C) by striking ''previous year'' each place it appears and inserting ''previous two years'';

(D) in the heading of subsection (a), by striking ''ANNUAL'' and inserting ''BIENNIAL''; and

(E) subsection (b)—

(i) in the heading, by striking ''ANNUAL'' and inserting ''BIENNIAL'';

(ii) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''odd-numbered'' after ''each''; and

(iii) in paragraph (2), by striking ''annual'' and inserting ''biennial''; and

(7) by adding at the end the following new section:

"SEC. 1908. DOMESTIC IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL NUCLEAR DETECTION ARCHITECTURE.

''In carrying out the mission of the Office under subparagraph (A) of section 1902(a)(4), the Director of the Nuclear Division shall provide support for planning, organization, equipment, training, exercises, and operational assessments to Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial governments to assist such governments in implementing radiological and nuclear detection capabilities in the event of terrorist attacks or other high-consequence events utilizing nuclear or other radiological materials that pose a high risk to homeland security. Such capabilities shall be integrated into the enhanced global nuclear detection architecture referred to in such section 1902(a)(4), and shall inform and be guided by architecture studies, technology needs, and research activities of the Office.''.

(c) REFERENCE.—Any reference in any law, regulation, or rule to the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office or the Director for Domestic Nuclear Detection of the Department of Homeland Security shall be deemed to be a reference to the Nuclear Division or the Director of the Nuclear Division, respectively, of the Department.

SEC. 6. EXPLOSIVES DIVISION.

Title XXII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as added by section 2 of this Act and as amended by sections 3, 4, and 5 of this Act, is further amended by adding at the end the following new subtitle:

"Subtitle E—Explosives Division

"SEC. 2241. EXPLOSIVES DIVISION.

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established within the CBRNE Office an Explosives Division, headed by a Director of the Explosives Division (in this subtitle referred to as the 'Director').

''(b) MISSION AND RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Director shall be responsible for coordinating departmental strategy and policy relating to terrorist attacks and other high-consequence events utilizing explosives that pose a high risk to homeland security, including the following:

''(1) Developing and maintaining the Department's strategy against explosives threats.

''(2) Serving as the Department representative for explosives threats and related activities with other Federal departments and agencies.

''(3) Providing oversight of the Department's preparedness, including operational requirements, for explosives threats.

''(4) Enhancing the capabilities of Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial governments, and private entities as appropriate, to counter terrorist attacks and other high-consequence events utilizing explosives.

''(5) Evaluating and providing guidance to Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial governments and appropriate private entities on detection and communication technology that could be effective during terrorist attacks or other high-consequence events utilizing explosives.

''(6) Supporting and enhancing the effective sharing and use of appropriate information generated by the intelligence community (as such term is defined in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4))), law enforcement agencies, other Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial government agencies, and foreign governments, on explosives threats.''.

SEC. 7. SAVINGS PROVISIONS.

Nothing in this Act shall change the authority of the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to lead the emergency management system of the United States. Nothing in this Act shall alter the responsibility of the Chief Medical Officer of the Department of Homeland Security to serve as the principal advisor to the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency on medical and public health issues pursuant to paragraph (1) of section 516(c) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 321e(c)).

SEC. 8. CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.

The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended—

(1) by striking the item relating to title XIX and inserting the following new item:

''TITLE XIX—NUCLEAR DIVISION'';

(2) by striking the item relating to section 1901 and inserting the following new item:

''Sec. 1901. Nuclear Division.'';

(3) by striking the item relating to section 1903;

(4) by adding after the item relating to section 1907 the following new item:

''Sec. 1908. Domestic Implementation of the global nuclear detection architecture.''; and

(5) by adding at the end the following:

''TITLE XXII—CBRNE OFFICE

''Subtitle A—Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives Office

''Sec. 2201. Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives Office.
''Sec. 2202. Composition of the CBRNE Office.
''Sec. 2203. Hiring authority.
''Sec. 2204. Grants, cooperative agreements, and other transactions and contracts.
''Sec. 2205. Terrorism risk assessments.
''Sec. 2206. CBRNE communications and public messaging.
''Sec. 2207. Chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives intelligence and information sharing.''.

''Subtitle B—Chemical Division

''Sec. 2211. Chemical Division.
''Sec. 2212. Demonstration projects.''.

''Subtitle C—Biological Division

''Sec. 2221. Biological Division.''.

''Subtitle D—Nuclear Division

''Sec. 2231. Nuclear Division.''.

''Subtitle E—Explosives Division

''Sec. 2241. Explosives Division.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material 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. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill, the Department of Homeland Security CBRNE Defense Act of 2015.

The threat from weapons of mass destruction is real and growing. We have seen groups like ISIS make makeshift chemical weapons; and on the battlefield last summer, a laptop reportedly retrieved from an ISIS hideout in Syria contained plans for weaponizing bubonic plague and documents discussing advantages of using biological weapons. They have also boasted about plans to smuggle radiological material into the United States. With recent FBI stings in places like Moldova, we know that there are sellers ready to supply the ingredients for these tools of terror, which brings us to the purpose of this legislation before us today.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Homeland Security must play a leading role in defending our homeland from CBRNE threats. Departments and agencies across the United States Government have centralized their weapons of mass destruction programs to provide clear focal points for dealing with this threat. Within the Department of Homeland Security, however, leadership, expertise, personnel, and resources related to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive threats are disbursed across numerous organizations within DHS headquarters. By consolidating offices within the DHS headquarters with responsibility for CBRNE, H.R. 3875 will ensure better coordination within the Department and interagency.

Mr. Speaker, we are living in dangerous times, and we must ensure the Federal Government is prepared to address these threats. This bill will ensure that the Department of Homeland Security is able to do so.

Before I close, I would like to thank Chairmen SHUSTER and SMITH for their cooperation in moving this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

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

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 8, 2015.

Hon. MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security, Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCAUL: I write concerning H.R. 3875, the ''Department of Homeland Security CBRNE Defense Act of 2015''. This legislation includes matters that I believe fall within the rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

In order to expedite Floor consideration of H.R. 3875, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure agrees to forgo action on this bill. However, this is conditional on our mutual understanding that forgoing consideration of the bill would not prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation that fall within the Committee's rule X jurisdiction.

I request that you please place a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest into the Congressional Record.

Sincerely,

BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, December 8, 2015.

Hon. BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SHUSTER, Thank you for your interest in H.R. 3875, the ''Department of Homeland Security CBRNE Defense Act of 2015.'' I appreciate your cooperation in allowing the bill to move expeditiously under suspension of the House Rules on December 8, 2015. Because your assertion of jurisdictional interest was raised after the report for H.R. 3875 was filed, the Parliamentarians were not able to render an official decision as to any jurisdictional claim the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee may have had.

I agree that the absence of a decision on this bill will not prejudice any claim the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee may have had, or may have with respect to similar measures in the future.

A copy of this letter will be entered into the Congressional Record.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY,
Washington, DC, December 8, 2015.

Hon. MICHAEL MCCAUL,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing concerning H.R. 3875, the ''Department of Homeland Security CBRNE Defense Act of 2015,'' which your Committee reported on November 16, 2015.

H.R. 3875 contains provisions within the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology's Rule X jurisdiction. As a result of your having consulted with the Committee and in order to expedite this bill for floor consideration, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology will forego action on the bill. This is being done on the basis of our mutual understanding that doing so will in no way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology with respect to the appointment of conferees, or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation.

I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding, and would request that you include a copy of this letter and your response in the Congressional Record during the floor consideration of this bill. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, December 8, 2015.

Hon. LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SMITH, Thank you for your interest in H.R. 3875, the ''Department of Homeland Security CBRNE Defense Act of 2015.'' I appreciate your cooperation in allowing the bill to move expeditiously under suspension of the House Rules on December 8, 2015. Because your assertion of jurisdictional interest was raised after the report for H.R. 3875 was filed, the Parliamentarians were not able to render an official decision as to any jurisdictional claim the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology may have had.

I agree that the absence of a decision on this bill will not prejudice any claim the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology may have had, or may have with respect to similar measures in the future.

A copy of this letter will be entered into the Congressional Record.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3875, the Department of Homeland Security CBRNE Defense Act of 2015.

Mr. Speaker, we were here 2 days ago, and I said that the American people are looking for the homeland to be safe. As I stand here today in the backdrop of a recent classified briefing for many Members, I again say that the issue of homeland security is not a partisan issue.

I am very grateful to Mr. MCCAUL and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, the ranking member, for their bipartisanship and the bipartisanship of this committee. Working alongside the other jurisdictional committees—that includes my other committee, Judiciary, that has, as their ranking member, Mr. CONYERS, and chairman, Mr. GOODLATTE, and many other committees—our commitment should be to secure the American people.

So, in this instance, pursuant to the fiscal year 2013 Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, the Department of Homeland Security was directed to evaluate its activities related to preventing and responding to threats posed by chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive, CBRNE, weapons and to determine whether there were ways to improve coordination of those activities.

Nearly 2 years later, DHS submitted its report to Congress and requested that certain activities and offices within the Department be consolidated to create a center of gravity for the DHS CBRNE activities.

H.R. 3875 seeks to implement much of the Department's proposal. In particular, the bill would bring the Office of Health Affairs, the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office, the Office of Bombing Prevention, the chemical and biological risk assessment activities Science and Technology Directorate, and staff from the Office of Policy and Office of Coordination Operations together in a single office, headed by a new assistant secretary.

I distinctly remember being in some of the meetings and hearings that drew about some of these coordinated activities, and I believe the new assistant secretary will be a very effective tool for making America safer.

During committee consideration of the measure, the committee accepted an amendment authored by Ranking Member THOMPSON to protect the missions of the offices brought together and prevent some of the disruption that could be caused by this kind of reorganization.

The amendment acknowledges that this reorganization will likely necessitate new expenditures. For instance, DHS may need to utilize retention bonuses to retain highly skilled, much-sought-after nuclear and biodefense experts who otherwise would leave DHS because of their lowered position and reduced prospects for advancement. I believe we should do that.

Ranking Member THOMPSON's amendment also protects the role of the Chief Medical Officer as a leader within the Department on public health and medical issues by preserving the CMO's direct line to the Secretary.

The amendment allows for the establishment of a health division within the new office which could serve as a base of operations for the Chief Medical Officer's public health activities.

I might comment very briefly further on this. We have found that we live in a situation where, whether it is a natural disaster, but in this instance a terrorist situation that comes about, there is certainly major need for coordinated health activities that a person briefed, informed, and trained under DHS, with the expertise, can give to local entities and States.

For example, a hospital in my community, St. Joseph Medical Center, is the only hospital in a very intense downtown urban center. We would be interested in making sure that all of those health systems work.

As a nation, we cannot afford to have focus and attention toward the CBRNE mission diminished as a result of the unavoidable staff upheaval and infighting associated within any organization of this order.

Accordingly, I am pleased that H.R. 3875, as amended, will help bolster the Department's ability to carry out this reorganization without diminishing its ability to continue to carry out its CBRNE mission.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in support of H.R. 3875, the "Department of Homeland Security CBRNE Defense Act of 2015."

As a Senior Member of the Homeland Security Committee, I served as Ranking Member of the Border and Maritime Subcommittee during the last Congress and in a previous Congress chaired the Subcommittee on Transportation Security.

It is important that the House take up the issue of how the WMD programs within the Department of Homeland Security are managed, which is why I am an original sponsor of the bill.

Events over the last Congress make it clear that Congress should be even more vigilant in providing for the protection of the United States.

Congress should be mindful of the: United States' leadership in the effort to forge an enforceable and verifiable nuclear agreement with Iran; deadliness of chemical weapons when they were used during the Syrian conflict against unarmed men, women, and children; and arrival of Ebola in Dallas, Texas and the cases that were treated around the nation.

The bill authorizes an Office of Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives (CBRNE) Defense within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Departments and agencies across the U.S. government have centralized their weapons of mass destruction (WMD) defense programs to provide clear focal points for dealing with this threat.

However, DHS responsibilities in the chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives areas continue to be spread across many offices in the Department with varying authorities and functions, affecting strategic direction as well as interdepartmental and interagency coordination.

This bill will bring DHS into line with the Defense Department, State Department, CIA, and FBI, which each have a lead office or bureau charged with defending America against chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives (CBRNE) threats.

This is the result of many years of oversight by the Committee on Homeland Security on the Department's management of CBRNE activities.

The bill authorizes a CBRNE Office, led by a Presidentially-appointed Assistant Secretary.

The bill directs the Secretary to include within the new CBRNE Office: the Office of Health Affairs; the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office; risk assessment activities and personnel of the Science and Technology Directorate; CBRNE activities and personnel of the Office of Policy and Operations Coordination and Planning; and the Office for Bombing Prevention.

The bill provides specific responsibilities of the Assistant Secretary and needed structure for the management of CBRNE activities.

DHS provided its proposal for consolidation of CBRNE activities to the Committee in June.

The Subcommittees on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications; and Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies held a hearing in July on the Department's proposal.

I urge my colleagues on in the House to join me in supporting this important step forward.

Our work is not yet done, but we are creating the groundwork for a safer and more resilient WMD deterrent, detection, and remediation federal homeland effort.

I appreciate the Homeland Security Committee's interest in my bill H.R. 85, Terrorism Prevention and Critical Infrastructure Protection Act.

Like Chairman MCCAUL, and Ranking Member THOMPSON, I regard securing our nation's critical infrastructure from terrorist threats as a top national and homeland security priority.

I share the understanding regarding how important it is to draft legislation that addresses the cyber threat posed by computer viruses and worms designed to destroy or cripple industrial control systems that sustain critical infrastructure is a serious challenge.

RECOMMENDATION: SUPPORT

Fixing a Broken Bureaucracy—H.R. 3875 increases transparency and accountability at DHS by bringing the Department's fragmented WMD defense programs under one roof and putting a lead official in charge.

Most security agencies (the Defense Department, State Department, CIA, and FBI) have a lead office or bureau charged with using their resources to defend America against chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives (CBRNE) threats.

But DHS does not—its WMD defense programs are scattered across multiple offices, a fractured approach that weakens our ability to confront these dangers on the frontlines.

The disorganization creates inefficiency, generates confusion about who is in charge at DHS, makes interagency collaboration more difficult, and drives away top talent.

The CBRNE Defense Act combines six separate offices and programs into one central CBRNE Office at DHS headquarters, led by a senior official who reports directly to the Secretary.

Elevating a Critical Mission—H.R. 3875 creates a stronger, unified office equipped to keep the nation safe from WMD threats, and

it ensures these issues will always stay on the Department's "front burner."

America faces persistent risk from terrorists and rogue states that want to threaten our people with weapons of mass destruction.

But under the current structure at DHS, important WMD defense efforts can get lost in the bureaucratic noise.

By consolidating these programs, the legislation will keep WMD challenges on the radar of top officials.

It will also allow DHS to conduct its CBRNE activities more strategically and effectively.

Streamlining Government—H.R. 3875 helps prevent taxpayer dollars from being wasted—and aims to reduce overlap and duplication wherever possible.

Hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars have been spent on failed CBRNE programs at DHS that were ill-planned and lacked effective oversight and management.

This legislation ensures DHS programs for combating WMD threats will be better coordinated and more closely monitored at the highest levels of the Department.

The bill simplifies the Secretary's ability to oversee the Department's WMD defense activities by consolidating standalone offices and streamlining the reporting structure.

I also creates the possibility of long-term savings by allowing the merged offices to combine their administrative functions.

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

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I have no more speakers. If the gentlewoman from Texas has no further speakers, I am prepared to close once the gentlewoman does.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for his leadership. I do not have any further speakers, but I would like to close and thank the committee as well for considering a bill that is now being reviewed—I want to thank the committee—H.R. 85, Terrorism Prevention and Critical Infrastructure Protection Act, which I hope contributes to all of our discussions about securing America.

This bill, Mr. Speaker, in particular, H.R. 3875, would consolidate important CBRNE activities within the Department of Homeland Security. I am hopeful that this reorganization will improve DHS' ability to carry out its mission in this space.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the diversity in the terrorist landscape is unprecedented. There are actors with aspirations to hit Western targets with deadly conventional weapons. There are also actors that are actively seeking to secure radiological and other nonconventional weaponry to exact maximum death, destruction, and chaos.

The Department of Homeland Security, first established after 9/11, has been designated and dictated to by the American people to keep them safe. It has an important role to play to address these threats. It is my great hope that this reorganization will help DHS take its CBRNE efforts to the next level.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, let me first thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, Ms. JACKSON LEE and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, for their coordination on this bill. I think this committee, probably more than any other one, has operated in a very bipartisan fashion. I am proud of that, as a chairman. I think in matters of national security, that is how we should operate, to reach across the aisle to get good things done for the American people to make them safer. So let me just say thank you for that.

I don't have to remind you, Mr. Speaker, the threats are real out there. We got a classified briefing on San Bernardino, the pipe bombs that were manufactured. In Dabiq Magazine, ISIS' latest publication, they discuss the ease with which to move a nuclear device through transnational criminal organizations into the Western Hemisphere: through Mexico and across our southwest border. That is precisely the kind of threat that this bill is designed to stop.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3875, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1545

DHS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY REFORM AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2015

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3578) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002, to strengthen and make improvements to the Directorate of Science and Technology of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3578

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 "DHS Science and Technology Reform and Improvement Act of 2015".

SEC. 2. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN SUPPORT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title III of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended—

(1) in section 301 (6 U.S.C. 181)—

(A) by striking "There" and inserting the following new subsection:

"(a) IN GENERAL.—There"; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(b) MISSION.—The Directorate of Science and Technology shall be the primary research, development, testing, and evaluation arm of the Department, responsible for coordinating the research, development, testing, and evaluation of the Department to strengthen the security and resiliency of the United States. The Directorate shall—

"(1) develop and deliver knowledge, analyses, and innovative solutions that are responsive to homeland security capability gaps and threats to the homeland identified by components and offices of the Department, the first responder community, and the Homeland Security Enterprise (as such term is defined in section 322) and that can be integrated into operations of the Department;

"(2) seek innovative, system-based solutions to complex homeland security problems and threats; and

"(3) build partnerships and leverage technology solutions developed by other Federal agencies and laboratories, State, local, and tribal governments, universities, and the private sector.";

(2) in section 302 (6 U.S.C. 182)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking "The Secretary, acting through the Under Secretary for Science and Technology, shall" and inserting the following new subsection:

"(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through the Under Secretary for Science and Technology, shall carry out the mission described in subsection (b) of section 301 and shall";

(B) in subsection (a), as so amended by subparagraph (A) of this paragraph—

(i) in paragraph (1), by inserting "and serving as the senior scientific advisor to the Secretary" before the semicolon at the end;

(ii) in paragraph (2)—

(I) by striking "national";

(II) by striking "biological,," and inserting "biological,"; and

(III) by inserting "that may serve as a basis of a national strategy" after "terrorist threats";

(iii) in paragraph (3)—

(I) by striking "the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis and the Assistant Secretary for Infrastructure Protection" and inserting "components and offices of the Department"; and

(II) by inserting "terrorist" before "threats";

(iv) in paragraph (4), by striking "except that such responsibility does not extend to human health-related research and development activities" and inserting the following: "including coordinating with relevant components and offices of the Department appropriate to—

"(A) identify and prioritize technical capability requirements and create solutions that include researchers, the private sector, and operational end users, and

"(B) develop capabilities to address issues on research, development, testing, evaluation, technology, and standards for the first responder community,

except that such responsibility does not extend to the human health-related research and development activities;".

(v) in paragraph (5)(A), by striking "biological,," and inserting "biological,";

(vi) by amending paragraph (12) to read as follows:

"(12) coordinating and integrating all research, development, demonstration, testing, and evaluation activities of the Department, including through a centralized Federal

clearinghouse established pursuant to paragraph (1) of section 313(b) for information relating to technologies that would further the mission of the Department, and providing advice, as necessary, regarding major acquisition programs;''.

(vii) in paragraph (13), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(viii) in paragraph (14), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(ix) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

''(15) establishing a process that—

''(A) includes consideration by Directorate leadership, senior component leadership, first responders, and outside expertise;

''(B) is strategic, transparent, and repeatable with a goal of continuous improvement;

''(C) through which research and development projects undertaken by the Directorate are assessed on a regular basis; and

''(D) includes consideration of metrics to ensure research and development projects meet Directorate and Department goals and inform departmental budget and program planning;

''(16) developing and overseeing the administration of guidelines for periodic external review of departmental research and development programs or activities, including through—

''(A) consultation with experts, including scientists and practitioners, regarding the research and development activities conducted by the Directorate of Science and Technology; and

''(B) biennial independent, external review—

''(i) initially at the division level; or

''(ii) when divisions conduct multiple programs focused on significantly different subjects, at the program level; and

''(17) partnering with components and offices of the Department to develop and deliver knowledge, analyses, and innovative solutions that are responsive to identified homeland security capability gaps and threats to the homeland and raise the science-based, analytic capability and capacity of appropriate individuals throughout the Department by providing guidance on how to better identify homeland security capability gaps and threats to the homeland that may be addressed through a technological solution and by partnering with such components and offices to—

''(A) support technological assessments of major acquisition programs throughout the acquisition lifecycle;

''(B) help define appropriate technological requirements and perform feasibility analysis;

''(C) assist in evaluating new and emerging technologies against homeland security capability gaps and terrorist threats;

''(D) support evaluation of alternatives;

''(E) improve the use of technology Department-wide; and

''(F) provide technical assistance in the development of acquisition lifecycle cost for technologies;

''(18) acting as a coordinating office for technology development for the Department by helping components and offices define technological requirements, and building partnerships with appropriate entities (such as within the Department and with other Federal agencies and laboratories, State, local, and tribal governments, universities, and the private sector) to help each such component and office attain the technology solutions it needs;

''(19) coordinating with organizations that provide venture capital to businesses, particularly small businesses, as appropriate, to assist in the commercialization of innovative homeland security technologies that are expected to be ready for commercialization in the near term and within 36 months.''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subsections:

''(b) REVIEW OF RESPONSIBILITIES.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on the implementation of paragraphs (2) (including how the policy and strategic plan under such paragraph may serve as a basis for a national strategy referred to in such paragraph), (11), (12), (13), (16), and (17) of subsection (a).'';

(3) in section 303(1) (6 U.S.C. 183(1)), by striking subparagraph (F);

(4) in section 305 (6 U.S.C. 185)—

(A) by striking ''The'' and inserting the following new subsection:

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(b) CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.—The Secretary shall review and revise, as appropriate, the policies of the Department relating to personnel conflicts of interest to ensure that such policies specifically address employees of federally funded research and development centers established pursuant to subsection (a) who are in a position to make or materially influence research findings or agency decision making.'';

(5) in section 306 (6 U.S.C. 186)—

(A) in subsection (c), by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''If such regulations are issued, the Under Secretary shall report to the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate prior to such issuance.''; and

(B) by amending subsection (d) to read as follows:

''(d) PERSONNEL.—In hiring personnel for the Directorate of Science and Technology, the Secretary shall have the hiring and management authorities described in section 1101 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (5 U.S.C. 3104 note; Public Law 105–261). The term of appointments for employees under subsection (c)(1) of such section may not exceed five years before the granting of any extension under subsection (c)(2) of such section.'';

(6) in section 308 (6 U.S.C. 188)—

(A) in subsection (b)(2)—

(i) in subparagraph (B)—

(I) in clause (iv), by striking ''and nuclear countermeasures or detection'' and inserting ''nuclear, and explosives countermeasures or detection (which may include research into remote sensing and remote imaging)''; and

(II) by adding after clause (xiv) the following new clause:

''(xv) Cybersecurity.''; and

(ii) by amending subparagraph (D) to read as follows:

''(D) ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this subparagraph and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation of this section. Each such report shall—

''(i) indicate which center or centers have been designated pursuant to this section;

''(ii) describe how such designation or designations enhance homeland security;

''(iii) provide information on any decisions to revoke or modify such designation or designations;

''(iv) describe research that has been tasked and completed by each center that has been designated during the preceding year;

''(v) describe funding provided by the Secretary for each center under clause (iv) for that year; and

''(vi) describe plans for utilization of each center or centers in the forthcoming year.''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d) TEST, EVALUATION, AND STANDARDS DIVISION.—

''(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Directorate of Science and Technology a Test, Evaluation, and Standards Division.

''(2) DIRECTOR.—The Test, Evaluation, and Standards Division shall be headed by a Director of Test, Evaluation, and Standards, who shall be appointed by the Secretary and report to the Under Secretary for Science and Technology.

''(3) RESPONSIBILITIES, AUTHORITIES, AND FUNCTIONS.—The Director of Test, Evaluation, and Standards—

''(A) through the Under Secretary for Science and Technology, serve as an adviser to the Secretary and the Under Secretary of Management on all test and evaluation or standards activities in the Department; and

''(B) shall—

''(i) establish and update as necessary test and evaluation policies for the Department, including policies to ensure that operational testing is done at facilities that already have relevant and appropriate safety and material certifications to the extent such facilities are available;

''(ii) oversee and ensure that adequate test and evaluation activities are planned and conducted by or on behalf of components and offices of the Department with respect to major acquisition programs of the Department, as designated by the Secretary, based on risk, acquisition level, novelty, complexity, and size of any such acquisition program, or as otherwise established in statute;

''(iii) review major acquisition program test reports and test data to assess the adequacy of test and evaluation activities conducted by or on behalf of components and offices of the Department, including test and evaluation activities planned or conducted pursuant to clause (ii); and

''(iv) review available test and evaluation infrastructure to determine whether the Department has adequate resources to carry out its testing and evaluation responsibilities, as established under this title.

''(4) LIMITATION.—The Test, Evaluation, and Standards Division is not required to carry out operational testing of major acquisition programs.

''(5) EVALUATION OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TECHNOLOGIES.—The Director of Test, Evaluation, and Standards may evaluate technologies currently in use or being developed by the Department of Defense to assess whether such technologies can be leveraged to address homeland security capability gaps.'';

(7) in section 309(a) (6 U.S.C. 189(a)), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) TREATMENT OF CERTAIN FUNDS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any funds provided to a Department of Energy national laboratory by the Department may not be treated as an assisted acquisition.'';

(8) in section 310 (6 U.S.C. 190), by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(e) SUCCESSOR FACILITY.—Any successor facility to the Plum Island Animal Disease Center, including the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) under construction as of the date of the enactment of this subsection, which is intended to the replace the Plum Island Animal Disease Center shall be

subject to the requirements of this section in the same manner and to the same extent as the Plum Island Animal Disease Center under this section.'';

(9) in section 311 (6 U.S.C. 191)—

(A) in subsection (b)—

(i) in paragraph (1)—

(I) by striking ''20 members'' and inserting ''not fewer than 15 and not more than 30''; and

(II) by inserting ''academia, national labs, private industry, and'' after ''representatives of'';

(ii) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (3); and

(iii) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraph:

''(2) SUBCOMMITTEES.—The Advisory Committee may establish subcommittees that focus on research and development challenges, as appropriate.'';

(B) in subsection (c)—

(i) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''on a rotating basis'' before the period at the end;

(ii) by striking paragraph (2) and redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (2); and

(iii) in paragraph (2), as so redesignated, by striking ''be appointed'' and inserting ''serve'';

(C) in subsection (e), in the second sentence, by striking ''the call of'';

(D) in subsection (h)—

(i) in paragraph (1)—

(I) in the first sentence—

(aa) by striking ''render'' and inserting ''submit''; and

(bb) by striking ''Congress'' and inserting ''the appropriate congressional committees'';

(II) in the second sentence, by inserting '', and incorporate the findings and recommendations of the Advisory Committee subcommittees,'' before ''during''; and

(ii) in paragraph (2)—

(I) striking ''render'' and inserting ''submit''; and

(II) by striking ''Congress'' and inserting ''the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate'';

(E) in subsection (i), by inserting '', except that the Advisory Committee shall file a charter with Congress every two years in accordance with subsection (b)(2) of such section (14)'';

(F) in subsection (j), by striking ''2008'' and inserting ''2020'';

(10) in section 313 (6 U.S.C. 193)—

(A) by redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (d); and

(B) by inserting after subsection (b) the following new subsection:

''(c) APPLICATION OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary, acting through the Under Secretary for Science and Technology, shall use the program established under subsection (a) to—

''(1) enhance the cooperation between components and offices of the Department on projects that have similar goals, timelines, or outcomes;

''(2) ensure the coordination of technologies to eliminate unnecessary duplication of research and development;

''(3) ensure technologies are accessible for component and office use on a Department website; and

''(4) carry out any additional purpose the Secretary determines necessary.'';

(11) by adding after section 317 (6 U.S.C. 195c) the following new sections:

''SEC. 318. IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section, the Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall establish a process to define, identify, prioritize, fund, and task the basic and applied homeland security research and development activities of the Directorate of Science and Technology to meet the needs of the components and offices of the Department, the first responder community, and the Homeland Security Enterprise (as such term is defined in section 322).

''(b) PROCESS.—The process established under subsection (a) shall—

''(1) be responsive to near-, mid-, and long-term needs, including unanticipated needs to address emerging terrorist threats;

''(2) utilize gap analysis and risk assessment tools where available and applicable;

''(3) include protocols to assess—

''(A) off-the-shelf technology to determine if an identified homeland security capability gap or threat to the homeland can be addressed through the acquisition process instead of commencing research and development of technology to address such capability gap or threat; and

''(B) communication and collaboration for research and development activities pursued by other executive agencies, to determine if technology can be leveraged to identify and address homeland security capability gaps or threats to the homeland and avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts;

''(4) provide for documented and validated research and development requirements;

''(5) strengthen first responder participation to identify and prioritize homeland security technological gaps, including by—

''(A) soliciting feedback from appropriate national associations and advisory groups representing the first responder community and first responders within the components and offices of the Department; and

''(B) establishing and promoting a publicly accessible portal to allow the first responder community to help the Directorate of Science and Technology develop homeland security research and development goals;

''(6) institute a mechanism to publicize the Department's homeland security technology priorities for the purpose of informing Federal, State, and local governments, first responders, and the private sector;

''(7) establish considerations to be used by the Directorate in selecting appropriate research entities, including the national laboratories, federally funded research and development centers, university-based centers, and the private sector, to carry out research and development requirements;

''(8) incorporate feedback derived as a result of the mechanism established in section 323, ensuring the Directorate is utilizing regular communication with components and offices of the Department; and

''(9) include any other criteria or measures the Under Secretary for Science and Technology considers necessary for the identification and prioritization of research requirements.

''SEC. 319. DEVELOPMENT OF DIRECTORATE STRATEGY AND RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

''(a) STRATEGY.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this section, the Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall develop and submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a strategy to guide the activities of the Directorate of Science and Technology. Such strategy shall be updated at least once every five years and shall identify priorities and objectives for the development of science and technology solutions and capabilities addressing homeland security operational needs. Such strategy shall include the coordination of such priorities and activities within the Department. Such strategy shall take into account the priorities and needs of stakeholders in the Homeland Security Enterprise (as such term is defined in section 322). In developing such strategy, efforts shall be made to support collaboration and avoid unnecessary duplication across the Federal Government. Such strategy shall be risk-based and aligned with other strategic guidance provided by—

''(A) the National Strategy for Homeland Security;

''(B) the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review; and

''(C) any other relevant strategic planning documents, as determined by the Under Secretary.

''(2) CONTENTS.—The strategy required under paragraph (1) shall be prepared in accordance with applicable Federal requirements and guidelines, and shall include the following:

''(A) An identification of the long-term strategic goals, objectives, and metrics of the Directorate, including those to address terrorist threats.

''(B) A technology transition strategy for the programs of the Directorate.

''(C) Short- and long-term strategic goals, and objectives for increasing the number of designations and certificates issued under subtitle G of title VIII, including cybersecurity technologies that could significantly reduce, or mitigate the effects of, cybersecurity risks (as such term is defined in subsection (a)(1) of the second section 226, relating to the national cybersecurity and communications integration center), without compromising the quality of the evaluation of applications for such designations and certificates.

''(b) FIVE-YEAR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall develop, and update at least once every five years, a five-year research and development plan for the activities of the Directorate of Science and Technology. The Under Secretary shall develop the first such plan by the date that is not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this section.

''(2) CONTENTS.—Each five-year research and development plan developed and revised under subsection (a) shall—

''(A) define the Directorate of Science and Technology's research, development, testing, and evaluation activities, priorities, performance metrics, and key milestones and deliverables for, as the case may be, the five-fiscal-year period from 2016 through 2020, and for each five-fiscal-year period thereafter;

''(B) describe, for the activities of the strategy developed under subsection (a), the planned annual funding levels for the period covered by each such five-year research and development plan;

''(C) indicate joint investments with other Federal partners where applicable, and enhanced coordination, as appropriate, with organizations as specified in paragraph (19) of section 302;

''(D) analyze how the research programs of the Directorate support achievement of the strategic goals and objectives identified in the strategy required under subsection (a);

''(E) describe how the activities and programs of the Directorate meet the requirements or homeland security capability gaps or threats to the homeland identified by customers within and outside of the Department, including the first responder community; and

''(F) describe the policies of the Directorate regarding the management, organization, and personnel of the Directorate.

''(3) SCOPE.—The Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall ensure that each five-year research and development plan developed and revised under subsection (a)—

''(A) reflects input from a wide range of stakeholders; and

''(B) takes into account how research and development by other Federal, State, private sector, and nonprofit institutions contributes to the achievement of the priorities identified in each plan, and avoids unnecessary duplication with such efforts.

''(4) REPORTS.—The Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate an annual report for seven years beginning not later than one year after the date of the development of the initial five-year research and development plan under paragraph (1) on the status and results to date of the implementation of such plan and the updates to such plan, including—

''(A) a summary of the research and development activities for the previous fiscal year in each mission area, including such activities to address homeland security risks, including threats, vulnerabilities, and consequences, and a summary of the coordination activities undertaken by the Directorate of Science and Technology for components and offices of the Department, together with the results of the process specified in paragraph (15) of section 302;

''(B) clear links between the Directorate's budget and each mission area or program, including those mission areas or programs to address homeland security risks, including threats, vulnerabilities, and consequences, specifying which mission areas or programs fall under which budget lines, and clear links between Directorate coordination work and priorities and annual expenditures for such work and priorities, including joint investments with other Federal partners, where applicable;

''(C) an assessment of progress of the research and development activities based on the performance metrics and milestones set forth in such plan; and

''(D) any changes to such plan.

''SEC. 320. MONITORING OF PROGRESS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall establish and utilize a system to track the progress of the research, development, testing, and evaluation activities undertaken by the Directorate of Science and Technology, and shall provide to the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and customers of such activities, at a minimum on a biannual basis, regular updates on such progress.

''(b) REQUIREMENTS.—In order to provide the progress updates required under subsection (a), the Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall develop a system that—

''(1) monitors progress toward project milestones identified by the Under Secretary;

''(2) maps progress toward deliverables identified in each five-year research and development plan required under section 319(b);

''(3) generates up-to-date reports to customers that transparently disclose the status and progress of research, development, testing, and evaluation efforts of the Directorate of Science and Technology; and

''(4) allows the Under Secretary to report the number of products and services developed by the Directorate that have been transitioned into acquisition programs and resulted in successfully fielded technologies.

''(c) EVALUATION METHODS.—

''(1) EXTERNAL INPUT, CONSULTATION, AND REVIEW.—The Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall implement procedures to engage outside experts to assist in the evaluation of the progress of research, development, testing, and evaluation activities of the Directorate of Science and Technology, including through—

''(A) consultation with experts, including scientists and practitioners, to gather independent expert peer opinion and advice on a project or on specific issues or analyses conducted by the Directorate; and

''(B) periodic, independent, external review to assess the quality and relevance of the Directorate's programs and projects.

''(2) COMPONENT FEEDBACK.—The Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall establish a formal process to collect feedback from customers of the Directorate of Science and Technology on the performance of the Directorate that includes—

''(A) appropriate methodologies through which the Directorate can assess the quality and usefulness of technology and services delivered by the Directorate;

''(B) development of metrics for measuring the usefulness of any technology or service provided by the Directorate; and

''(C) standards for high-quality customer service.

''SEC. 321. HOMELAND SECURITY SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FELLOWS PROGRAM.

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary, acting through the Under Secretary for Science and Technology and the Under Secretary for Management, shall establish a fellows program, to be known as the Homeland Security Science and Technology Fellows Program (in this section referred to as the 'Program'), under which the Under Secretary for Science and Technology, in coordination with the Office of University Programs of the Department, shall facilitate the placement of fellows in relevant scientific or technological fields for up to two years in components and offices of the Department with a need for scientific and technological expertise.

''(b) UTILIZATION OF FELLOWS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Under the Program, the Department may employ fellows—

''(A) for the use of the Directorate of Science and Technology; or

''(B) for the use of a component or office of the Department outside the Directorate, under a memorandum of agreement with the head of such a component or office under which such component or office will reimburse the Directorate for the costs of such employment.

''(2) RESPONSIBILITIES.—Under an agreement referred to in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1)—

''(A) the Under Secretary for Science and Technology and the Under Secretary for Management shall—

''(i) solicit and accept applications from individuals who are currently enrolled in or who are graduates of postgraduate programs in scientific and engineering fields related to the promotion of securing the homeland or critical infrastructure sectors;

''(ii) screen applicants and interview them as appropriate to ensure that such applicants possess the appropriate level of scientific and engineering expertise and qualifications;

''(iii) provide a list of qualified applicants to the heads of components and offices of the Department seeking to utilize qualified fellows;

''(iv) subject to the availability of appropriations, pay financial compensation to such fellows;

''(v) coordinate with the Chief Security Officer to facilitate and expedite provision of security and suitability clearances to such fellows, as appropriate; and

''(vi) otherwise administer all aspects of the employment of such fellows with the Department; and

''(B) the head of the component or office of the Department utilizing a fellow shall—

''(i) select such fellow from the list of qualified applicants provided by the Under Secretary;

''(ii) reimburse the Under Secretary for the costs of employing such fellow, including administrative costs; and

''(iii) be responsible for the day-to-day management of such fellow.

''(c) APPLICATIONS FROM NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.—The Under Secretary for Science and Technology may accept an application under subsection (b)(2)(A) that is submitted by a nonprofit organization on behalf of individuals whom such nonprofit organization has determined may be qualified applicants under the Program.

''SEC. 322. CYBERSECURITY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall support research, development, testing, evaluation, and transition of cybersecurity technology, including fundamental research to improve the sharing of information, analytics, and methodologies related to cybersecurity risks and incidents, consistent with current law.

''(b) ACTIVITIES.—The research and development supported under subsection (a) shall serve the components of the Department and shall—

''(1) advance the development and accelerate the deployment of more secure information systems;

''(2) improve and create technologies for detecting attacks or intrusions, including real-time continuous diagnostics and real-time analytic technologies;

''(3) improve and create mitigation and recovery methodologies, including techniques and policies for real-time containment of attacks, and development of resilient networks and information systems;

''(4) support, in coordination with the private sector, the review of source code that underpins critical infrastructure information systems;

''(5) develop and support infrastructure and tools to support cybersecurity research and development efforts, including modeling, testbeds, and data sets for assessment of new cybersecurity technologies;

''(6) assist the development and support of technologies to reduce vulnerabilities in industrial control systems; and

''(7) develop and support cyber forensics and attack attribution.

''(c) COORDINATION.—In carrying out this section, the Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall coordinate activities with—

''(1) the Under Secretary appointed pursuant to section 103(a)(1)(H);

''(2) the heads of other relevant Federal departments and agencies, including the National Science Foundation, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, the Information Assurance Directorate of the National Security Agency, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Department of Commerce, the Networking and Information Technology Research and Development Program Office, Sector Specific Agencies for critical infrastructure, and other appropriate working groups established by the President to identify unmet needs and cooperatively support activities, as appropriate; and

''(3) industry and academia.

''(d) TRANSITION TO PRACTICE.—The Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall

support projects through the full life cycle of such projects, including research, development, testing, evaluation, pilots, and transitions. The Under Secretary shall identify mature technologies that address existing or imminent cybersecurity gaps in public or private information systems and networks of information systems, identify and support necessary improvements identified during pilot programs and testing and evaluation activities, and introduce new cybersecurity technologies throughout the Homeland Security Enterprise through partnerships and commercialization. The Under Secretary shall target federally funded cybersecurity research that demonstrates a high probability of successful transition to the commercial market within two years and that is expected to have notable impact on the cybersecurity of the information systems or networks of information systems of the United States.

''(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) CYBERSECURITY RISK.—The term 'cybersecurity risk' has the meaning given such term in the second section 226, relating to the national cybersecurity and communications integration center.

''(2) HOMELAND SECURITY ENTERPRISE.—The term 'Homeland Security Enterprise' means relevant governmental and nongovernmental entities involved in homeland security, including Federal, State, local, and tribal government officials, private sector representatives, academics, and other policy experts.

''(3) INCIDENT.—The term 'incident' has the meaning given such term in the second section 226, relating to the national cybersecurity and communications integration center.

''(4) INFORMATION SYSTEM.—The term 'information system' has the meaning given that term in section 3502(8) of title 44, United States Code.

''SEC. 323. INTEGRATED PRODUCT TEAMS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish integrated product teams to serve as a central mechanism for the Department to identify, coordinate, and align research and development efforts with departmental missions. Each team shall be managed by the Under Secretary for Science and Technology and the relevant senior leadership of operational components, and shall be responsible for the following:

''(1) Identifying and prioritizing homeland security capability gaps or threats to the homeland within a specific mission area and technological solutions to address such gaps.

''(2) Identifying ongoing departmental research and development activities and component acquisitions of technologies that are outside of departmental research and development activities to address a specific mission area.

''(3) Assessing the appropriateness of a technology to address a specific mission area.

''(4) Identifying unnecessary redundancy in departmental research and development activities within a specific mission area.

''(5) Informing the Secretary and the annual budget process regarding whether certain technological solutions are able to address homeland security capability gaps or threats to the homeland within a specific mission area.

''(b) CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT.—Not later than two years after the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary shall provide to the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate information on the impact and effectiveness of the mechanism described in subsection (a) on research and development efforts, component relationships, and how the process has informed the research and development budget and enhanced decision making, including acquisition decision making, at the Department. The Secretary shall seek feedback from the Under Secretary for Science and Technology, Under Secretary for Management, and the senior leadership of operational components regarding the impact and effectiveness of such mechanism and include such feedback in the information provided under this subsection.

''SEC. 324. HOMELAND SECURITY-STEM SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall establish a Homeland Security-STEM internship program (in this section referred to as the 'program') to carry out the objectives of this subtitle.

''(b) PROGRAM.—The program shall provide students with exposure to Department mission-relevant research areas, including threats to the homeland, to encourage such students to pursue STEM careers in homeland security related fields. Internships offered under the program shall be for up to ten weeks during the summer.

''(c) ELIGIBILITY.—The Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall develop criteria for participation in the program, including the following:

''(1) At the time of application, an intern shall—

''(A) have successfully completed not less than one academic year of study at an institution of higher education in a STEM field;

''(B) be enrolled in a course of study in a STEM field at an institution of higher education; and

''(C) plan to continue such course of study or pursue an additional course of study in a STEM field at an institution of higher education in the academic year following the internship.

''(2) An intern shall be pursuing career goals aligned with the Department's mission, goals, and objectives.

''(3) Any other criteria the Under Secretary determines appropriate.

''(d) COOPERATION.—The program shall be administered in cooperation with the university-based centers for homeland security under section 308. Interns in the program shall be provided hands-on research experience and enrichment activities focused on Department research areas.

''(e) ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS; OPERATION.—The Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall determine the academic requirements, other selection criteria, and standards for successful completion of each internship period in the program. The Under Secretary shall be responsible for the design, implementation, and operation of the program.

''(f) RESEARCH MENTORS.—The Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall ensure that each intern in the program is assigned a research mentor to act as counselor and advisor and provide career-focused advice.

''(g) OUTREACH TO CERTAIN UNDER-REPRESENTED STUDENTS.—The Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall conduct outreach to students who are members of groups under-represented in STEM careers to encourage their participation in the program.

''(h) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'institution of higher education' has the meaning given the term in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002), except that the term does not include institutions described in subparagraph (C) of such section 102(a)(1).''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is 30 days after the date of the enactment of this section.

(c) 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 new items:

''Sec. 318. Identification and prioritization of research and development.
''Sec. 319. Development of Directorate strategy and research and development plan.
''Sec. 320. Monitoring of progress.
''Sec. 321. Homeland Security Science and Technology Fellows Program.
''Sec. 322. Cybersecurity research and development.
''Sec. 323. Integrated product teams.
''Sec. 324. Homeland Security-STEM summer internship program.''.

(d) RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.—Section 831 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 391) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2020'';

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking the last sentence; and

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

''(3) PRIOR APPROVAL.—In any case in which a component or office of the Department seeks to utilize the authority under this section, such office or component shall first receive prior approval from the Secretary by providing to the Secretary a proposal that includes the rationale for the use of such authority, the funds to be spent on the use of such authority, and the expected outcome for each project that is the subject of the use of such authority. In such a case, the authority for evaluating the proposal may not be delegated by the Secretary to anyone other than the Under Secretary for Management.'';

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2020''; and

(B) by amending paragraph (2) to read as follows:

''(2) REPORT.—The Secretary shall annually submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report detailing the projects for which the authority granted by subsection (a) was used, the rationale for such use, the funds spent using such authority, the extent of cost-sharing for such projects among Federal and non-federal sources, the extent to which use of such authority has addressed a homeland security capability gap or threat to the homeland identified by the Department, the total amount of payments, if any, that were received by the Federal Government as a result of the use of such authority during the period covered by each such report, the outcome of each project for which such authority was used, and the results of any audits of such projects.''; and

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

''(e) TRAINING.—The Secretary shall develop a training program for acquisitions staff in the use of other transaction authority to help ensure the appropriate use of such authority.

''(f) OTHER TRANSACTION AUTHORITY DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'other transaction authority' means authority under subsection (a).''.

(e) AMENDMENT TO DEFINITION.—Paragraph (2) of subsection (a) of the second section 226 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6

U.S.C. 148; relating to the national cybersecurity and communications integration center) is amended to read as follows:

''(2) INCIDENT.—The term 'incident' means an occurrence that actually or imminently jeopardizes, without lawful authority, the integrity, confidentiality, or availability of information on an information system, or actually or imminently jeopardizes, without lawful authority, an information system.''.

(f) GAO STUDY OF UNIVERSITY-BASED CENTERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall initiate a study to assess the university-based centers for homeland security program authorized by section 308(b)(2) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 188(b)(2)), and provide recommendations to the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate for appropriate improvements.

(2) SUBJECT MATTERS.—The study required under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(A) A review of the Department of Homeland Security's efforts to identify key areas of study needed to support the homeland security mission, and criteria that the Department utilized to determine those key areas for which the Department should maintain, establish, or eliminate university-based centers.

(B) A review of the method by which university-based centers, federally funded research and development centers, and Department of Energy national laboratories receive tasking from the Department of Homeland Security, including a review of how university-based research is identified, prioritized, and funded.

(C) A review of selection criteria for designating university-based centers and a weighting of such criteria.

(D) An examination of best practices from other agencies' efforts to organize and use university-based research to support their missions.

(E) A review of the Department of Homeland Security's criteria and metrics to measure demonstrable progress achieved by university-based centers in fulfilling Department taskings, and mechanisms for delivering and disseminating the research results of designated university-based centers within the Department and to other Federal, State, and local agencies.

(F) An examination of the means by which academic institutions that are not designated or associated with the designated university-based centers can optimally contribute to the research mission of the Directorate of Science and Technology of the Department of Homeland Security.

(G) An assessment of the interrelationship between the different university-based centers and the degree to which outreach and collaboration among a diverse array of academic institutions is encouraged by the Department of Homeland Security, particularly with historically Black colleges and universities and minority-serving institutions.

(H) A review of any other essential elements of the programs determined in the conduct of the study.

(g) PRIZE AUTHORITY.—The Under Secretary for Science and Technology of the Department of Homeland Security shall utilize, as appropriate, prize authority granted pursuant to current law.

(h) PROHIBITION ON NEW FUNDING.—No funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section and the amendments made by this section. Such section and amendments shall be carried out using amounts otherwise appropriated or made available for such purposes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RATCLIFFE) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material 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. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3578, the DHS Science and Technology Reform and Improvement Act of 2015, makes targeted adjustments and strategic improvements to the ways in which the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate, or DHS S&T, carries out its responsibility to conduct research and development. These strategic improvements will strengthen the Directorate and address some of its well-documented challenges.

DHS S&T monitors the Nation's evolving threats and makes use of technological advancements to develop and deliver solutions to meet the critical needs of the DHS components.

The legislation we are considering today provides a clear mission statement for the Directorate and it codifies S&T's portfolio review process. This process engages key leadership and stakeholders to ensure that research and development meets the Directorate and Department goals.

Amendments considered at both the subcommittee and full committee further strengthen this legislation, including Mr. RICHMOND's amendment to codify integrated product teams, a mechanism that will support the Directorate's ability to identify, coordinate, and align research and development efforts with departmental missions.

H.R. 3578 also ensures that the Directorate identifies technical capability requirements and creates solutions with researchers and the private sector. It also bolsters S&T's role as coordinator of research and development across the Department.

This bill requires additional transparency by requiring S&T to link its budget with mission areas and programs.

Cybersecurity research and development is essential to support DHS' efforts to secure the dot-gov domain. The seriousness of this mission received heightened awareness after the OPM breach compromised the highly sensitive and personal information of over 20 million Americans.

H.R. 3578 bolsters S&T's cybersecurity research and development by ensuring sector specific agencies for critical infrastructure are included in the coordination of cybersecurity research and development and by codifying the Transition to Practice program to support the lifecycle of cyber projects, including research, development, testing, evaluation, and transition.

S&T is the primary research arm of the Department, managing the basic and applied research and development of science and technology for DHS' operational components. S&T's work includes supporting research and development for technologies to benefit first responders, the Nation's border and maritime security, cybersecurity, and chemical and biological defenses.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Texas, Chairman SMITH, of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee for his support in moving this legislation forward.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation would strengthen the important role and work of the Directorate to meet both the scientific and technological security needs of our Nation.

I urge all Members to join me in supporting this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY,

Washington, DC, December 4, 2015.

Hon. MICHAEL MCCAUL,

Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing concerning H.R. 3578, the ''DHS Science and Technology Reform and Improvement Act of 2015,'' which your Committee ordered reported on September 30, 2015.

H.R. 3578 contains provisions within the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology's Rule X jurisdiction. However, in consideration of your request to expedite this bill for floor consideration, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology will forego formal consideration of H.R. 3578. This is being done on the basis of our mutual understanding that doing so will in no way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology with respect to the appointment of conferees, or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation.

I appreciate that the Committee on Homeland Security has consulted with the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and the two Committees have reached agreement on the final text of H.R. 3578. I understand you acknowledge the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology's jurisdiction over the legislation and that the Committee on Homeland Security agrees to work with the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology to develop and enact an additional homeland security research and development measure early in 2016.

I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding and would request that you include a copy of this letter and your response in the Congressional Record during the floor consideration of this bill. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

LAMAR SMITH,

Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, December 4, 2015.

Hon. LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 3578, the ''DHS Science and Technology Reform and Improvement Act of 2015.'' I acknowledge that by forgoing action on this legislation your Committee is not diminishing or altering its jurisdiction.

I also concur with you that forgoing action on this bill does not in any way prejudice the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology with respect to its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future. Furthermore, I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation.

In addition, I agree that the Committee on Homeland Security will continue to work with the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology to develop additional legislation addressing homeland security research and development in early 2016.

I will include copies of this exchange in the *Congressional Record* during consideration of this measure on the House floor. I appreciate your cooperation regarding HR. 3578, and I look forward to working with the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology as the bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman,
Committee on Homeland Security.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise to support H.R. 3578, the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Reform and Improvement Act of 2015.

First, I want to say to the gentleman from Texas, thank you so very much for your leadership. Again, we have a great opportunity working together, along with your ranking member, Mr. RICHMOND, and the chairman of the full committee, Mr. MCCAUL, and, as well, Mr. THOMPSON. I believe we are continuously building blocks of security for the American people.

Research and development is a key component of the Department of Homeland Security's mission to make America more secure and better able to prevent, respond to, and recover from natural disasters and terrorist acts.

In the constantly evolving threat landscape, technology-based force multipliers are essential for managing our borders, safeguarding cyberspace, and making sure we are resilient in the face of disasters.

H.R. 3578 will improve the way the Science and Technology Directorate serves its customers within the Department in the first responder community in three ways.

Before I say that, let me indicate to the chairman, we understand that we are looking at generational gaps. Terrorists are young. People who wish to undermine the landscape of cybersecurity can use, if I might say, these young minds, these technocrats, to do things that we may have never heard of, so our system must be resilient.

First, this bill requires S&T to engage in strategic planning and priority-setting exercises that will assist Congress in measuring the management effectiveness and utility of the research and technologies it funds. This kind of self-assessment will make S&T a more effective partner to its customers and will help make its program more efficient.

Second, H.R. 3578 directs S&T to evaluate its university programs and collaborative agreements and assess its efforts to broaden outreach to diverse institutions, which may have a unique expertise to add to S&T's ongoing work.

Given the current fiscal challenges, it is critical that we maximize the way we leverage the capabilities of knowledge-rich universities, and this provision will help S&T do just that. In fact, I believe that the universities are our richest source of talent, and not only for the researchers and the professors, but certainly the students who are young, who are there to do good, of whom we can utilize both their talents, their approach, and their intellect.

Finally, the bill encourages carefully targeted venture capital investments in the homeland security enterprise that can accelerate product development and add mission critical capabilities quickly and efficiently.

These targeted investments will help put better technologies into the hands of DHS boots-on-the-ground State and local first responders soon.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3578 codifies existing practices at S&T that are working and will make S&T a stronger, more reliable partner in the homeland security mission.

I encourage my colleagues to support this important bipartisan legislation, and, as well, I continue to look forward to working with this subcommittee, among others, to begin to look at the cyber space and the cybersecurity infrastructure.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH), my friend and colleague.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague from Texas (Mr. RATCLIFFE) for his work on this legislation, for his earlier generous comments, and for yielding me time as well. I also want to thank both him and the gentleman from Texas, MICHAEL MCCAUL, the full committee chairman, for their work on this legislation.

The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology shares jurisdiction with the Homeland Security Committee over the research and development programs carried out by the Department of Homeland Security. In the case of this bill, H.R. 3578, it is the R&D of the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate, which was established by legislation that originated in the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, likewise, shares jurisdiction of the bill we just considered, H.R. 3875. That bill will assess and plan DHS research and development of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives defenses.

Next year, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology expects to continue to advance science and technology efforts to counter terrorist threats to the homeland.

In anticipation of today's legislation, our committee exercised its jurisdiction by holding two hearings. In September of 2014, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology's Research and Technology Subcommittee held a joint DHS S&T Directorate oversight hearing with Homeland Security's Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies Subcommittee.

The hearing focused on a series of Government Accountability Office reviews that found serious problems with management and coordination of R&D within the Department of Homeland Security. This includes fragmented and overlapping R&D programs and millions of taxpayer dollars spent on duplicative R&D projects.

The GAO recommended that the S&T Directorate develop stricter policies and guidance to help define, oversee, coordinate, and track R&D across the Department of Homeland Security.

The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology conducted a follow-up oversight hearing on October 27 of this year. At that hearing, Under Secretary Brothers described the progress made in its implementation of the GAO's recommendations and updated us on the S&T Directorate's initiatives to help DHS meet the full spectrum of threats.

The legislation before the House today reflects the work of the members of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and the Committee on Homeland Security to help the S&T Directorate meet a broad range of homeland security challenges by stretching the technological envelope.

The bill establishes a clear mission for the Directorate, updates its responsibilities, and requires strategy and R&D plans to prioritize addressing homeland threats. It also authorizes targeted cybersecurity R&D projects and creates new S&T integrated product teams to develop technological solutions to meet the Department's mission areas and address threats to the homeland.

Last week's horrifying terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California, just days after a terrorist attack in Paris, reminds us that this legislation is ultimately about defending the American people and our country from terrorists.

Again, I thank Chairman MCCAUL for taking the initiative with this critical legislation, and I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RATCLIFFE) as well.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In order to meet the needs of those on the front line of homeland security activities from Customs and Border Protection and the Transportation Security to local first responders, the Science and Technology Directorate must rapidly develop and deliver innovative solutions that advance DHS' mission.

I am convinced that the whole matter of cyber technology are the new frontier of terrorism and that this Department must be, as it has been, very well prepared with human personnel being on the front lines of the first responders, and must give them extra tools through S&T to help to further the mission of the security of this Nation. It is a complex and difficult mission.

H.R. 3578 puts S&T on a pathway to making smarter and quicker R&D investment in technology and tools that help our first responders do their jobs better and more effectively.

With that, I ask my colleagues to support H.R. 3578, and I thank the proponent of this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I thank the gentlewoman for her support and leadership in connection with this bill. I would also like to thank Chairman MCCAUL and Ranking Member THOMPSON for their leadership in moving this important bill forward.

Mr. Speaker, threats in technologies are always changing. This bill will help DHS S&T find strategic and focused technology options and innovative solutions to address homeland security capability gaps and threats to our homeland.

I, once again, urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 3578, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RATCLIFFE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3578, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

□ 1600

STATE AND LOCAL CYBER PROTECTION ACT OF 2015

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3869) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require State and local coordination on cybersecurity with the national cybersecurity and communications integration center, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3869

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 ''State and Local Cyber Protection Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. STATE AND LOCAL COORDINATION ON CYBERSECURITY WITH THE NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY AND COMMUNICATIONS INTEGRATION CENTER.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The second section 226 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 148; relating to the national cybersecurity and communications integration center) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(g) STATE AND LOCAL COORDINATION ON CYBERSECURITY.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Center shall, to the extent practicable—

''(A) assist State and local governments, upon request, in identifying information system vulnerabilities;

''(B) assist State and local governments, upon request, in identifying information security protections commensurate with cybersecurity risks and the magnitude of the potential harm resulting from the unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, or destruction of—

''(i) information collected or maintained by or on behalf of a State or local government; or

''(ii) information systems used or operated by an agency or by a contractor of a State or local government or other organization on behalf of a State or local government;

''(C) in consultation with State and local governments, provide and periodically update via a web portal tools, products, resources, policies, guidelines, and procedures related to information security;

''(D) work with senior State and local government officials, including State and local Chief Information Officers, through national associations to coordinate a nationwide effort to ensure effective implementation of tools, products, resources, policies, guidelines, and procedures related to information security to secure and ensure the resiliency of State and local information systems;

''(E) provide, upon request, operational and technical cybersecurity training to State and local government and fusion center analysts and operators to address cybersecurity risks or incidents;

''(F) provide, in coordination with the Chief Privacy Officer and the Chief Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Officer of the Department, privacy and civil liberties training to State and local governments related to cybersecurity;

''(G) provide, upon request, operational and technical assistance to State and local governments to implement tools, products, resources, policies, guidelines, and procedures on information security by—

''(i) deploying technology to assist such State or local government to continuously diagnose and mitigate against cyber threats and vulnerabilities, with or without reimbursement;

''(ii) compiling and analyzing data on State and local information security; and

''(iii) developing and conducting targeted operational evaluations, including threat and vulnerability assessments, on the information systems of State and local governments;

''(H) assist State and local governments to develop policies and procedures for coordinating vulnerability disclosures, to the extent practicable, consistent with international and national standards in the information technology industry, including standards developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology; and

''(I) ensure that State and local governments, as appropriate, are made aware of the tools, products, resources, policies, guidelines, and procedures on information security developed by the Department and other appropriate Federal departments and agencies for ensuring the security and resiliency of Federal civilian information systems.

''(2) TRAINING.—Privacy and civil liberties training provided pursuant to subparagraph (F) of paragraph (1) shall include processes, methods, and information that—

''(A) are consistent with the Department's Fair Information Practice Principles developed pursuant to section 552a of title 5, United States Code (commonly referred to as the 'Privacy Act of 1974' or the 'Privacy Act');

''(B) reasonably limit, to the greatest extent practicable, the receipt, retention, use, and disclosure of information related to cybersecurity risks and incidents associated with specific persons that is not necessary, for cybersecurity purposes, to protect an information system or network of information systems from cybersecurity risks or to mitigate cybersecurity risks and incidents in a timely manner;

''(C) minimize any impact on privacy and civil liberties;

''(D) provide data integrity through the prompt removal and destruction of obsolete or erroneous names and personal information that is unrelated to the cybersecurity risk or incident information shared and retained by the Center in accordance with this section;

''(E) include requirements to safeguard cyber threat indicators and defensive measures retained by the Center, including information that is proprietary or business-sensitive that may be used to identify specific persons from unauthorized access or acquisition;

''(F) protect the confidentiality of cyber threat indicators and defensive measures associated with specific persons to the greatest extent practicable; and

''(G) ensure all relevant constitutional, legal, and privacy protections are observed.''.

(b) CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the national cybersecurity and communications integration center of the Department of Homeland Security shall provide to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate information on the activities and effectiveness of such activities under subsection (g) of the second section 226 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 148; relating to the national cybersecurity and communications integration center), as added by subsection (a) of this section, on State and local information security. The center shall seek feedback from State and local governments regarding the effectiveness of such activities and include such feedback in the information required to be provided under this subsection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material 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. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The need to address cybersecurity at the State and local levels is of the utmost importance. From our local DMV offices and courthouses to our critical infrastructure, the exploitable vulnerabilities and possible consequences are alarming.

Yet, in the cybersecurity realm, State and local governments often do not have access to the technical capabilities and training that the Federal Government does.

My bill, H.R. 3869, the State and Local Cyber Protection Act, is a critical step in the resolution of this problem.

In 2010, the National Governors Association released a statement on the importance of cybersecurity in protecting the ability of Federal, State, and local governments to perform their vital functions.

They stated:

''Due to the breadth and scope of the State role in entitlement services, facilitating travel and commerce, regulatory oversight, licensing and citizen services, states gather, process, store, and share extensive amounts of personal information. From cradle to grave, the states are the nexus of identity information for individuals. This makes the states prime targets for external and internal cyber threats.''

Cybersecurity is a shared responsibility involving all levels of government and the private sector. While much has been done over the last several years to improve the Nation's cybersecurity, a number of challenges remain. This bill would allow State and local governments access to the assistance, training, and tools, voluntarily and upon request, that are required to secure our Nation's information systems at every level.

This bill instructs the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center, the NCCIC, at the Department of Homeland Security to coordinate with States and locals on securing their information systems.

The NCCIC will do so by assisting in the identification of system vulnerabilities and possible solutions for State and local information security systems.

They will be developing a Web portal to communicate available tools for States and locals, providing technical training for State and local cybersecurity analysts, providing assistance and implementing cybersecurity tools upon request, providing privacy and civil liberties training, and informing States and locals on the current cybersecurity guidelines already developed at the Federal level.

Lastly, the State and Local Cyber Protection Act would require the NCCIC to seek feedback from State and local governments once the law is implemented and voluntary assistance has begun in order to gauge the effectiveness of these efforts and to ensure that progress is being made.

The Department of Homeland Security has a substantial responsibility to States and locals in the cyber realm as State and local systems host a wide range of sensitive PII and critical infrastructure data, making them especially attractive for cyberattacks. By reinforcing the relationship between DHS and State and local governments, we are supporting and urging for the continued development of cyber protection for our State and local governments.

I urge all Members to join me in supporting this bill.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 3869, the State and Local Cyber Protection Act of 2015.

Let me first of all thank the gentleman from Texas for his leadership in working on this legislation, to again acknowledge our chairs—Mr. MCCAUL and Mr. THOMPSON—and also to acknowledge Mr. RATCLIFFE and Mr. RICHMOND for their leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, the threat of the cyber attack is growing, and the damage caused by those attacks, whether it is the theft of personally identifiable information or the disruption of operations, is becoming more costly.

FEMA has identified cybersecurity as an area for national improvement in its National Preparedness Report every year since it was first published in 2012. That finding is based, in large part, on State self-assessments reflecting a lack of confidence in cybersecurity capabilities. The threat posed by criminal and terrorist hackers continues to evolve even as State and local governments work to gain a stronger footing in the cybersecurity mission area.

Let me say that this country continues to grow, continues to increase its population, and continues to become dependent on the cybersecurity infrastructure. Helping to engage State and local entities by training is a crucial, crucial action, if I might applaud the gentleman, but also say it is a very important mission for both the Homeland Security Department and the Committee on Homeland Security. The Department of Homeland Security has resources and capabilities that, when shared with State and local governments, can help them step up their games.

H.R. 3869, the State and Local Cyber Protection Act of 2015, would codify ongoing efforts by instructing the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center, the NCCIC, and the Department of Homeland Security to coordinate with State and local governments and to, upon request, provide assistance to secure their information systems.

Information systems run water entities in our communities. I remember visiting one that was up on the Web, if you will, that could be altered by a cyber attack. This legislation would codify DHS' ongoing coordination effort to give assurances to State and local governments that DHS stands ready to partner with them to protect their network.

Under this bill, DHS is authorized to assist State and local governments to deploy technology capable of diagnosing and mitigating against cyber threats and vulnerabilities.

H.R. 3869 authorizes DHS to provide training to State and local entities regarding integrating policies to protect privacy and civil liberties into their cybersecurity efforts.

It is increasingly important that all levels of government be capable of identifying information system vulnerabilities and of protecting them from unauthorized access, disclosure, and disruption of data.

I will say to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) that we have always, as a committee, been reminded of privacy and civil liberties issues while also protecting the American people. To build that capability, the Federal Government has a role to play in assisting State and local entities by providing both technical training on cybersecurity and guidance on potential privacy and civil liberties implications.

Mr. Speaker, many stakeholders throughout the country have told us this bill is a vital, much-needed step in advancing national cybersecurity capabilities.

I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 3869.

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 3869, the State and Local Cyber Protection Act.

As a Senior Member of the Homeland Security Committee, and Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations I am well aware of the terrorism and criminal risks to our nation's critical infrastructure, civilian and privacy computer networks.

For this reason, I introduced H.R. 85, the Terrorism Prevention and Critical Infrastructure Protection Act, which directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to work with critical infrastructure owners and operators and state, local, and territorial to take proactive steps to address All Hazards that would impact: national security; economic stability; public health and safety; and/or any combination of these.

This nation is presented with new challenges in confronting threats to our national security, and cybersecurity.

Critical infrastructure remains an essential area that must receive the needed attention to protect it against all threats and all-hazards.

Post-9/11 established the need to anticipate unexpected threats from a variety of sources. The nation must plan to be a step ahead of our enemies in order to effectively detect, deter, and defend against terrorist attacks in whatever form they may arise, including cyberattacks to our nation's critical infrastructure.

It is for these reasons that I proposed H.R. 85, the Terrorism Prevention and Critical Infrastructure Protection Act of 2015. This bill should it become law would greatly assist in our nation's ability to protect critical infrastructure from the worse effects of cyber-attacks.

The nation must be adequately prepared to fight cyber terrorism just as vigorously as we combat other form of terrorism carried out through physical violence. We can be prepared to meet and defeat cyber terrorism threats with legislative efforts like H.R. 85, which would offer tools to effectively address terrorist attacks against critical infrastructure.

The Terrorism Prevention and Critical Infrastructure Protection Act directs the Secretary of Homeland Security (DHS) to:

(1) better engage critical infrastructure owners and operators as volunteers for the purpose of coordination of communication among state, local, tribal, and territorial entities for the purpose of taking proactive steps to manage risk and strengthen the security and resilience of the nation's critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks;

(2) establish terrorism prevention policy to engage with international partners to strengthen the security and resilience of domestic critical infrastructure and critical infrastructure located outside of the United States;

(3) make available research findings and guidance to federal civilian agencies for the identification, prioritization, assessment, remediation, and security of their internal critical infrastructure to assist in the prevention, mediation, and recovery from terrorism events.

The bill sets forth the terrorism protection responsibilities of the Department of Homeland Security as it relates to the Department's responsibility to protection and defends civilian agencies and private sector networks from cyber-attacks.

H.R. 85, Terrorism Prevention and Critical Infrastructure Protection Act also provides guidance to the Secretary of Homeland Security regarding actions to be taken to:

(1) facilitate the timely exchange of terrorism threat and vulnerability information as well as information that allows for the development of a situational awareness capability for federal civilian agencies during terrorist incidents;

(2) implement an integration and analysis function for critical infrastructure that includes operational and strategic analysis on terrorism incidents, threats, and emerging risks; and

(3) support greater terrorism cyber security information sharing by civilian federal agencies with the private sector that protects constitutional privacy and civil liberties rights.

Finally the bill directs the National Research Council to evaluate how well DHS is meeting the objectives of this Act.

I thank Chairman MCCAUL and Ranking Member THOMPSON for their support and collaboration in working with me to improve the bill for consideration by the Full Committee and ultimately the House of Representatives as we work to ensure safety, security, resiliency, trustworthiness of vital critical infrastructure networks, while at the same time ensuring that data used for this purpose does not undermine the privacy and civil liberties of Americans.

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

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, so I reserve the balance of my time.

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

In closing, I include for the RECORD an article dated October 19 from The Hill newspaper on boosting power grid defenses against ISIS.

[From The Hill, Oct. 19, 2015]

JACKSON LEE PUSHES TO BOOST POWER-GRID DEFENSES AGAINST ISIS

(By Katie Bo Williams)

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D–Texas) on Friday called for action on a bill bolstering power-grid cybersecurity after a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) official said the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is trying to hack American electrical power companies.

''No solace should be taken in the fact that ISIS has been unsuccessful,'' Jackson Lee said. ''ISIS need only be successful once to have catastrophic impact on regional electricity supply.''

Caitlin Durkovich, assistant secretary for infrastructure protection at DHS, told energy firm executives at an industry conference in Philadelphia last week that ISIS ''is beginning to perpetrate cyberattacks.''

Law enforcement officials speaking at the same event indicated that the group's efforts have so far been unsuccessful, thanks in part to a Balkanized power grid and an unsophisticated approach.

''Strong intent. Thankfully, low capability,'' said John Riggi, a section chief at the FBI's cyber division. ''But the concern is that they'll buy that capability.''

Jackson Lee, a senior member of the House Homeland Security Committee and ranking member on the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, in January introduced the Terrorism Prevention and Critical Infrastructure Protection Act.

The bill directs DHS to work with critical infrastructure companies to boost their cyber defenses against terrorist attacks, part of a swath of legislation that has attempted to codify the agency's responsibilities in that area.

Late last year, the Senate passed its version of the House-passed National Cybersecurity and Critical Infrastructure Protection Act.

The bill officially authorized an already-existing cybersecurity information-sharing hub at DHS.

Although a deadly attack on power plants or the electric grid—a ''cyber Pearl Harbor''—is still only a hypothetical, experts warn critical infrastructure sites are increasingly at risk, as electric grids get smarter.

National Security Agency Director Michael Rogers told lawmakers last fall that China and ''one or two'' other countries would be able to shut down portions of critical U.S. infrastructure with a cyberattack. Researchers suspect Iran to be on that list.

In August, DHS announced the creation of a new subcommittee dedicated to preventing attacks on the power grid.

The new panel is tasked with identifying how well the department's lifeline sectors are prepared to meet threats and recover from a significant cyber event.

The committee will also provide recommendations for a more unified approach to state and local cybersecurity.

''There is a great deal that has been done and is being done now to secure our networks,'' Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson told the House Judiciary Committee in July. ''There is more to do.''

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, State and local governments have been struggling to keep pace with the evolving threats posed by cyber breaches. They just cannot do it alone. We have the resources. This Department was crafted and designed to be able to reach out beyond these parameters to ensure that local governments and State governments felt that they were secure.

I believe that the enactment of H.R. 3869 would send a clear message about our commitment to helping State and local governments address the perennial cybersecurity challenges that permeate their providing services for their constituents, which have been identified every year, according to the National Preparedness Report.

In having formerly chaired this infrastructure committee, I know that the need still remains great and that we have an opportunity to keep building and improving on that resource.

Again, I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on H.R. 3869.

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

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I concur with the gentlewoman. Once again, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3869.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3869, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to assist State and local coordination on cybersecurity with the national cybersecurity and communications integration center, and for other purposes.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FIRST RESPONDER IDENTIFICATION OF EMERGENCY NEEDS IN DISASTER SITUATIONS

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2795) to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to submit a study on the circumstances which may impact the effectiveness and availability of first responders before, during, or after a terrorist threat or event, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2795

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 ''First Responder Identification of Emergency Needs in Disaster Situations'' or the ''FRIENDS Act''.

SEC. 2. CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MAY IMPACT FIRST RESPONDERS DURING A TERRORIST EVENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report that describes select State and local programs and policies, as appropriate, related to the preparedness and protection of first responders. The report may include information on—

(1) the degree to which such programs and policies include consideration of the presence of a first responder's family in an area impacted by a terrorist attack;

(2) the availability of personal protective equipment for first responders;

(3) the availability of home Medkits for first responders and their families for biological incident response; and

(4) other related factors.

(b) CONTEXT.—In preparing the report required under subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the United States may, as appropriate, provide information—

(1) in a format that delineates high risk urban areas from rural communities; and

(2) on the degree to which the selected State and local programs and policies included in the report were developed or are being executed with funding from the Department of Homeland Security, including grant funding from the State Homeland Security Grant Program or the Urban Area Security Initiative under sections 2002 and 2003, respectively, of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 603 and 604).

(c) HOMELAND SECURITY CONSIDERATION.—After issuance of the report required under subsection (a), the Secretary of Homeland Security shall consider the report's findings and assess its applicability for Federal first responders.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material 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. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today to support H.R. 2795, the First Responder Identification of Emergency Needs in Disaster Situations.

Our country continues to be resilient because of the men and women who keep us safe every day by putting their lives on the line. We can thank them by ensuring they have sufficient resources to do their jobs.

H.R. 2795 will take a national snapshot of the current policies and programs that support first responders and their families in the event of a terrorist attack.

By requiring the Government Accountability Office to report this national snapshot to Congress and to the Department of Homeland Security, we will have a better understanding of the support surrounding our first responders and their families.

Both the National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Officials and the International Association of Fire Chiefs are endorsing this legislation because it promotes the critical work our first responders are always prepared to do despite the challenges they face. Events like the Ebola scare that hit the U.S. in 2014 alerted us to the impact these events have not only had on our first responders, but also on their families.

I thank Ms. JACKSON LEE for introducing this legislation and for working with the Committee on Homeland Security to promote this important issue.

I urge all Members to join me in supporting this bill.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 2795, the First Responder Identification of Emergency Needs in Disaster Situations, or the FRIENDS Act, as we have been very happy to call it as we have crafted it.

First responders are our Nation's heroes. We know that we are gathering together in these final weeks to make sure that we pass the 9/11 health bill that provided for those who stood in the face of danger during the tragedy of 9/11.

We know that first responders run into burning buildings, that they rescue people trapped by dangerous floods, that they put themselves in harm's way to protect others, and that, as we well know in these times, they deal with terrorism.

Just last week, in San Bernardino, we saw brave first responders heroically pursue two individuals who were fleeing from the scene of a deadly attack at an office holiday party.

We also know that, at the site of that incident, we saw a massive number of first responders who were going toward the building. Not knowing the threat or whether or not the individuals who had created this massacre were still there or how many there were, they ran toward the building.

To do their jobs, first responders must leave their homes and families while the rest of us cling to ours. Whether it was to deal with the aftermath of a terrorist attack, like the attacks of September 11, or to give support during a catastrophic disaster, like Hurricane Katrina, first responders bravely leave home to save others.

I had firsthand experiences of both of those incidences, one, a natural disaster and, one, a terrorist act.

I watched as firefighters stayed day after day after day and would not remove themselves because they were engaged in recovering their colleagues—their brothers and sisters—and those others who had perished. They stayed day after day.

That was a great hardship on those families. We know the stories. We know that some of them were dealing with situations in which they may have been the only parent or the only guardian.

In the situation of Katrina, I saw the Coast Guard stay in the area time after time and the National Guard and other first responders come from all over the country and from even all over the world to be able to help those who were in need, and they stayed a very long time.

Unfortunately, today first responders are asked to answer the call to action without knowing whether their families will be safe as they work to rescue others. Our first responders deserve better.

□ 1615

The FRIENDS Act directs the Government Accountability Office to conduct a comprehensive review of policies and programs designed to ensure that first responders are able to do their job safely and effectively by assessing, among other things, measures to ensure first responder families are safe and the availability of personal protective equipment is there.

During committee consideration of the FRIENDS Act, my friend from New York (Mr. HIGGINS) offered an amendment to authorize GAO to evaluate the availability of home med kits for first responders and their families in assessing the preparedness of first responders, maybe even being able to take care of their neighborhood or their family or themselves in the course of these disasters. I am pleased to support the Higgins amendment, and I believe it adds to the bill.

H.R. 2759 also directs GAO to distinguish policies available in high-risk urban areas, which may be better resourced, and rural areas where efforts to ensure preparedness for first responders and their families may require creative leveraging of resources. Many of those areas have volunteer fire departments and volunteers who need the assistance from this act. This provision will ensure that the information included in the report will be applicable and adaptable by various communities across the country as they work to better protect their protectors and to give them the support system that they need.

Additionally, the FRIENDS Act directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to review GAO's findings and assess whether policies identified could be applicable to Federal first responders. The FRIENDS Act has been endorsed by the International Association of Fire Chiefs, as well as the National Association of State EMS Officials, and the International Emergency

Management Society, along with others.

Before I conclude, I would like to thank Ranking Member THOMPSON and Chairman MCCAUL for their help in bringing this important legislation to the floor. Let me also thank the ranking member and chairman of the emergency preparedness committee and all of jurisdictional committees that helped contribute to this. Let me also acknowledge the staffs on both sides of the aisle who were enormously effective in helping to bring about this bill.

I want to thank Mr. HOYER, who for many, many years was a co-chair of the Congressional Fire Service Caucus on which I participated with him over those years, for his stated support of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Homeland Security, and the author and sponsor, I am proud to rise in strong support of H.R. 2795, the ''First Responder Identification of Emergency Needs in Disaster Situations of 2015,'' or the ''FRIENDS Act.''

I thank Chairman MCCAUL and Ranking Member THOMPSON for their cooperation, assistance, and support in shepherding this important legislation to the floor.

I appreciate Congressman PAYNE, the Ranking Member of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications, for his original co-sponsorship and strong support of the FRIENDS Act.

The FRIENDS Act embodies the important and fundamental idea that we have an obligation to ensure that the first responders who protect our loved ones in emergencies have the peace of mind that comes from knowing that their loved ones are safe while they do their duty.

The FRIENDS Act, which reflects stakeholder input and bipartisan collaboration with the Majority, is an example of what can be achieved for the American people when Members of Congress put the public interest ahead of partisan interests.

I thank the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the National Association of State EMS Officials, and the International Emergency Management Society for their valuable assistance and input regarding the FRIENDS Act.

I thank Kay Goss; the President of the International Emergency Management Society, who provided technical assistance during the bill's drafting process on the work of first responders to prepare for catastrophic events.

Kay Goss was Associate FEMA Director in charge of National Preparedness, Training, and Exercises during the Clinton Administration, the first woman confirmed by the Senate to serve in that position.

I am passionate about the work of those who dedicate themselves to public service.

I hold in high regard the service of firefighters, law enforcement officers, emergency response technicians, nurses, emergency room doctors, and the dozens of other professionals who are the ultimate public servants.

Few persons outside their ranks truly understand why and how first responders are able to do what they do every day—voluntarily and cheerfully risk placing their lives in harm's way to save a stranger.

First responders, whether as law enforcement officers, fire fighters, search and rescue workers, or emergency medical technicians make our lives safer, often at considerable risk to their personal safety.

H.R. 2795 provides Congress an opportunity to let our first responders know that we do recognize and understand that they have families and loved ones who they must leave behind when they are called to duty.

The GAO study that will be provided as a result of this bill will shed light on what is being done by local and state governments to address the needs of first responder families when threats like Hurricanes Sandy, Hugo, and Katrina hit communities, or when a terrorist attack like the ones seen in New York and Boston occur.

The report called for by the FRIENDS Act will also provide information on the availability of personal protective equipment for first responders.

The issue of personal protective equipment was an acute problem for front line first responders during last year's Ebola crisis.

First responders including EMTs, emergency room doctors and nurses, as well as law enforcement and fire department professionals who responded to emergencies were in need of guidance on how to effectively treat a person with Ebola without becoming infected.

I joined members of the House Committee on Homeland Security in a Full Committee field hearing last year in Dallas, Texas, shortly after the first case of Ebola was diagnosed in the United States.

That patient, Eric Duncan, lived in the Dallas area and was treated at a local hospital, but died of the illness.

As a result of coming in contact with Mr. Duncan two nurses at the hospital where he was treated became ill with the disease.

During the Dallas field hearing, I brought to the attention of the House Homeland Security Committee a letter from National Nurses United transmitting the results of a survey of nurses, which found that:

1. Nearly 80 percent of respondents agreed that their hospital had not communicated to them any policy regarding potential admission of patients infected by Ebola;

2. 85 percent of respondents agreed that their hospital had not provided education on Ebola to enable nurses to interact with patients safely;

3. One-third of respondents reported that their hospital had insufficient supplies of eye protection (face shields or side shields with goggles) and fluid resistant/impermeable gowns; and

4. Nearly 40 percent of respondents agreed that their hospital did not have plans to equip isolation rooms with plastic covered mattresses and pillows and to discard all linens after use; fewer than 1 in 10 respondents reported that they were aware their hospital had such a plan in place.

The Centers for Disease Control and a few hospitals around the country with infectious disease units knew the right protocols and had the right protective gear to be used when treating an Ebola patient.

Ebola in the United States was a frightening thought for many, but I think we saw the best of what first responders do each day—our doctors and nurses went to work and treated the sick and did what they always do—take care of those in need.

In unanimously reported the FRIENDS Act favorably to the House, the Homeland Security Committee voted to support first responders and the people who love them and need them most, their families.

The FRIENDS Act will help ensure that our healthcare workers, EMTs, firefighters, law enforcement, and other local, state, and federal first responders can answer the call of duty secure in the knowledge that they will have what they need in the way of health kits or an emergency response plan to enable them to perform their duty and return home safely to their families and loved ones.

The GAO's comprehensive review of the range of policies and programs in place at the State level to address the preparedness and protection of first responders will also delineate high risk urban areas from rural communities; and the degree to which selected state policies were developed or executed with funding from the DHS Grant Programs or Urban Area Security Initiative authorized by the Homeland Security Act.

The GAO Report's focus on the presence of the family of first responders in an area affected by a terrorist attack and the availability of personal protective equipment is essential.

This will be the first report that focuses on the family as a critical factor that should be considered in the work of first responders during times of crisis such as a terrorist attack or public emergency.

The issue of families in areas that may be impacted by terrorist attack or other crisis was highlighted by the Ebola crisis in Dallas, Texas last year.

According to Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins, who managed the crisis, one of the chief concerns of first responders was keeping their families safe.

Judge Jenkins recounted that discrimination against first responders and their families was a real concern because it was known that EMTs and the firefighters accompanying them responded to the home of the first known Ebola victim in the United States, Eric Duncan.

People were so fearful for themselves and their children's health regarding possible means of contracting Ebola they did not want their children attending a school with the child of first responders who might come into contact with Ebola victims.

For this reason, Judge Jenkins requested the Commissioner of Public Health, the top Ebola expert in the United States, and the Dallas County Medical Society explain to the public that there was a zero percent chance of transmission of Ebola in that scenario.

In Dallas County and around the nation first responders expressed concerns regarding their lack of knowledge about the disease, as well as not having the right type of protective equipment to ensure their safety in managing the care of possible Ebola victims.

These are certainly factors that one would expect to weigh on a first responder called to respond to a terrorist attack or unprecedented emergency.

The bravery or dedication of first responders is not in question—they are the people who run into burning buildings to save people whom they may never have met.

The FRIENDS Act is a small token of the nation's gratitude and appreciation for all first responders do keep us safe.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge and thank Natalie Matson and her colleagues on the Homeland Security Committee's majority staff, Moira Bergin and her colleagues with

the Minority staff, and Lillie Coney of my personal staff for their technical expertise and great work on H.R. 2795.

I urge all Members to support the nation's first responders and vote to pass H.R. 2795, the FRIENDS Act.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, so I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close since I have no further speakers, and I yield myself the remaining time.

One of the things that we wanted to do in the course of this legislation is to make sure that the stakeholders were fully informed and thought this would be a constructive addition to their ability to serve the public and to be on call and to be away for long periods of time from their families, which they have been called to do.

As I begin to reflect, I reflected on the wildfires in the West, the enormous flooding that we have had, and certainly we cannot forget the issues dealing with terrorism. The terrorism investigations, as individuals who are victims are buried in California, the first responders, law enforcement, and others are still on the job investigating what is occurring.

So, Mr. Speaker, I include a series of letters into the RECORD from the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, who are indicating the importance of this legislation; a letter from the Office of the Mayor of the City of Houston, Mayor Annise Parker, who indicates that as first responders risk their lives in responding to terrorist attacks and other emergencies, they and their families are at increased risk; from the Houston Professional Fire Fighters, Association Local 341, who have written on behalf of the 3,800 men and women of the Houston Fire Department, indicating the need for this legislation to protect their families; from the National Association of State EMS Officials, the International Association of Fire Chiefs on behalf of nearly 11,000 fire service leaders for introducing this legislation that would provide adequate preparedness for their families; and an article which is entitled ''Family Versus Duty: Personal and Family Preparedness Law Enforcement Organizational Resilience.''

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF BLACK LAW ENFORCEMENT EXECUTIVES,
Alexandria, VA, December 9, 2015.

Hon. SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
Rayburn House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSWOMAN JACKSON LEE: On behalf of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), our Executive Board, local chapters, and members, I am writing to express support for H.R. 2795, the First Responder Identification of Emergency Needs in Disaster Situations (FRIENDS) Act. Our nation's first responders risk their lives in responding to terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and other emergencies. Consequently, they and their families may be at increased risk due to exposures they face in responding to disasters. Directing the Government Accountability Office to prepare a report that examines the preparedness and protection of first responders and their families, including an assessment of the grant funding available, will serve an important function by evaluating existing resources to protect first responders and their families and the need for additional resources.

NOBLE feels that it is important that we equip our first responders to protect our communities while also ensuring that their families are safe.

Sincerely,

DWAYNE A. CRAWFORD,
Executive Director,
NOBLE.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR,
CITY OF HOUSTON,
Houston, TX, December 7. 2015.

Hon. SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
Rayburn House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSWOMAN JACKSON LEE: I am writing to express my support for H.R. 2795, the First Responder Identification of Emergency Needs in Disaster Situations (FRIENDS) Act. Our nation's first responders risk their lives in responding to terrorist attacks and other emergencies, and they and their families may be at increased risk because of exposure they face in responding to disasters. Directing the Government Accountability Office to prepare a report that examines the preparedness and protection of first responders and their families, including an assessment of the grant funding available, will serve an important function by evaluating existing resources to protect first responders and their families and the need for additional resource.

We live in challenging times with the threat of terrorist attacks, and it is critical that we are prepared and that we best equip our first responders to protect our cities while at the same time ensuring that their families are safe.

Thank you for advancing this important legislation.

Sincerely,

ANNISE D. PARKER,
Mayor.

HOUSTON PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION LOCAL 341,
Houston, TX, December 7, 2015.

Hon. SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
House of Representatives, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE JACKSON LEE, On behalf of the 3,800 men and women of the Houston Professional Fire Fighters Association, IAFF Local 341, I thank you for your leadership on H.R. 2795, the First Responder Identification of Emergency Needs in Disaster Situations (FRIENDS) Act.

HPFFA members and our families appreciate your commitment to helping ensure that first responders' families will be prepared in the event of large-scale natural disasters, health crises, or terrorist attacks.

Thank you for introducing the FRIENDS Act.

Please let us know if you need anything else.

Sincerely,

ALVIN W. WHITE, JR.,
President.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE EMS OFFICIALS,
Falls Church, VA, September 28, 2015.

Re: Expressing Support for the Jackson Lee Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 2795.

Hon. MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman, House Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. MARTHA MCSALLY,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. DONALD M. PAYNE,
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

We are writing to express our support for the Jackson Lee Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute titled, the ''Families of Responders Identification of Emergency Needs in Designated Situations'' or the ''FRIENDS Act.'' This bill would provide an important report on the state of family support planning for the families of first responders.

We believe that Federal family support planning is important to homeland security because this area of continuity of operations planning addresses the health and safety needs of first responder families during terrorist attacks or incidents as well as other emergencies. The FRIENDS Act will be an important first step in engaging the first responder community on the role of family in preparedness and continuity of operations.

The FRIENDS Act would also engage first responder organizations to get their perspectives on best practices in family support planning programs on the local and state levels.

For these reasons, we support the FRIENDS Act of 2015.

Sincerely,

PAUL R. PATRICK,
President.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS,
Fairfax, VA, November 3, 2015.

Hon. SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE JACKSON LEE: On behalf of the nearly 11,000 fire service leaders of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), I would like thank you for introducing your substitute amendment to H.R. 2795, the First Responder Identification of Emergency Needs in Disaster Situations (FRIENDS) Act. The IAFC supports this legislation, because it will examine an important issue facing the nation's first responders during a major terrorist attack: adequate preparedness for the first responders' families.

During a major terrorist attack, fire, law enforcement and EMS officials will be called upon to take heroic actions to protect the public and provide fire and emergency medical response. In the case of a large-scale incident or biological attack, the families of these first responders also will be at risk. Based on the experience of IAFC members during the response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and last year's response to potential Ebola incidents in the United States, I know that the welfare of the first responders' families weighs heavily on them as they serve the public. It is important that federal, state, and local officials make plans to provide for the safety of first responders' families in order to ensure strong morale among

local fire, law enforcement, and EMS officials during a major terrorist attack.

The IAFC thanks the House Homeland Security Committee for considering this substitute amendment to H.R. 2795. It would direct the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to examine planning for first responders' families during terrorist attacks. We urge the GAO to highlight effective plans, so that other jurisdictions can learn from them. We also support Representative Higgins' amendment to make minor changes to the bill, including examining the use of med-kits for first responders' families.

Thank you for introducing this important legislation. The IAFC urges the House Homeland Security Committee to pass both this substitute amendment and the Higgins amendment. We look forward to working with you to pass this legislation in the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

FIRE CHIEF RHODA MAE KERR,
EFO, CFO, MPA,
President and Chair of the Board.

FAMILY VS. DUTY: PERSONAL AND FAMILY PREPAREDNESS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

It has been more than four years since Hurricane Katrina opened our eyes to the personal struggles faced by law enforcement officers in the wake of disaster. The law enforcement response to Hurricane Katrina brought to the forefront the challenges that ensue when the intended responders become victims. Many law Enforcement Officers had to make the choice between their responsibility to their families and their duties as police officers. As law enforcement officers, how do we balance the needs and safety of our families with our duty to respond in a crisis? As employers and managers of law enforcement officers what are our responsibilities to our employees and their families in developing and maintaining personal and family preparedness? What steps can be taken by organizations to increase employee and family preparedness of law enforcement personnel?

This article provides an overview of personal and family preparedness of police officers and its relationship to law enforcement organizational readiness. The role of the law enforcement agency in developing and supporting personal and family preparedness will also be reviewed. The overall goal of this article is to develop the general elements of an effective program for law enforcement agencies that advances the personal and family preparedness of law enforcement officers to increase the likelihood that officers will report in emergency situations.

HURRICANE KATRINA: PREPAREDNESS AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) faced a multitude of challenges in efforts to respond to the impact of Hurricane Katrina that resulted in an ''almost total loss of police capabilities in New Orleans.'' The official reports crafted in the wake of the disaster identify several issues that led to the ''collapse of law enforcement.'' These identified problems included ''missing police officers led to a law enforcement manpower shortage.'' While there were some officers who were derelict in their duties in failing to report, the vast majority had become victims themselves, or dealt with family crises related to the disaster, making it difficult or impossible to report for duty. There are estimates that as much as 5 percent of the NOPD force were stranded at home. Other elements, including the technological failures of electric power grids, communications systems, etc., can be overcome through effective continuity planning. The loss of significant numbers of personnel through their failure to report is completely debilitating for the law enforcement function. Regardless of the technological enhancements, policing is accomplished by people, without them there is no maintenance of civil order.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH: ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO REPORT

Although the conditions faced by NOPD in its efforts to respond to Hurricane Katrina were of a scale not seen in our modern history, ensuring that personnel are willing and able to report for assignment is critical. This is an easier task when notice of the potential crisis, such as an approaching Hurricane, is known for several days in advance. Developing the organizational agility for officers to report in sudden unexpected conditions is more challenging.

There has been little research conducted directly on the ability and willingness of police officers to report in crisis situations. There have been several studies conducted in the public health and healthcare community, and limited studies among firefighters and emergency medical technicians. While there are many parallels that can be drawn across first response organizations, each has unique challenges in different emergency situations that may impact the willingness of responders to report.

There are two studies that have been conducted on the ability and willingness of law enforcement officers to report in disaster. A 2007 study of police officers in the Washington, DC area by Demme revealed that family preparedness and safety were the determinant factors in the ability and willingness of law enforcement officers to report for duty in the event of a biological incident. In an unpublished study, Nestal (2005) examined the ability and willingness of police officers in Philadelphia to respond using the National Planning Scenarios outlined in Department of Homeland Security preparedness guidance. The planning scenarios presented fifteen disaster situations that range from natural disasters to terrorist attacks. The study revealed that based on the given scenario, 55–66 percent of police officers reported they would refuse to adhere to an emergency recall or would consider abandoning their position based upon concerns for the safety of their family.

These studies illustrate the importance of family preparedness to the resilience of law enforcement agencies in disaster. Although further research is needed, these studies make employee and family preparedness impossible to ignore in overall agency preparedness efforts.

THE ROLE OF THE EMPLOYER IN EMPLOYEE AND FAMILY PREPAREDNESS

A recent study by Landahl & Cox (2009) examined the actions being taken by first response organizations related to employee and family preparedness and the attitudes and opinions of senior leaders on the role of the employer in the development of employee and family preparedness. The study showed that 97 percent of homeland security leaders identified that employee and family preparedness is an essential element to organizational resilience during large-scale emergencies. In addition, the results showed that a majority (52.9 percent) reported that organizations should be prepared to assume some responsibility for the care of essential employees and their families. The study concluded that ''there is a fundamental disconnect between problem recognition by homeland security leaders and organizational activities; only 29 percent of participants reported their organizations had conducted training in or had written plans to support employees and families during disaster.''

Essentially, the problem has been recognized, but little has been accomplished towards a solution. Although the issue of employee and family preparedness was exposed during the response to Hurricane Katrina and recognized through research, the issue remains absent from Department of Homeland Security planning and preparedness guidance.

IMPLEMENTING POLICY TO INCREASE PERSONAL AND FAMILY PREPAREDNESS

Law enforcement agencies train officers for confrontations, teach them how to investigate crimes and help them develop skills to earn promotions. However, as leaders we fail to teach our officers how to prepare their families and themselves if they are called to duty during a crisis. To improve the chances that law enforcement officers will be in a position to make the decision to report in a crisis situation, leaders should develop clear expectations through policy and planning; including a Mission Statement and Strategic Plan. According to Whisenand, the agencies that have gone through difficult times, managerially, have had three things in common. Each of these agencies exhibited signs of a lack of leadership, an absence of a shared vision and their strategic plans were either poorly developed or had not been established. Therefore, administrators should create a clear policy for their officers so expectations are established before disaster strikes.

Such a policy should include the following:

EMERGENCY RECALL GUIDELINES

Clear emergency recall guidelines allow officers to understand the methods and expectations following the notification of off-duty personnel to return to work. The policy should establish how the decision will be made, how officers will be contacted, reporting locations, and expected time from notification to reporting. Notifications may be accomplished through radio communication, telephone contact, pagers, or media utilizing the Emergency Alert System. These guidelines also establish who is exempt from returning. This may include officers who are on vacation, sick leave, or military duty.

HOLD-OVER GUIDELINES

These guidelines establish the process for extending the tour of on-duty personnel. This should include the decision process, which personnel may be affected.

SCHEDULE ASSIGNMENTS

While maintaining the flexibility to respond to a variety of incidents, expected emergency pre-planned shift assignments should be communicated to personnel. For example, agencies may choose to implement 12-hour A/B platoon shifts. The expectation should be communicated to personnel in order to facilitate personal and family preparedness planning.

LEVELS OF MOBILIZATION

Levels of mobilization should be established to set parameters for how many personnel will report for duty. Will the entire department report or will it be selected divisions, or specialized units that will be mobilized.

CIVILIAN SUPPORT STAFF

Communicating policies and roles for support staff is critical to emergency operations. They must be included in policies and personal and family preparedness process.

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

Roles and responsibilities for logistical support of law enforcement operations in disasters need to be clearly defined. The Senate Hurricane Katrina report indicated that there were deficiencies in that there ''did not appear to be any pre-planning for food,

water, weapons, and medical care.'' Officer's need to know how they will be supported during disaster operations, will they have off-shift food and lodging available? Concerns about on-duty and off-duty support may impact officers' willingness to report for assignment. The clear articulation and communication of support that officers can expect will allow for personal and family planning, strong support efforts may increase response rates.

FAMILY SUPPORT

Agencies must determine their level of commitment to support officer families and communicate the expected relationship between the organization and families to officers. There is a range of support that agencies can provide to families ranging from basic home logistical support to providing a shelter to locate officers' families during a disaster or an emergency situation. If agencies do not plan to provide support to families, they must communicate this expectation and prepare officers and families to be self-sufficient. The decision to provide no support to families may impact recall and dereliction of duty rates.

ANTICIPATED EMERGENCIES

Following their experience in Hurricane Katrina, the NOPD took a different approach in preparing officers to report for duty prior to Hurricane Gustav in 2008. NOPD provided employees paid time off to prepare and evacuate their families if necessary before reporting for duty. The effectiveness of the strategy on response rates could not be measured as Hurricane Gustav largely missed New Orleans. Pre-incident policies such as time off to prepare should be considered and communicated to personnel.

POLICY ENFORCEMENT/DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

Policy should clearly articulate the consequences when officers elect not to report for duty. Leaders must deal decisively with the issue. The failure of the chief executive to address such cases could erode confidence in their ability to maintain discipline within the department. Failure to enforce can also call into question the importance of such a policy.

TRAINING AND EXERCISE

Training in emergency policies should occur at least on an annual basis and be reinforced regularly by supervisory personnel. Training should include instruction in the development of personal and family preparedness plans and emergency kits. Emergency exercises should include the extension to families, in order for officers to engage their families in the potential impact of agency emergency operations on the home.

CONCLUSION

The general public and agency leadership have the expectation that law enforcement officers report for duty when significant events or crises occurs. An established policy that includes protocols, training, clear organizational mission, and communication of the expected relationship between agencies and families of officers can help officers prepare and facilitate the decision to report for duty. Agency executives must place high organizational value on personal and family preparedness and reinforce it through training, exercise, and the supervision process. Provisions for the safety of officers' families should be a key component of a plan. Planning and policy development can steer the organizational culture to a culture of preparedness that include the families of our most critical asset; our people.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as I began, let me thank the first responders of this Nation and thank their families for the sacrifice that they make. Our first responders rush into dangerous conditions to protect us. They deserve to have the peace of mind that their families are safe as they courageously help others and other families during disaster and crisis. Now, their plate is enhanced. It is fuller dealing with not only these disasters, but the potential of a terrorist act.

So I want to extend my gratitude to all of those who have offered their support, again, in particular, the International Association of Fire Chiefs for their support in working with us.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2795.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remaining time.

I, once again, urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2795.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (H.R. 2795) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2795, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 644, TRADE FACILITATION AND TRADE ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2015, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENTS TO H.R. 2250, LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

Mr. COLE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114–378) on the resolution (H. Res. 560) providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 644) to reauthorize trade facilitation and trade enforcement functions and activities, and for other purposes, and providing for consideration of the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 2250) making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 3578, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 2795, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

DHS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY REFORM AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3578) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to strengthen and make improvements to the Directorate of Science and Technology of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RATCLIFFE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 416, nays 0, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 687]

YEAS—416

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bost
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu, Judy
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)

Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—17

Aguilar
Boyle, Brendan F.
Cicilline
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Grayson
Grijalva
Johnson, Sam
Kildee
McGovern
Meadows
Nolan
Polis
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Sessions
Sinema

□ 1652

Messrs. CRAWFORD and COURTNEY changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RAISING A QUESTION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to a question of the privileges of the House and offer the following resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK). The Clerk will report the resolution.

The Clerk read as follows:

Whereas the safety of the American people is urgently at stake;

Whereas the integrity of the legislative process has been seriously undermined by the influence of a powerful lobby, causing the House leadership to prevent the American people's representatives from considering commonsense measures to prevent terrorists from purchasing assault weapons and firearms from any licensed firearms dealer in the United States;

Whereas the first duty of Members of Congress is to protect and defend the American people, and that duty is forsaken by the failure of the House leadership to withstand the influence of a powerful lobby controlled by the gun industry;

Whereas leaders of terrorist organizations have previously urged sympathizers to exploit the United States' lax gun laws in order to perpetrate domestic terror;

Whereas suspects on the FBI's Terrorist Watchlist can go into a gun store anywhere in America and buy dangerous firearms of their choosing legally;

Whereas since 2004, more than 2,000 suspected terrorists have legally purchased weapons in the United States;

Whereas in that time period, more than 90 percent of all suspected terrorists who tried to buy a gun in a store in America walked away with his or her weapon of choice;

Whereas the House leadership ensures the ability of suspected terrorists to continue to buy guns and refuses to schedule legislation to close the terror list loophole;

Whereas since the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary school nearly 3 years ago, more than 1,000 mass shootings, 90,000 gun deaths, and 210,000 gun injuries have occurred; and

Whereas mass shootings and gun violence are inflicting daily tragedy on communities across America: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) a clear and present danger exists to the American people; and

(2) in order to protect the American people and the integrity of the legislative process, upon the adoption of this resolution, the Speaker shall place H.R. 1076, the ''Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act'', as introduced by Congressman Peter King (Republican–NY), on the calendar for an immediate vote.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentlewoman from California wish to present argument on the parliamentary question whether the resolution presents a question of the privileges of the House?

Ms. PELOSI. I do, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California is recognized.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, it is shocking to the American people that Congress refuses to keep guns out of the hands of those on the FBI's terrorist watch list. The gun violence epidemic is a public health crisis that we have a responsibility to address. Failing to meet that responsibility brings dishonor to the House of Representatives.

Public sentiment demands action. Eighty percent of Americans support legislation to close the outrageous loophole that puts guns in the hands of people, again, on the FBI's terrorist watch list. In the last decade, 90 percent of those on the FBI's terrorist watch list who tried to buy guns in America left the store with their weapons of choice.

In closing, in the people's House, we do nothing. We have not even allowed an up-or-down vote. In just over 1,000 days since Sandy Hook, we have seen 1,000 mass killings, 90,000 gun deaths, and 210,000 gun injuries in communities across America.

By refusing to act, we disgrace the House, we dishonor the American people, and we erode America's faith in our democracy. We have no right to hold moments of silence without action to end gun violence. Give us an up-or-down vote.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will rule.

The gentlewoman from California seeks to offer a resolution raising a question of the privileges of the House under rule IX. The resolution directs the Speaker to schedule a particular measure for an immediate vote.

One of the fundamental tenets of rule IX, as the Chair most recently ruled on October 8, 2013, is that a resolution expressing a legislative sentiment does not qualify as a question of the privileges of the House.

By calling for a vote on a particular measure, the resolution expresses a legislative sentiment in violation of the principles documented in sections 702 and 706 of the House Rules and Manual. Accordingly, the resolution does not constitute a question of the privileges of the House.

Ms. PELOSI. 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. MCCARTHY. 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. PELOSI. 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 the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 2795.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 242, nays 173, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 688]

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)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
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
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—173

Adams
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
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
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
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—18

Aguilar
Boyle, Brendan F.
Cicilline
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Grayson
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Johnson, Sam
Kildee
McGovern
Meadows
Nolan
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Scott (VA)
Sessions
Sinema

□ 1715

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.

FIRST RESPONDER IDENTIFICATION OF EMERGENCY NEEDS IN DISASTER SITUATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARTER of Georgia). The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2795) to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to submit a study on the circumstances which may impact the effectiveness and availability of first responders before, during, or after a terrorist threat or event, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 396, nays 12, not voting 25, as follows:

[Roll No. 689]

YEAS—396

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Allen
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blum
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bost
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu, Judy
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Guinta
Guthrie
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Jolly
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
Labrador
LaHood
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lee
Levin
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Pallone
Palmer
Pascrell
Paulsen

Payne
Pearce
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—12

Amash
Collins (GA)
Gohmert
Grothman
Harris
Huelskamp
Jones
Massie
Palazzo
Sanford
Sensenbrenner
Stutzman

NOT VOTING—25

Aguilar
Blackburn
Boyle, Brendan F.
Cicilline
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Grayson
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Johnson, Sam
Kildee
LaMalfa
Lawrence
Lewis
McGovern
Meadows
Nolan
Pelosi
Price, Tom
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Scott (VA)
Sessions
Sinema
Webster (FL)

□ 1724

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 689, had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, on December 10, 2015, I was unavoidably detained due to ongoing issues surrounding the health of my youngest daughter in Minnesota.

Had I been present and voting on rollcall No. 687, I would have voted "yea" (Suspend the Rules and pass H.R. 3578).

Had I been present and voting on rollcall No. 688, I would have voted "nay" (Motion to Table).

Had I been present and voting on rollcall No. 689, I would have voted "yea" (Suspend the Rules and pass H.R. 2795).

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for votes on Thursday, December 10, 2015. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 688 and "yea" on rollcall vote 689.

HONORING THE LIFE AND WORK OF ''FEARLESS'' PHYLLIS GALANTI

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

Mr. BRAT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and work of ''Fearless'' Phyllis Galanti, an amazing woman and a true American hero.

On Tuesday, the House passed H.R. 2693 which honors Phyllis Galanti by naming the arboretum at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond, Virginia, as the Phyllis E. Galanti Arboretum.

When her husband, Paul Galanti, was shot down and taken as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam in June 1966, Phyllis did not respond with fear but, instead, became a tireless advocate for American POWs around the world.

''Fearless Phyllis,'' as she became known, sought an audience with the North Vietnamese leaders, collected almost half a million letters from the Richmond area, and personally delivered them to the North Vietnamese embassy in Stockholm. She also gave hundreds of policy presentations to leaders like President Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, becoming nationally known for her dedication to bringing home POWs.

Mr. Speaker, after over 7 years of separation, Paul and Phyllis were reunited in February of 1973 in Norfolk, Virginia. Even with her husband home, Phyllis continued her work, confronting not only Vietnam, but also the Soviet Union and Iran in her tireless quest to bring our boys home, eventually earning The American Legion Service Medal.

Her dedication to our prisoners of war is truly inspirational. We all are grateful that this bill passed the House, and I owe a special thanks to former POW Representative SAM JOHNSON; Veterans Committee Chairman JEFF MILLER; my good friend from Richmond, Representative BOBBY SCOTT; and the entire Virginia delegation.

VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. PETERS. Navy Yard, Washington, D.C., September 16, 2013:

Arthur Daniels, age 51.
Kenneth Bernard Proctor, 46.
Aaron Alexis, age 34.

Santa Monica, California, June 7, 2013:

Carlos Navarro Franco, 68 years old.
Margarita Gomez, 68.
Samir Zawahri, 55 years old.
Marcelo Franco, 26 years old.
Christopher Zawahri, 24.

Chattanooga, Tennessee, July 16, 2015:

Thomas Sullivan, 40 years old.
David Wyatt, 35.
Randall Smith, 26.
Carson Holmquist, 25.
Squire Wells, 21 years old.

Houston, Texas, August 9, 2015:

Dwayne Jackson, 50 years old.
Valerie Jackson, 40.
Nathaniel Jackson, 13.
Honesty Jackson, 11.
Dwayne Jackson, Jr., 10.
Caleb Jackson, 9.
Trinity Jackson, 7.
Jonah Jackson, 6.

Manchester, Illinois, April 24, 2013:

Jo Ann Sinclair, 66 years old.
James Roy Ralston, 29.
Brittney Lynn Luark, 23.

□ 1730

IRAN HAS VIOLATED THE NUCLEAR DEAL

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, this week it was revealed that Iran tested medium-range ballistic missiles. By doing so, Iran has now violated the nuclear deal that was agreed to over objection of a majority of this House in July, which calls on Iran to end its ballistic missile program for 8 years.

Iran is also now in violation of two United Nations Security Council resolutions. Like many of my colleagues in the House, I opposed the Iran nuclear deal because of the likelihood that Iran would cheat and the Obama administration would refuse to hold them accountable and reimpose sanctions.

So far, there has been no response from the Obama administration on snapping back the sanctions into place. Because of that, Iran will continue to enjoy more and more of the plus $100 billion in unfrozen assets that they have not been accessible to.

If Iran is allowed to break the agreement without consequences, it will only encourage more bad behavior and unrest in the Middle East.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

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

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to celebrate Human Rights Day, the anniversary of the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was signed in 1948. Today is the 67th anniversary of that, as I just indicated.

I also just introduced a resolution recognizing this anniversary and supporting the ideals of human rights. I am pleased to have the support already of 37 of my colleagues as cosponsors of this resolution recognizing Human Rights Day.

I believe we should take this opportunity to pause and to honor all those

struggling across the globe to claim the fundamental rights and freedoms that belong to all human beings.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the House to take up my resolution and set aside today to recognize Human Rights Day.

CONGRESS NEEDS TO PROTECT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as I have said today on the floor and yesterday, the American people expect us to keep them safe.

Let me thank my colleagues for the support they have given the Homeland Security Committee on a number of bills and particularly note the legislation that I introduced, the FRIENDS Act, the sole purpose of which is to ensure that those who are first responders who have to be away for a period of time, that their families are protected.

I also think it is an important moment for bridging and building on law enforcement and community. I have had the opportunity to meet with a number of police chiefs of major cities. We have introduced—JOHN CONYERS and myself, along with a number of Members—the Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act, which really is an opportunity and a bridge to be able to provide an accreditation pathway for the law enforcement agencies to build upon the improvement and the best practices that they may have, including a medallion for those who have fallen in duty.

It is also important, as we look forward to the security of this Nation, to recognize the tragedy of San Bernardino. I offer to those families my deepest sympathy. There was a major failure which we need to correct.

Members of Congress need to come together so that we are not behind the terrorist act, but in front of it, to protect the American people.

CURRENT ISSUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

PUERTO RICO'S FINANCIAL CRISIS AND THE WAY FORWARD

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time.

I would like to begin this evening by yielding to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. DUFFY), my good friend and colleague.

Mr. DUFFY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

Tonight I rise to talk about our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico.

If you have watched the news recently, you are well aware that there is an economic financial debt crisis taking place right now in Puerto Rico. Our American brothers and sisters are going through an incredibly difficult time.

The island is $73 billion in debt. That is 100 percent of their GDP, which is catastrophically high. This debt has had a huge impact on the livelihoods of those who live on the island.

The unemployment rate is over twice what it is on the mainland. It is at 12.4 percent. Forty-eight percent of Americans on the island are living in poverty. Again, half of the island citizens—Americans—are living in poverty.

Ten percent of the 3.5 million people on the island are leaving and they are coming to the mainland. It is great because they work hard and they have an amazing culture. It is wonderful they are coming. But if you are coming to the mainland, you should be coming because you want to come, not because you don't have economic opportunity in your home. We don't want to force people away from their families and their neighbors and their community because they don't have economic opportunity.

We have to stand together in this House and stand with our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico. We can't turn a blind eye. We have to work with them. We have to work for them so we can address this crisis.

Yesterday I introduced a pretty simple and straightforward bill that will help jump-start the Puerto Rican economy, help put people back to work, grow their economy, better paying jobs, and lift people out of poverty. It is very simple. It is called the Puerto Rico Financial Stability and Debt Restructuring Choice Act, and it has two prongs.

Prong number one is we are going to implement a financial stability board that is going to help the island with the management of its budget, its tax collection, and its finances.

Prong number two is Puerto Rico can access a chapter 9 bankruptcy. By the way, every State in America can access chapter 9. It will be the same rights as every State that we will offer Puerto Rico. It is pretty simple and straightforward stuff.

I also think it is important to note that no one wants to have a financial stability board shoved down their throat, and the citizens of Puerto Rico don't want that either. That is why we give them the choice. This doesn't go into effect unless the Puerto Rican legislative assembly approves the financial stability board and the Governor signs it so that they have a say in their future.

If we do this, we will allow Puerto Rico to restructure their debt, to get their finances in order, to grow their economy, and to let people on the island start living the American Dream. If we do nothing, if we turn a blind eye and say that we are not going to offer the same bankruptcy option that every State has, we are turning our backs on our fellow American citizens on the island, and that is not who we are. We should stand together.

Now, there are others who have proposed different solutions for the island, and those solutions involve a bailout without real structural reform. I have got to tell you that, after the 2008 financial crisis, I think Americans have had it up to here with bailouts. We usually go with bankruptcy and financial reform, and that is what my bill does.

I would encourage all of my fellow Americans in this institution, whether you are a conservative or a liberal, you are a Republican or a Democrat, to note that our brothers and sisters, our fellow American citizens in Puerto Rico, are going through tough times, and it is our job to stand with them, not turn our backs.

If we can pass this bill, it is going to be a new day on the island, economic prosperity and opportunity. And then people have a choice to say: Do I want to stay on the island, raise my family on the island, or do I want to leave and come to the mainland?

The choice is theirs. They won't be forced into that choice just because they don't have opportunity on the island of Puerto Rico.

I encourage all of my colleagues and friends to reach out. Let's be part of the solution.

RECOVERING AMERICA

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, as I walked through the airport recently, I noticed a young teenager. She was traveling and was seemingly happy to be involved in whatever activity she was going to.

She wore a button on her lapel. It said: What you do matters. It caught my attention: What you do matters. I liked it. I am not sure what was motivating her, but she wanted to communicate an important value to elevate an ideal. I simply admired her willingness to take a stand.

Mr. Speaker, I should say this now, though: There is a troubling statistic out there, and a recent survey highlights this. A majority of Americans do not identify with what America has become. Many people feel our country is slipping away. In reality, most want to reclaim the promise of our great Nation.

Contrary to the barrage of negativity, most people hope for justifiable goals: to regain power over their own lives, to regain power over the government, and to regain power over their own economic prospects.

Mr. Speaker, one of the strengths of America's system of government is its capacity for constant replenishment. Opportunities sometimes present themselves unpredictably. That gives us a chance to reassess and realign in new and compelling ways, both to preserve important traditions as well as to restore the future promise of our Nation.

A stronger America might be glimpsed through what I call four interlocking principles, the first of

which is government decentralization; second, economic inclusion; third, foreign policy realism; and, fourth, social conservation.

Let's take that first point. A return to a more decentralized government will restore an important source of America's strength. When the Federal Government grows beyond its effective purpose, it infringes upon basic liberty, it stifles innovation, it crushes creativity, and it impedes our responsibility for one another in the community.

A creeping tendency to nationalize every conceivable problem and nationalizing every conceivable discussion erodes the community's input. While the Federal Government does have an important central role in maintaining the guardrails of societal stability, the rule of law, and a fair opportunity economy, America's governing system is designed to operate most effectively at varying levels. Those close to an opportunity or those close to a problem ought to have the first authority to seize the opportunity or to solve the problem.

Second: economic inclusion. Economic inclusion should help America recover from an arthritic economy. You see, Mr. Speaker, when power concentrates in a Washington Wall Street axis, where the transnational corporation is an emerging ruling entity and where small business—the source of most jobs in America—is suffocated under increasingly complex dictates, the opportunity for a strong and vibrant marketplace diminishes. A vibrant market actually expands the space for constructive interdependency and community dynamism, fighting poverty, and driving innovation.

Third: foreign policy realism. Foreign policy realism should chart a new course between isolationism and over-interventionism. America has an important leadership role to play on the world stage. Today, however, many Americans are alarmed by an exhausted, drifting, and often counterproductive foreign policy.

After World War II, America was cast in the role of the world's superpower and at great sacrifice. We, as a country, created the space for international order. But now we live in a multi-polar world. Other countries, which we helped empower through our generous sacrifice, must take a seat at the table of responsible nations.

□ 1745

Leveraging America's strength through strategic international partnerships will help us navigate a 21st century that is marked by ever-shifting geopolitical frameworks.

The fourth point: social conservation. What does that mean? Social conservation preserves the condition for order, for opportunity, and for happiness.

We must fight back against dimming hope and diminishing opportunity and darkening shadows. A healthy society depends upon more than politics for the promotion of sustainable values. America has many mediating institutions, as we call it—important civic institutions, if you will—which uphold greater ideas.

As an example, Mr. Speaker, I am a proud, long-time member of the Rotary Club in Lincoln, Nebraska. At every Rotary Club meeting across this country, in which hundreds of thousands of Americans participate, there hangs a banner at the front of the club, and it reads: ''Is it true? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned?''

Perfect. Beautiful. Perhaps we ought to hang the banner right here, Mr. Speaker. That is a pretty good game plan.

As new leadership emerges on the national stage, perhaps this is the moment to think critically about how we regain the high ground of purposeful government, an opportunity economy, a balanced foreign policy, and a flourishing culture in a good society. We need to play all four quarters.

Ultimately, both the government and the marketplace are downstream from our culture; and with a heavy heart, I say this—everyone knows it—America's social fabric is fraying. Many people are experiencing deepening anxiety about the future direction of the country. The recent attack in San Bernardino has only intensified the feeling. A crazed couple, driven by its twisted religious ideology, murdered indiscriminately those at a social services center. It is a horrible tragedy and a grotesque irony, and our hearts feel for those who were so gravely harmed.

A genuine multiculturalism—long a hallmark of the American experience—will continue to decay into discord unless two mutually supporting conditions are sustained: a genuine appreciation of organic differences and a binding substructure of universal ideals and shared values. One such value is that we do no harm to others, and a religion that teaches killing is no religion at all. Other important values include trustworthiness, thrift, citizenship, courteousness, and so on. By the way, Mr. Speaker, a helpful list of these ideals, of these virtues, is found in the Boy Scout Law.

This values crisis is compounding this three-part problem of government overreach, economic exclusion, and cultural dislocation. A centralizing government seems decreasingly able to understand, much less address, the needs of its citizens it should serve. In the midst of this divisive political season, partisan dysfunction, and bureaucratic inertia, it is all hindering the proper progress toward addressing our country's most pressing problems, and it overshadows important local initiatives where certain problems can best be solved. Not everything is a Federal issue. A private sector which is consolidating corporate power, often underwritten by the State, is disenfranchising the small business sector. A loss of genuine choice and genuine competition of economic pluralism reduces the ability of people to participate, own, and innovate in a marketplace that is truly free and can deliver widespread prosperity.

A culture of contrasting philosophies, more and more inflamed by caustic rhetoric, is contributing to what some believe are irreconcilable social divisions. An impoverished account of individualism, of a liberty reduced to autonomous choice and divorced of responsibility creates the conditions for social anarchy, which further creates the conditions for counterproductive government interventions, lawless overreach, and intrusive market manipulations. Then add into this mix a confusing assortment of values choices that are driven more by experimenting elites than by the stability of sound tradition, and you have the recipe for harmful disruption. No wonder there is so much sadness in the world.

As politicians and the media debate policy positions, we must understand that authentic solutions involve a return to essential value propositions. The application of proper principles to these problems would enable us in Washington to better assuage widespread and justifiable angst with appropriate government policy, with appropriate government decentralization, and with dynamic economic inclusion, supported by a hope-filled culture. That is our answer.

As you enter my State—I live in Nebraska—the sign reads: ''. . . the good life.'' A good life is found in freedom and responsibility. A just and orderly society is founded and sustained by persons who care. What we all do does really matter, just like my young teenage friend—I would like to call her a ''friend''—displayed in the airport recently.

Mr. Speaker, late this summer, before school began, I took my younger children on a family trip to western Nebraska. Near Valentine, Nebraska, which is in an area called the Sandhills, water from the underground aquifer—it is called the Ogallala Aquifer—seeps out of the ground and falls dramatically over rock formations and into a stream that then feeds into the Niobrara River. The area is called Fort Falls, and it is a part of the Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge. The stream's icy cold water flows like a river into the shallow warm water that is running in the Niobrara. What is even more interesting to ponder, as you look around, are the steep slopes on both sides of the beautiful river. On the north bank, rocky hill formations are covered with pine trees. On the south bank, the trees are much different. You see the last reach of the eastern deciduous forest, with a mixed variety of plants and hardwood trees just like you would see here in Virginia. It looks like California on one side, and across the river here in Virginia on the other. Right there, where

I live in Nebraska, we are the geographic center of our country, where east meets west.

As a part of that trip, we also took a drive northward into the State of South Dakota, into the Black Hills, to a place called Mount Rushmore. It happened to be the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally that weekend, so I and about 2 million other bikers were on the road. Everyone knows the four faces on Mount Rushmore. Each of the four American Presidents embodied great qualities and faced significant challenges:

George Washington was a transcendent leader who purposefully walked away from power, giving our early Republic a chance to grow into a vibrant democracy;

Thomas Jefferson's life was seemingly full of conflicts and contradictions, but his efforts gave rise to the Declaration of Independence, which poetically expressed an understanding of the dignity and the rights of all persons, which so beautifully still informs our culture and our government to this day;

Abraham Lincoln made a midcourse correction in his life. He rejected an early snarky, political, antagonistic attitude and turned toward a vision of that which is noble and good. His reputation as a skillful and humble leader extended well beyond the Civil War to many important endeavors, including the development of land grant institutions all over this country, like the University of Nebraska;

Theodore Roosevelt had to rebuild his life after his wife died at a young age. His boundless energy, translating into multiple accomplishments, perhaps helped him outpace a haunting melancholy from which he suffered. As an avid hunter, he grew to recognize the importance of wildlife preservation. Beyond the natural places that he preserved, perhaps Roosevelt's greatest legacy was one of trust busting—breaking up concentrations of economic power that locked so many Americans out of a fair shot at economic opportunity.

Four great Presidents. Four men who sacrificed greatly to give us what we have today.

Today, Mr. Speaker, many people in the country are experiencing a serious disquiet about all of these challenges that we are facing. They feel disconnected from the ability to control their own well-being. These concentrations of power are overwhelming the capacity of individuals to shape their own environments. Political and economic and cultural cartels are growing more powerful, and, in some ways, they are more hidden and destructive than in Roosevelt's time.

Of course, today, political problems are on everyone's mind. This concentration of power stifles innovation and creativity; and as money flows into the political system, it pays for the polarization which hinders the ability of our body to find constructive solutions. This transcends, by the way, the current partisan divide.

Our increasingly interconnected world offers significant benefits and opportunities to us, but globalization also introduces forces that can leave so many Americans feeling helpless. Transnational corporate conglomerates, often buttressed by oligarchic political systems, are shrinking the space for genuine choice and competition in the private sphere. As I talked about earlier, the stress of small business is very real. This concentration of economic power endangers true free market principles, which should be working for the many.

On a deeper level, America's political disrepair and economic malaise signal an underlying brokenness in our society, in our culture. Persons—humans—thrive in relationships with our families and communities in a healthy society, which creates the preconditions for this human flourishing. Cultural consolidation and social discord have left more and more people, again, feeling directionless and feeling alone. Weakening relationships and weakening social institutions foreshadow and prefigure political and economic problems. Ultimately, renewing America—restoring America's government and economy—requires reclaiming a vibrant civil society, which is the true source of our Nation's strength.

Mr. Speaker, if you have ever driven through those Black Hills, which I spoke of earlier—the one-lane tunnels and winding hairpin turns—they form a very beautiful but a very arduous journey, even without all the motorcycles around you. As you continue that journey, looking for something, an opening then appears in the trees, and you see it—that magnificent piece of art, carved in stone, with four of America's greatest Presidents.

Their likenesses are in the rock, timeless and unchanging; but the ideals they represent must be reestablished in each generation. The renewal of America will depend, in large part, on whether or not we can grasp what these leaders stood for and whether or not we can make the sacrifices necessary to reclaim our country's potential in this time, our time.

Mr. Speaker, what we all do matters.

I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, December 11, 2015, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3740. A letter from the Director, Issuances Staff, Office of Policy and Program Development, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Mandatory Inspection of Fish of the Order Siluriformes and Products Derived From Such Fish [Docket No.: FSIS-2008-0031] (RIN: 0583-AD36) received December 8, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

3741. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting notification that the Department intends to assign women to previously closed positions and units across all Services and U.S. Special Operations Command, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 652(a); Public Law 109-163, Sec. 541(a)(1); (119 Stat. 3251) and 10 U.S.C. 6035(a); Public Law 106-398, Sec. 573(a)(1); (114 Stat. 1654A-136); to the Committee on Armed Services.

3742. A letter from the Under Secretary, Comptroller, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's semiannual report on the account balance in the Defense Cooperation Account and a listing of personal property contributed, as of September 30, 2015, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2608(i); Public Law 101-403, title II, Sec. 202(a)(1) (as amended by Public Law 103-160, Sec. 1105(b)); (107 Stat. 1750); to the Committee on Armed Services.

3743. A letter from the Under Secretary, Comptroller, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's semiannual report on the account balance in the Defense Cooperation Account and a listing of personal property contributed, as of September 30, 2015, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2608(i); Public Law 101-403, title II, Sec. 202(a)(1) (as amended by Public Law 103-160, Sec. 1105(b)); (107 Stat. 1750); to the Committee on Armed Services.

3744. A letter from the Comptroller, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Office's annual report on actions taken to carry out Sec. 308 of the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989, pursuant to 12 U.S.C. 1463 note; Public Law 111-203, Sec. 367(c); (124 Stat. 1556); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3745. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's 2013 Report to Congress on Outcome Evaluations of Administration for Native Americans (ANA) Projects, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 2992(e); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

3746. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's FY 2015 Agency Financial Report, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3515(a); Public Law 101-576, Sec. 303(a); (104 Stat. 2849); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3747. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's Semiannual Report to Congress for the period April 1 through September 30, 2015, pursuant to µ5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act) Sec. 5(b); Public Law 95-452, Sec. 5(b); (92 Stat. 1103); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3748. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's semiannual report to Congress for the period of April 1, 2015, to September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act) Sec. 5(b); Public Law 95-452, Sec. 5(b); (92 Stat. 1103); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3749. A letter from the Director, Peace Corps, transmitting the Corps' Performance and Accountability Report for Fiscal Year 2015, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3515(a); Public Law 101-576, Sec. 303(a); (104 Stat. 2849); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3750. A letter from the Acting Administrator, United States Agency for International Development, transmitting the

Agency's Fiscal Year 2015 Agency Financial Report, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3515(a); Public Law 101-576, Sec. 303(a); (104 Stat. 2849); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3751. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's report entitled ''Computation of Annual Liability Insurance (Including Self-Insurance) Settlement Recovery Threshold'', pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1395y(b)(9)(D); Public Law 112-242, Sec. 202(a)(2); (126 Stat. 2379); 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. BISHOP of Utah: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 2406. A bill to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 114–377, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. COLE: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 560. Resolution providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 644) to reauthorize trade facilitation and trade enforcement functions and activities, and for other purposes, and providing for consideration of the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 2250) making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes (Rept. 114–378). Referred to the House Calendar.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committees on Agriculture, Energy and Commerce, Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Judiciary discharged from further consideration. H.R. 2406 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. RIGELL (for himself and Mr. WELCH):

H.R. 4208. A bill to authorize the use of the United States Armed Forces against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California (for herself, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. LEE, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Ms. MOORE, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. BASS, Mr. LEWIS, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. SARBANES, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. NADLER, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. HINOJOSA, Ms. ADAMS, Ms. FUDGE, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

H.R. 4209. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize grants to provide treatment for diabetes in minority communities; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. PITTENGER:

H.R. 4210. A bill to amend the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act to require voting members of the Financial Stability Oversight Council to testify before Congress at least twice each year when requested to do so or to otherwise permit certain Members of Congress to attend meetings of the Council whether or not such meetings are open to the public; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. ROYCE (for himself and Ms. SEWELL of Alabama):

H.R. 4211. A bill to require Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to establish procedures for considering certain credit scores in making a determination whether to purchase a residential mortgage, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California (for herself, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. SCHRADER, and Mr. LANCE):

H.R. 4212. A bill to establish a Community-Based Institutional Special Needs Plan demonstration program to target home and community-based care to eligible Medicare beneficiaries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PASCRELL (for himself, Mr. PIERLUISI, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, and Mr. SERRANO):

H.R. 4213. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make residents of Puerto Rico eligible for the earned income tax credit and to provide for equitable treatment for residents of Puerto Rico with respect to the refundable portion of the child tax credit; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois (for himself and Mr. PASCRELL):

H.R. 4214. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the excise tax and special occupational tax in respect of firearms and to increase the transfer tax on any other weapon, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Natural Resources, the Judiciary, Energy and Commerce, and Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT (for himself, Ms. BASS, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. FARR, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. KEATING, Mr. BEYER, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONYERS, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. DESAULNIER, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HECK of Washington, Mr. HONDA, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. MOULTON, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. KILMER, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Ms. LEE, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. MENG, Mr. NADLER, Mr. NEAL, Ms. NORTON, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. POLIS, Mr. QUIGLEY, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. SIRES, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. TONKO, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. TAKAI, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. YARMUTH):

H.R. 4215. A bill to require regulation of wastes associated with the exploration, development, or production of crude oil, natural gas, or geothermal energy under the Solid Waste Disposal Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. MOORE (for herself and Mr. STIVERS):

H.R. 4216. A bill to protect the investment choices of American investors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. BERA:

H.R. 4217. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to determine eligibility for health insurance subsidies without regard to amounts included in income by reason of conversion to a Roth IRA; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. BARLETTA, and Mr. DESJARLAIS):

H.R. 4218. A bill to suspend the admission to the United States of refugees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BOUSTANY (for himself and Mr. MEEKS):

H.R. 4219. A bill to authorize the extension of nondiscriminatory treatment (normal trade relations treatment) to the products of Kazakhstan; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BUCK (for himself, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mrs. LOVE, and Mr. TIPTON):

H.R. 4220. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to facilitate water leasing and water transfers to promote conservation and efficiency; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. CARNEY:

H.R. 4221. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to restore National SMART Grants for a certain number of award years; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. CARNEY:

H.R. 4222. A bill to direct the Secretary of Education to carry out a pilot program under which higher education savings accounts are established for the benefit of eligible secondary school students; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, 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. JUDY CHU of California (for herself, Ms. LEE, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. HONDA, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. TITUS, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. GARAMENDI, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mrs. CAPPS, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia):

H.R. 4223. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to reinstate the authority of the Secretary of Education to make Federal Direct Stafford Loans to graduate and professional students; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. COLLINS of Georgia:

H.R. 4224. A bill to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 121 Spring Street SE in Gainesville, Georgia, as the ''Sidney Olsin Smith, Jr. Federal Building and United States Courthouse''; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. CONYERS (for himself, Mr. NADLER, and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia):

H.R. 4225. A bill to amend title 28 of the United States Code to authorize the appointment of additional bankruptcy judges; and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida (for himself and Ms. GRAHAM):

H.R. 4226. A bill to amend the Agricultural Act of 2014 to provide relief for agricultural producers adversely impacted by the Oriental fruit fly; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Ms. DELAURO:

H.R. 4227. A bill to enhance beneficiary and provider protections and improve transparency in the Medicare Advantage market, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. DESAULNIER (for himself and Mr. LAMALFA):

H.R. 4228. A bill to amend title 23, United States Code, to establish additional requirements for certain transportation projects with estimated costs of $2,500,000,000 or more, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. KATKO (for himself and Mr. CICILLINE):

H.R. 4229. A bill to address the continued threat posed by dangerous synthetic drugs by amending the Controlled Substances Act relating to controlled substance analogues; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. NADLER:

H.R. 4230. A bill to authorize the establishment of the Stonewall National Historic Site in the State of New York as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 4231. A bill to direct the Librarian of Congress to obtain a stained glass panel depicting the seal of the District of Columbia and install the panel among the stained glass panels depicting the seals of States which overlook the Main Reading Room of the Library of Congress Thomas Jefferson Building; 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. POMPEO:

H.R. 4232. A bill to amend the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 to provide for the consideration by State regulatory authorities and nonregulated electric utilities of whether subsidies should be provided for the deployment, construction, maintenance, or operation of a customer-side technology; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. ROHRABACHER (for himself, Mr. ISSA, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. ROYCE, and Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California):

H.R. 4233. A bill to eliminate an unused lighthouse reservation, provide management consistency by incorporating the rocks and small islands along the coast of Orange County, California, into the California Coastal National Monument managed by the Bureau of Land Management, and meet the original Congressional intent of preserving Orange County's rocks and small islands, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. SARBANES:

H.R. 4234. A bill to establish a demonstration program to facilitate physician reentry into clinical practice to provide primary health services; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. SCHAKOWSKY (for herself, Ms. MATSUI, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. NORTON, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. ELLISON, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

H.R. 4235. A bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to provide for greater spousal protection under defined contribution plans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SERRANO (for himself, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. HINOJOSA, Ms. MENG, Mr. PIERLUISI, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, and Mr. HASTINGS):

H.R. 4236. A bill to promote savings by providing a tax credit for eligible taxpayers who contribute to savings products and to facilitate taxpayers receiving this credit and open a designated savings product when they file their Federal income tax returns; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HONDA (for himself, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. NORTON, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. POCAN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. LEE, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. KEATING, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mr. TAKANO):

H. Res. 561. A resolution expressing support for support of transgender acceptance; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LOWENTHAL (for himself, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. COSTA, Mr. CROWLEY, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. FARR, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. HAHN, Mr. HONDA, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. KEATING, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEVIN, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. PETERS, Mr. POCAN, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. SPEIER, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. VARGAS):

H. Res. 562. A resolution recognizing the 67th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the celebration of ''Human Rights Day''; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. ROHRABACHER (for himself, Mr. MEEKS, and Mr. COHEN):

H. Res. 563. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States and the Republic of Belarus should establish full diplomatic relations; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. RIGELL:

H.R. 4208.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 11: To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water

By Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California:

H.R. 4209.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution and

Article 1, Section 8, clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. PITTENGER:

H.R. 4210.

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. ROYCE:

H.R. 4211.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Under Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution to regulate commerce.

By Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California:

H.R. 4212.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. PASCRELL:

H.R. 4213.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois:

H.R. 4214.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I of the Constitution and its subsequent amendments and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT:

H.R. 4215.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 (relating to the power of Congress to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.)

By Ms. MOORE:

H.R. 4216.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. BERA:

H.R. 4217.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Clause 8

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

H.R. 4218.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8—necessary and proper clause

By Mr. BOUSTANY:

H.R. 4219.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 8 of Article I of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. BUCK:

H.R. 4220.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1, Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution:

''The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts, and Excises, to pay the Debts, and provide for the common Defense and General Welfare of the United States; but all Duties and Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.''

By Mr. CARNEY:

H.R. 4221.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, the Taxing and Spending Clause: ''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 . . .''

By Mr. CARNEY:

H.R. 4222.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, the Taxing and Spending Clause: ''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 . . .''

By Ms. JUDY CHU of California:

H.R. 4223.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 or Article 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. COLLINS of Georgia:

H.R. 4224.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution, which states that Congress shall have the power ''to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. CONYERS:

H.R. 4225.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 4.

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida:

H.R. 4226.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

The Congress shall have Power * * * To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Ms. DELAURO:

H.R. 4227.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. DESAULNIER:

H.R. 4228.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. KATKO:

H.R. 4229.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause I of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution

By Mr. NADLER:

H.R. 4230.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, section 8, clauses 1, 17, and 18.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 4231.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clause 18 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. POMPEO:

H.R. 4232.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. ROHRABACHER:

H.R. 4233.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the United States Constitution, which gives Congress the ''Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belongings to the United States . . .''

By Mr. SARBANES:

H.R. 4234.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Ms. SCHAKOWSKY:

H.R. 4235.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. SERRANO:

H.R. 4236.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution, which states that that ''The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises . . .'' In addition, this legislation is introduced pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution, which states that Congress shall have the power ''to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof.''

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 402: Mr. ZELDIN.

H.R. 465: Mr. COLLINS of New York.

H.R. 563: Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. KNIGHT, and Ms. LOFGREN.

H.R. 592: Mr. SWALWELL of California.

H.R. 595: Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 721: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California.

H.R. 731: Mr. DELANEY and Mr. POLIQUIN.

H.R. 769: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona and Mr. ROHRABACHER.

H.R. 815: Mr. ROSS.

H.R. 835: Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.

H.R. 902: Mr. NOLAN.

H.R. 985: Mr. ABRAHAM.

H.R. 1062: Mr. JOYCE.

H.R. 1095: Mr. MEEKS.

H.R. 1116: Mr. POMPEO and Mr. MOOLENAAR.

H.R. 1209: Mr. GALLEGO and Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD.

H.R. 1221: Mr. KEATING.

H.R. 1247: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.

H.R. 1282: Ms. EDWARDS.

H.R. 1331: Mr. LATTA.

H.R. 1439: Ms. DUCKWORTH and Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 1475: Ms. JACKSON LEE.

H.R. 1516: Mr. KEATING and Ms. BONAMICI.

H.R. 1550: Miss RICE of New York.

H.R. 1654: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1655: Mr. GUTHRIE and Mr. HINOJOSA.

H.R. 1671: Mr. ROHRABACHER, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, and Mr. MESSER.

H.R. 1769: Mr. MASSIE, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, and Mr. MEEKS.

H.R. 1786: Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. POE of Texas, and Mr. PAULSEN.

H.R. 1814: Mr. MEEKS and Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1923: Mr. VISCLOSKY.

H.R. 1940: Mr. JEFFRIES and Mr. MCDERMOTT.

H.R. 2016: Ms. EDWARDS and Mrs. DAVIS of California.

H.R. 2050: Mr. HECK of Nevada, Mr. MEEKS and Mr. DONOVAN.

H.R. 2058: Mr. GOODLATTE and Mr. HOLDING.

H.R. 2114: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.

H.R. 2187: Ms. SINEMA.

H.R. 2209: Mr. KIND.

H.R. 2218: Mr. MACARTHUR.

H.R. 2237: Mr. ROTHFUS.

H.R. 2283: Mr. KEATING.

H.R. 2302: Mr. FOSTER, Mr. CONYERS, and Ms. LOFGREN.

H.R. 2315: Mr. ABRAHAM.

H.R. 2366: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.

H.R. 2400: Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, and Mr. LAHOOD.

H.R. 2461: Ms. MCCOLLUM.

H.R. 2622: Mr. O'ROURKE.

H.R. 2648: Mr. NADLER.

H.R. 2680: Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois.

H.R. 2871: Ms. SPEIER.

H.R. 2872: Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.

H.R. 2880: Mr. BEYER.

H.R. 2902: Mr. LEVIN.

H.R. 2903: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.

H.R. 2978: Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. FUDGE, Miss RICE of New York, and Mr. LEVIN.

H.R. 2992: Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 3053: Mr. DIAZ-BALART.

H.R. 3067: Mr. SCHIFF.

H.R. 3068: Mr. WELCH.

H.R. 3084: Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 3156: Mr. LABRADOR.

H.R. 3158: Mr. LABRADOR.
H.R. 3179: Mr. BARLETTA and Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 3180: Mr. VEASEY.
H.R. 3226: Ms. MCCOLLUM.
H.R. 3229: Mr. LEWIS, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, and Ms. BROWNLEY of California.
H.R. 3290: Mr. RANGEL.
H.R. 3303: Mr. POLIS and Mr. BEYER.
H.R. 3310: Mr. DUFFY.
H.R. 3321: Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana.
H.R. 3326: Ms. DUCKWORTH.
H.R. 3338: Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 3339: Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. ROTHFUS, and Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 3406: Ms. KAPTUR.
H.R. 3411: Mr. RANGEL.
H.R. 3437: Mr. ROGERS of Alabama.
H.R. 3516: Mr. WILLIAMS.
H.R. 3535: Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 3640: Mr. BOUSTANY.
H.R. 3648: Ms. MCCOLLUM.
H.R. 3660: Mr. GALLEGO.
H.R. 3694: Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.
H.R. 3706: Mr. EMMER of Minnesota and Mr. HUFFMAN.
H.R. 3719: Mr. POLIQUIN.
H.R. 3722: Mr. SCHWEIKERT and Mrs. COMSTOCK.
H.R. 3784: Mr. KILDEE and Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.
H.R. 3799: Mr. DEFAZIO.
H.R. 3832: Mr. BUCSHON.
H.R. 3856: Mr. BUCSHON.
H.R. 3870: Mr. ASHFORD and Mr. KNIGHT.
H.R. 3886: Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. LEE, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. BLUMENAUER, and Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 3913: Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. ASHFORD, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 3926: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. HAHN, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. CAPUANO, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. COURTNEY, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. TAKAI, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. NADLER, and Mr. BEYER.
H.R. 3929: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
H.R. 3957: Mr. DEUTCH.
H.R. 3964: Mr. WELCH and Mr. HONDA.
H.R. 4018: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. WENSTRUP, and Mr. KELLY of Mississippi.
H.R. 4040: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.
H.R. 4042: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas and Mr. VEASEY.
H.R. 4057: Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.
H.R. 4080: Mr. DELANEY.
H.R. 4086: Mr. MEEKS.
H.R. 4087: Mr. KING of New York, Mr. HUNTER, and Ms. MCSALLY.
H.R. 4117: Mr. MEEKS,
H.R. 4124: Mr. ASHFORD, Mr. HONDA, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 4135: Mr. MEEKS.
H.R. 4140: Mr. FINCHER and Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.
H.R. 4144: Ms. PINGREE, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, and Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.
H.R. 4162: Mr. HONDA.
H.R. 4177: Mr. LABRADOR.
H.R. 4179: Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H.R. 4185: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. COOK, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. PALMER, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. MASSIE, and Mr. LONG.
H.R. 4197: Mr. MICA, Mr. MARCHANT, and Mr. RATCLIFFE.
H. Con. Res. 26: Mr. WESTMORELAND.
H. Con. Res. 75: Mr. GOWDY and Mr. COURTNEY.
H. Con. Res. 100: Mr. LANCE, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. DOLD, Mr. JOYCE, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. STEWART, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mrs. LOWEY, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. LATTA, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mrs. LOVE, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. ASHFORD, and Mr. POLIQUIN.
H. Res. 14: Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. AMASH, and Mr. CLAY.
H. Res. 145: Ms. MCCOLLUM.
H. Res. 220: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.
H. Res. 346: Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS and Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.
H. Res. 364: Ms. MCCOLLUM.
H. Res. 383: Ms. MCCOLLUM.
H. Res. 386: Ms. MCCOLLUM and Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H. Res. 469: Mr. MACARTHUR.
H. Res. 523: Mr. PETERS and Mr. BUCHANAN.
H. Res. 528: Ms. LEE, Ms. BROWN of Florida, and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.
H. Res. 541: Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MEEKS, and Mrs. LOWEY.
H. Res. 552: Mr. PERLMUTTER and Mr. TAKAI.
H. Res. 553: Mrs. COMSTOCK and Mr. HECK of Nevada.
H. Res. 554: Mr. KILMER, Mr. HONDA, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. CÁRDENAS, and Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California.
H. Res. 559: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina and Mr. MOOLENAAR.

DELETIONS OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 3094: Mr. MICA.

PETITIONS, ETC.

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

38. The SPEAKER presented a petition of Mr. Gregory D. Watson, a citizen of Austin, TX, relative to urging Congress to propose, for ratification by special conventions held within the individual states, an amendment to the United States Constitution which would clarify that a declaration of martial law, or a suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, does not immunize the President of the United States from any process of involuntary removal from the office of President that is contained within the Constitution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161 WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2015 No. 179

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, we place our trust in You. During this season, when we sing about good will toward humanity, many forces seek to turn that dream into a nightmare.

Make our lawmakers instruments of Your peace. Where there is discord, may they bring harmony. Where there is cynicism, may they bring faith. Where there is sadness, may they bring joy. And where there is despair, may they bring hope. Use these stewards of liberty to make the rough places smooth and the crooked places straight.

Lord, thank You for bringing hope to the helpless and for hearing and comforting the oppressed.

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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

NOTICE

If the 114th Congress, 1st Session, adjourns sine die on or before December 24, 2015, a final issue of the *Congressional Record* for the 114th Congress, 1st Session, will be published on Thursday, December 31, 2015, to permit Members to insert statements.

All material for insertion must be signed by the Member and delivered to the respective offices of the Official Reporters of Debates (Room HT–59 or S–123 of the Capitol), Monday through Friday, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. through Wednesday, December 30. The final issue will be dated Thursday, December 31, 2015, and will be delivered on Monday, January 4, 2016.

None of the material printed in the final issue of the *Congressional Record* may contain subject matter, or relate to any event, that occurred after the sine die date.

Senators' statements should also be formatted according to the instructions at http://webster.senate.gov/secretary/Departments/Reporters__Debates/resources/cong__record.pdf, and submitted electronically, either on a disk to accompany the signed statement, or by e-mail to the Official Reporters of Debates at "Record@Sec.Senate.gov".

Members of the House of Representatives' statements may also be submitted electronically by e-mail, to accompany the signed statement, and formatted according to the instructions for the Extensions of Remarks template at https://housenet.house.gov/legislative/research-and-reference/transcripts-and-records/electronic-congressional-record-inserts. The Official Reporters will transmit to GPO the template formatted electronic file only after receipt of, and authentication with, the hard copy, and signed manuscript. Deliver statements to the Official Reporters in Room HT–59.

Members of Congress desiring to purchase reprints of material submitted for inclusion in the *Congressional Record* may do so by contacting the Office of Congressional Publishing Services, at the Government Publishing Office, on 512–0224, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. daily.

By order of the Joint Committee on Printing.

GREGG HARPER, *Chairman.*

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 3 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

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

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DISCRIMINATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, yesterday the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the case of Fisher v. University of Texas. In that case the plaintiff was challenging the affirmative action program the University of Texas has.

During those oral arguments, conservative Justice Scalia asked whether affirmative action harms minority students by placing them in environments that are too academically challenging for them. Justice Scalia said the following about African-American students: ''There are those who contend that it does not benefit African Americans to get them into the University of Texas where they do not do well, as opposed to having them go to a less advanced school, a slower-track school where they do well.''

Justice Scalia further argued that African-American students ''come from lesser schools where they do not feel that they're . . . being pushed ahead in . . . classes that are too . . . fast for them'' and that the University of Texas should not take really qualified African-American students because that means ''the number of . . . really competent blacks admitted to lesser schools turns out to be less.''

But that wasn't enough. This is what else he said: ''I don't think it stands to reason that it's a good thing for the University of Texas to admit as many blacks as possible.''

It is stunning that a man of his intellect—and I have always acknowledged his intellect, but these ideas that he pronounced yesterday are racist in application if not intent. I don't know about his intent, but it is deeply disturbing to hear a Supreme Court Justice endorse racist ideas from the bench of the Nation's highest Court. His endorsement of racist theories has frightening ramifications, not the least of which is to undermine the academic achievements of Americans, African Americans especially.

Earlier this week I spoke about the Republican platform, which has a lot of hate in it. As we speak, Donald Trump is proposing to ban Muslim immigration. Other leading candidates are proposing religious tests, tossing around slurs on a daily basis.

The top two Republican leaders in the United States have said they will support Donald Trump if he is nominated. And now a Republican-appointed Justice is endorsing racist ideas from the Supreme Court bench. The only difference between the ideas endorsed by Trump and Scalia is that Scalia has a robe and a lifetime appointment. Ideas such as these don't belong on the Internet, let alone the mouths of the Nation's leaders.

The idea that African-American students are somehow inherently intellectually inferior to other students is despicable. It is a throwback to a time that America left behind half a century ago. The idea that we should be pushing well-qualified African-American students out of the top universities into lesser schools is unacceptable. That Justice Scalia could raise such an uninformed idea shows just how out of touch he is with the values of this Nation. It goes without saying that an African-American student has the same potential to succeed in an academically challenging environment as any other student.

I firmly continue to believe the United States of America is the greatest Nation in the world because of our ability to embrace men and women of diverse backgrounds and provide them with the opportunity to succeed. Colleges and universities that welcome diversity provide their students with an opportunity many in the world can never hope to obtain. Learning with people from different backgrounds spurs creativity and innovation. Research has shown that increased racial diversity on campuses produces higher levels of academic achievement for all students, and Fortune 500 companies agree that embracing diversity is good for the bottom line.

The Supreme Court previously has acknowledged that diversity provides a substantial and compelling contribution to our educational system. Yet Justice Scalia's comments paint a picture of two disturbing realities.

Despite the progress our Nation has made on diversity and inclusion, there is still much work to do to ensure we are giving every American a fair shot regardless of race, ethnicity, or religion. As a nation, we still have the responsibility to direct adequate resources to our educational system to prepare all students for higher education.

Generations of discrimination and legally sanctioned inequality have produced racial disparities in our educational system—sad but true. These disparities must be addressed by embracing diversity in our schools, workplaces, markets, and neighborhoods while investing in adequate resources for all students, from pre-K to higher education.

Our Nation was founded on the values of liberty, justice, and equality. Justice Scalia's distressing comments are a reminder that we must remain vigilant to safeguard opportunity for all Americans. Embracing diversity is not only the right thing to do, it is the American way.

Lyndon Johnson said:

> It is not enough just to open the gates of opportunity. All our citizens must have the ability to walk through those gates.

It is our responsibility as a nation to open the gates of opportunity for all Americans, in spite of what Justice Scalia said yesterday.

Mr. President, has the Chair announced the business of the day?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It has been announced.

Mr. REID. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE NEW SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, what a difference a new Senate can make—what a difference.

Some may have thought Washington would never agree on a replacement for No Child Left Behind. Years of inaction on the Senate floor gave ample cause for doubt. Some may have been skeptical when a new Senate with a new approach resolved to finally solve the problem—but no longer.

Yesterday, the new Senate voted overwhelmingly to deliver the most significant K–12 education reform in well over a decade. The President will sign the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act later this morning.

Here is what this bipartisan law will do: replace a broken law with conservative reform that will help students succeed instead of helping Washington grow. That means swapping one-size-fits-all Federal mandates for greater State and local flexibility. That means bringing an end to the ability of faraway bureaucrats to impose common core. That means strengthening charter schools. That means putting education back in the hands of those who know students' needs best—parents, teachers, States, and school boards.

The Every Student Succeeds Act is conservative reform passed on a bipartisan basis. The Wall Street Journal calls it ''the largest devolution of federal control to the states in a quarter-century,'' and it is an important achievement for our kids and for our country.

So I want to thank again the Senators who worked together to make this possible—Senator ALEXANDER, a Republican from Tennessee, and Senator MURRAY, a Democrat from Washington. They took advantage of the opportunities a new and more open Senate provided. They put good legislation together and then placed personal stakes in its success. They worked hard. They labored over many months, and they didn't lose sight of what a legislative exercise like this one should really be about: good policy, better outcomes for our country, and, with the bill we passed yesterday—the bill the President will sign today—greater opportunities for every student to succeed.

Senator ALEXANDER was right when he said that ''this bill is just one more example that Congress is back to work.'' It is worth noting a point he made the other day as well: ''This has

been one of the most productive Senate years in a long time,'' he said. ''The Republican Senate majority is making a real difference, particularly [for] 100,000 public schools, [for] 3.5 million teachers, and [for] 50 million children.''

But perhaps the American people are wondering why. Perhaps they are wondering why the Senate is suddenly back to work this year. Perhaps they are wondering why some issues are suddenly passing now when they weren't passing previously. Let me turn back to the rest of what Senator ALEXANDER said, because I think the answer for a bill like ESSA is really quite simple. ''We're doing it,'' he said, ''by working in a bipartisan way with our colleagues, which is, I think, the way the American people want us to govern.''

Here is the idea. Give Senators of both parties more of a say in the process, and Senators of both parties are likely to take more of a stake in the outcome. That is why, on this bill, we saw a more open process that started way back in the committee stage. Senator ALEXANDER and Senator MURRAY, the top Republican and the top Democrat on the education committee, understood that No Child Left Behind had to be fixed after years of inaction. So they worked together on a bipartisan basis, and the Senate passed the most significant K–12 education reform in years.

Take another example. Senator INHOFE and Senator BOXER, the top Republican and top Democrat on the public works committee, understood that crumbling roads and bridges had to be fixed after years of inaction. So they worked together on a bipartisan basis, and the Senate passed the first long-term transportation bill in a decade.

How about this one: Senator BURR and Senator FEINSTEIN, the top Republican and top Democrat on the Intelligence Committee, understood that Americans' online privacy and financial transactions deserved some protection after years of inaction. So they worked together on a bipartisan basis, and the Senate passed an important cyber security bill.

Across the new Congress, we saw several other stuck issues come unstuck too: a decisive end to Washington's annual doc fix drama, strong action to help knock down foreign trade barriers, and extending a hand of compassion to victims of modern slavery. All of it passed in the new Congress, and all of it passed on a bipartisan basis.

Now, let me be clear. No one is saying that all of the Senate's challenges have been ironed out. Of course we know that our work is ongoing. Of course we know there will always be bumps along the way.

But here is what we can say for sure. The new Senate has taken serious steps to foster a more open atmosphere on many issues. The new Senate has seen real progress made for our country, often on a bipartisan basis, and we are proud of that. We are proud of that. Whether we are Republican or Democrat, I think that is something we can all take pride in as Americans.

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.

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

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

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

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

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I rise today to highlight the positive change our new Republican majority has brought to the U.S. Senate in 2015.

As a first-year Senator—and I will remind everybody that I spent a lot of time on the other side of the Capitol observing the Senate—I came to the body looking to improve this institution that for far too long was not working for American families. Not only did the Senate fail to pass legislation that would help our seniors, students, and workers, it failed to even debate critical issues. Looking from the House side across the hall in the Capitol, we really couldn't understand that.

In 2014 the Senate only voted on 15 amendments. This year, under new leadership, we have taken hundreds of amendment votes and committees are hard at work. We debated issues, clearly stated our policy priorities, and broke the gridlock that defined the previous Congress.

Allowing Senators from both sides of the aisle to offer amendments, participate in the process, and take votes is the best way to achieve bipartisan legislation. It is common sense. Isn't that the way it is supposed to be? It is kind of how I thought it should be, and I am glad to know that this year, that is what we are doing. Working together is the only way to enact policies that will improve the lives of the American people.

The new Senate work has borne tremendous fruit, particularly in the past week. We passed the first major overhaul of elementary and secondary education in more than a decade, and the President is poised to sign this into law. Eighty-five Senators voted for it; that is a big bipartisan majority.

The Every Student Succeeds Act strikes the proper balance between flexibility and accountability. The bill ends education waivers and the Federal common core mandate that had turned Washington bureaucrats into basically a national school board. No one cares more about a student's success than a child's parents and their teachers, and those closest to our children should be the ones empowered to make those decisions. At the same time, accountability matters.

I have three children who went through the school system, and testing done properly is a good thing. A parent wants to know where their child stands. We want to know what their weaknesses and successes are, and we want to know where the school stands. But under this bill, States will have multiple measures of student achievement, not just testing. Test results will just be a part of that evaluation, and States will have broad discretion to measure other factors. High schools will now report on the rate of graduates going on to higher education. Whether graduates are prepared to continue education is, in my view, an important measure of success.

This bill also recognizes the importance of technology and education, not just in the classroom but also at home. It includes language that Senator KING and I introduced to study the homework gap. Students who lack access to fast and reliable broadband at home need to be able to continue learning outside the classroom.

If the teacher gives an assignment and students are given a device and they take it home, if they don't have the connectivity, they are behind. But if they do have the connectivity—the access—they can continue their education at home and be prepared the next day.

States will now have flexibility to use Federal resources to improve this access to technology. This is a significant step forward, I think, for the education system that is outdated and out of step with the needs of our students. It is particularly hard-hitting in rural communities.

Last week we passed and the President signed the first long-term highway bill in 17 years. Since 2009, Congress has lurched from one short-term patch to another, leaving officials across the country unable to plan future highway and transit projects.

The shameful inability to make a lasting investment in our infrastructure came to an end last week. The FAST Act invests $2.5 billion in West Virginia's roads and bridges over 5 years. I can say after going home last weekend that the biggest issue raised to me in a congratulatory way was this: Thank you for passing the highway bill. With it, the completion of Route 35 in West Virginia and Corridor H will bring economic potential to our State. Key projects such as the King Coal Highway and the Coalfields Expressway will help isolated communities attract businesses and provide jobs. States will also now have more flexibility, which is exactly what they want and need, to spend Federal dollars.

New permitting reforms will help taxpayer dollars go farther and enable projects to be completed more quickly. Time is money, and if we can complete in a shorter time span and do the regulatory obligations at the same time—

concurrently—it can save States, the Federal Government, and localities money.

This highway bill is truly a jobs bill not only for the workers who will build and repair America's roads and bridges, but these investments will also bring broader economic benefits to our communities.

Another good thing this bill does that will help further job growth in West Virginia is it reauthorizes the Appalachian Regional Commission. This reauthorization includes bipartisan language to establish a high-speed broadband development initiative for underserved areas in Appalachia.

Just this Sunday, the Charleston Gazette-Mail wrote about how the lack of broadband was hindering efforts to provide telemedicine in small West Virginia towns. The ARC reauthorization is a tangible step towards getting this region connected. Broadband access can power these communities.

So passage of the education and highway bills are tremendous recent achievements, and they follow earlier bipartisan accomplishments this year.

With our entitlement programs hurdling towards bankruptcy, it was important for Congress to act. In April, we permanently eliminated Medicare's sustainable growth rate, or SGR, putting an end to the long series of temporary patches that had vexed our Nation's seniors and doctors. These reforms will encourage competition, save taxpayer dollars, and provide a more reliable system for our seniors. We know there is more to do, but this marks a good first step to preserve Medicare for future generations.

This same legislation extended funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program—a program I have been intimately involved with in West Virginia since my early days as a member of the house of delegates.

We passed legislation to help veterans heal from the unseen wounds of war and to support victims of human trafficking.

We renewed trade promotion authority to facilitate new trade agreements that can expand American jobs. And we did all of this by working together to find common ground on behalf of the people we serve.

Even when consensus cannot be achieved or the President chooses to go it alone, the Senate should debate the tough issues and show the American people where we stand. We say where we stand when we are running for election. We should be saying where we stand now that we are elected. We shouldn't be shying away from that.

The President's relentless environmental campaign to expand Washington bureaucracy at the expense of our economy is an issue I have been deeply concerned about. Energy-producing States have been hit the hardest. My State of West Virginia now has the largest and highest unemployment rate after enduring thousands of layoffs and WARN notices. Nationwide, coal mining employment has dropped by 30 percent since 2011. When I was a Member of the House of Representatives, I took action to rein in the President's regulatory agenda, but often legislation that passed the House could not garner enough support here in the Senate.

So as a newly elected Senator, I committed to change that and to lead the legislative response to protect affordable, reliable energy. Just last month, we succeeded. The Senate passed two resolutions to avoid the Clean Power Plan that are now headed to the President's desk, including the one that I led. Under new leadership, the Senate strongly opposed policies that are devastating our energy economy and have negligible environmental benefit.

ObamaCare is another costly disaster that has placed great burdens on the American people. The new Republican-led Senate recently delivered on its promise to pass legislation that repeals the broken law. Basically, ObamaCare is failing. Americans are facing skyrocketing premiums and deductibles. Countless people have lost access to the doctor and health care plan of their choice. Even insurance companies are threatening to pull out of the system, and the Nation's largest one is one of those.

President Obama and the Democrats are fighting to use taxpayers' dollars to bail out the big insurance companies in a misguided attempt to save their failed health care policy.

The repeal legislation we passed last week would reduce taxes by more than $1 trillion, strengthen Medicare, and provide significant resources for a problem plaguing our country—substance abuse and mental health treatment. We know the President will veto the bill, but new leadership in the Senate has put a repeal bill on his desk for the first time. And this legislation will serve as a model for efforts to repeal and replace ObamaCare in the next Congress.

This year, we have addressed the concerns of many Americans and the serious challenges that we face. We have solved problems and delivered real results. And under Leader MCCONNELL's management, we have been able to debate critical issues on behalf of the Americans we serve, offer new reforms and ideas through the amendment process, and enact important bipartisan legislation.

But this is just the beginning. While much has been accomplished, our work is far from done, and I look forward to building on this record of bipartisan achievement in the year ahead.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise to talk about an opportunity we have in the midst of all the negotiations going on to do something incredibly meaningful, that has bipartisan support, and literally will address a group of diseases that affect one out of four people every year—one out of four people who work here, one out of four people in our families. A set of diseases right now for which less than 40 percent of those with the disease get the treatment they need, but when they do, it is manageable and they can go on and lead productive lives. What I am talking about is mental illness. One out of four people every year has some kind of mental illness which is treatable and with medications and with treatment—just like any other disease—can allow someone to go on and live their life.

We have started the process in public policy of doing what we call mental health parity by saying now that insurance can't discriminate whether it is a behavioral disease, mental health, substance abuse or physical health, but we don't yet have the services in the community. So what happens is we pay dearly. Not only do individuals pay with their lives, their livelihoods, their families, and communities pay, but we pay as taxpayers.

It was interesting to me, speaking at a conference a couple of days ago here in DC with law enforcement and mental health professionals coming together, to hear about the Cook County Jail in Chicago, a huge facility. The sheriff there now has appointed a psychiatrist as the director of the jail. Why? Because one-third of the people housed in the jail have psychiatric problems. They shouldn't be in the jail. They may have committed some minor infraction because they didn't have a job or maybe they were on the street. Maybe they were hearing voices in their head and didn't hear the police officer and didn't respond in a way—or where it was considered belligerent. We now know from papers today in Michigan that studies show that people who are mentally ill are 16 times more likely to be killed in a year by a police officer. I am not suggesting that it is at all on purpose but it is because of the nature of the behavioral problems and what ends up happening in the real world when people aren't getting the treatments they need. We know what happens in terms of violence and people committing crimes, although someone who has a mental health disease is much more likely to be a victim than a perpetrator.

We have people in the emergency rooms of our hospitals. I have talked to hospital administrators and doctors who say what we need is to make sure we have a 24-hour emergency psychiatric facility, a place where someone can go or family members can call or the police can use if they find someone who needs help, not the hospital emergency room and certainly not the jail.

The good news is that we have started a bipartisan effort that can fix this. My partner and colleague in this, Senator BLUNT, and I, over a year ago, authored a provision that was passed by the House and Senate to begin something called the Excellence in Mental Health Act. We now have in law a definition of quality behavioral health services. We have federally qualified health centers in the community where people without insurance can go and get preventive care and get the physical health services they need, but the health clinics can't get reimbursed for mental health or substance abuse services. So we now have a definition. We have standards for what quality behavioral health care, mental health, and substance abuse care looks like. We have standards. We begin to provide dollars so that communities can provide those services if they meet the standards.

A couple of years ago when we put together money for the first step by saying we are going to provide money for 8 States to be able to meet those standards—8 out of 50—the good news was that half the States in the country responded and said: We want to be one of those eight States. Twenty-four States across our country now have signed up. They have received planning grants to assess their community mental health services, what they are doing, and how they can meet these new high standards, how they can make sure they include 24-hour psychiatric emergency services in their community so their citizens have the help they need as well as ongoing help for families and individuals. Twenty-four States have said: Sign me up. We are willing to do the work.

We have funding for eight of those States to actually be able to do it, to change lives; eight of those States to be able to provide services, treatment, hope for individual families, help for the sheriff, and relief for the emergency room. What we are proposing now and what is under consideration is to fund the 24 States. We have 24 States that have stepped forward. Let's provide them the resources. In the context of what we are talking about in the budget, it is a very small amount of money. We could say to the communities across this country and virtually half of the States that we are going to give them the resources to meet higher quality standards, to be able to provide the services desperately needed for one out of four people every year who have some kind of mental illness. The ramifications of doing nothing are severe in so many ways.

The reality is that we are at a point where we have the opportunity to say that as a country we are going to recognize and treat diseases above the neck the same as diseases below the neck and support communities that step up with higher quality standards and services. In the world in which we live, this would be a huge bipartisan victory.

I know this is under discussion, and I am hopeful that as the leadership moves forward, they will join us—the bipartisan coalition in the House and the Senate—in saying yes to give the people an opportunity to live their lives, be successful, work, and manage their diseases in the community just like any other disease.

I wish to say in closing that if you are a diabetic, you check your insulin every day. If you check your sugar and take your insulin, you manage your disease. It is not debilitating. You can go out and live your life. I imagine there are many people who work in the Senate who are managing diabetes. You can do the same thing if you are bipolar. It is a chemical imbalance of the brain. It is just a different organ, a different part of the body. If, in fact, you have the medication to stabilize and you have the support and treatment you need, you can manage that disease, go on with your life, be successful, work, have a family, and be able to live with dignity. That is what we are talking about. We are talking about giving people who have diseases in the brain the same opportunity for treatment and management of those diseases to live healthy, hopeful, successful lives as we do for people who have diseases in any other organ of the body. We have the opportunity to do that. At the end of next week, I deeply hope we will be able to celebrate that we have done something incredibly important for families across America.

I yield the floor.

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

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, this is the 29th time I have been on the floor over this current session to address what is called, ''Waste of the Week.'' Twenty-nine weeks of this year, I have been on the Senate floor talking about examples of how the Federal Government wastes taxpayers' money through waste, fraud, and abuse. I have laid out specific examples.

Some changes have been made in programs as a result of the publicity it has received not just from me but from the accounting offices that are doing the checking and the inspectors general who are doing the checking.

Sometimes I wonder if anybody is listening, but I am very encouraged by the fact that a number of us now, including the Presiding Officer, are talking about this issue. I hope every Member in this body, all 100 of us, start thinking about ways in which we can make our Federal Government more efficient and effective and stop wasting through fraud and abuse, stop wasting taxpayer dollars. I don't want to keep doing this, but I am going to keep doing this until there is a majority and hopefully a unanimous clarion call saying: Let's clean up this government. Let's go after this waste, fraud, and abuse.

In terms of examples, we have now totaled well over $100 billion. We are coming up with much higher numbers as we come down to the floor every week. The Presiding Officer just issued a book, which I think every Member of this body ought to read, collecting other examples of waste, fraud, and abuse.

All of this is really in honor of a former Member, Senator Tom Coburn of Oklahoma, who really led the charge on this issue. I regret that Tom is not still a Member of the Senate. He had a way of digging out this information that was commendable. He would come to the floor and make a persuasive case through the illustration of various forms of abuse of the taxpayers' dollars.

A number of my colleagues are picking up the clarion call. As I said, we need all 100 of us to come to the conclusion that we don't have to stand here and say we are doing everything we possibly can to manage the people's money when we know that is not true, when we know that inspectors general of virtually every agency in the government have come up with reports that simply say ''Why in the world are you doing this in the first place?'' or ''Look at this amount of fraud.''

One-hundred billion dollars or more is just a drop in the budget, so we are going to continue to expose this waste. Today I had hoped this 29th waste of the week would be the last one of this calendar year, but it looks as if we might be here 1 more week, so we will get the 30th in next week if necessary.

Recently, the inspector general for the Department of Housing and Urban Development conducted a series of audits on HUD's multibillion-dollar portfolio. The results that have been printed are deeply troubling. After reviewing HUD's books, the inspector general found that the agency's finances are missing records, contain inaccurate information, and have even violated Federal laws. He acknowledged that HUD's accounting has lacked appropriate oversight for a long time. This has been going on for a long time.

Let me quote from his report:

> Multiple deficiencies existed in HUD's internal controls over financial reporting, resulting in misstatements on financial statements, noncompliance laws and regulations. We have reported on HUD's administrative control of funds in our audit reports and management reports since fiscal year 2005. HUD continued to not have a fully implemented and complete administrative control of funds system that provided oversight of both obligations and disbursements.

This was exposed in 2005. Ten years later, they are still having the problem. They still haven't cleaned up their act.

This is just one agency. Maybe this is the worst agency—I don't know—in terms of being irresponsible and how they spend money, but I doubt it. I suspect that this statement could have been made by a number of our agencies.

I wish to highlight a couple of specific examples from the inspector general's audits.

One audit examined HUD's Government National Mortgage Administration, commonly known as Ginnie Mae. Ginnie Mae buys mortgages from banks and institutions, bundles those mortgages together, and then sells portions of those bundles to investors. These mortgage-backed securities are fully backed by U.S. Government guarantees.

The IG's audit bluntly noted that HUD's financial records are so bad that it was not even possible to audit the entirety of Ginnie Mae's $25.2 billion portfolio. In other words, the recordkeeping for the transactions that took place under HUD was in such disarray, so bad, they couldn't even provide an audit that correctly addressed the problem. From what the IG could review, it found Ginnie Mae's finances contained nine material weaknesses, eight significant deficiencies in internal controls, and six instances of noncompliance with applicable laws and regulations. After reviewing Ginnie Mae's 2015 finances, the inspector general found over $1 billion in abuse and inefficiencies.

If this had happened to any business in America other than the Federal Government, either the business would be bankrupt, the stockholders would have depleted its value, or the board of trustees would have fired its manager. They would have had to reorganize the entire—no way can you run a business this way. No way would it be possible to run it. This would happen only in the Federal Government because we can print money and we can keep it flowing into HUD and these other agencies. And for the 10 years since it was disclosed, they have continued the same practices that have gone on before that don't even allow us the ability to fully understand what they are even doing. They have been warned about it, and they have been talked to about it. They said they are going to clean it up, but it continues.

Let me give another example. The IG also found waste and fraud and mismanagement involving HUD's taxpayer-subsidized housing benefits. The low-income housing program provides affordable housing for households with incomes less than 80 percent of the median income for the area. This program has helped many families put a roof over their head through the years. Unfortunately, because of a loophole in HUD's review policies, households that have too high an income and thus are not qualified to receive Federal support have been able to remain in the taxpayer-subsidized Federal housing program.

The inspector general of HUD found that more than 25,000 over-income families were living in HUD taxpayer-subsidized housing in 2014 alone. So over 25,000 people who don't qualify for the program any longer because their income has improved are still living under the subsidized housing program, which is providing subsidies to them that they are no longer qualified to receive.

One doesn't actually have to have a low income to participate in this taxpayer-subsidized low-income housing; they simply had to have a low income when they applied. But hopefully this helped them as they were having income problems and financial problems—those who are able to come out of the system and who receive a larger income and therefore no longer qualify retained the subsidies, and HUD never took action to basically determine that they no longer qualify for this. There were over 25,000 specific incidents.

In a specific example in New York City, the program's income ceiling for a four-person household is just a little over $67,000. Yet a New York family was legally able to remain in public housing when their annual income was nearly $500,000. In fact, they owned real estate that produced over $790,000 in rental income within only 4 years. So people who had qualified for this had achieved tremendous financial success—from what source, I am not exactly sure. They have moved from a program that said you have to have income below $67,000 to qualify. Their income was over $500,000, and yet they still retained their qualification.

Let's look at a small town. In Oxford, NE, a single-person household earned over $65,000 annually and had assets of nearly $1.6 million—far higher than the city's income cap of $33,500. In other words, to be in the program you could not earn over $33,500. This individual was earning obviously extraordinarily more than that with a $1.6 million value of assets and yet still received subsidized housing.

If this was a one-off, if this was a few people here and there taking advantage of the system and so forth—but we are talking tens of thousands of people on just this single program. Remember, the audit of HUD looked at a whole range of discrepancies. I am talking only about a couple of specific programs.

It is not hard to agree that this waste of taxpayer dollars is something that can be addressed. I am encouraged that my colleagues are looking at this in a number of ways—and the more the better. We do this in respect and honor for what Senator Coburn started, and I am happy to be a part of that. I know the Presiding Officer is also.

I will conclude by saying for just this one agency, I can give a lot more examples of reckless disregard for use of taxpayer money that have been documented by the inspector general and that have been provided to that agency, which has not been able to clean up its act since 2005. They have had 10 years to do it, and it still continues. The inspector general says it is such a mess, it is so disassembled, it is so poorly administered that it can't even come to a conclusion of how bad it is. It is impossible to fully audit the Department of Housing and Urban Development because of their financial ineptness and their financial incapability of keeping records on their very own programs.

Today we are going to add a modest amount. This could be tens of billions. We took only a couple of examples here, and those examples total $1,174,000,000. That is not small change. Think about being about to send this back to the taxpayers who are working their hearts out and having taxes levied on them or think about how we can send this money to higher priorities—maybe to some things related to national security where we are scraping for funds to be able to provide the security this country needs. Whatever the reason, the waste continues to pile up. No one coming down to this floor can say ''We can't cut a penny more of spending'' without addressing this first.

It appears that we will be down here for the 30th ''Waste of the Week'' next week, which I regret. But we have plenty of waste lined up to be talking about.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it is December 10, and Congress is working its way through some final items of business, including a giant spending bill called an omnibus—some might call it an ''ominous''—bill because it is so big it takes all of the discretionary spending that Congress makes for the entire year and wraps it up into one big package. I have to say it did not have to be that way. It shouldn't have been that way.

In the 114th Congress, under new leadership, we actually did something that hadn't been done in 6 years. We actually passed a budget. The purpose of the budget in part is to set caps on spending levels for the Appropriations Committee and for the 12 appropriations bills that should come out—and in fact did come out—of the Appropriations Committee. But the reason we find ourselves here at the end of the year with this ominous Omnibus appropriations process is that our Democratic colleagues filibustered all of those individual appropriations bills.

It would have been so much better to take those up one at a time so the American people and Members of the Senate could read them and understand them. We could debate them, we could offer amendments to try to improve them, and then we could finally pass them and send them on to the President. But because of the desire to force the majority to agree to higher spending levels, our colleagues across the aisle filibustered those appropriations bills. So here we are, at the end of the year, with a few huge pieces of legislation left to consider.

I think most people looking at Washington, DC, these days are tempted to

want to look the other way because so much that happens here seems to be so contentious and, frankly, a reflection of our polarized politics in America. But despite all of the challenges we have—and I know the Democratic leader the other day actually claimed this was one of the most unproductive Senates in recent memory, only to be given three Pinocchios by the Fact Checker at The Washington Post. So I would like to remind the Democratic leader about some of the things we have actually done, working in a bipartisan fashion, to get legislation through the Senate, through the House, and to the President's desk.

Sometimes I think we need a bit of a refresher course on what the Constitution provides in terms of the division of responsibilities in government. The Founders of our great Nation made it hard—not easy. They made it hard to pass laws, and appropriately so, because they viewed the concentration of power and the ability to push through legislation as a potential threat to their individual liberties. So not only did they divide the legislative power between the House and the Senate, but they also created a Presidency that has the ability to veto that legislation.

Sometimes in their enthusiasm for certain policies, some of our own constituents get frustrated and they say: Why couldn't you pass this bill or that bill? Well, the truth is the only way this happens is when there is, first of all, some leadership on the part of the majority party because it is the majority leader and the Speaker, the majority leader in the House, who actually set the agenda. So that is pretty important. A lot of the legislation we considered this year would not have even come up if our Democratic friends had been in charge. But once we have the bill on the floor, it literally takes bipartisan consensus building in order to actually get something done.

I would like to talk about a few of those things that we have been able to get done this year because I don't want them to get lost amidst all of the contentiousness that people read about and watch on their television. It is important that the people we work for understand we have actually been trying very hard to get some important things done.

After the House of Representatives passed the Every Student Succeeds Act with a strong bipartisan vote last week, yesterday the Senate followed suit by passing that legislation with 85 votes. It obviously wasn't perfect because 15 of our colleagues did not vote for it, but that was about as strong a bipartisan vote as you get in the Senate these days.

I think it is important to highlight the time and effort it took many Members of this body to create and ultimately pass this bill. Of course, it took the leadership of Chairman ALEXANDER of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. But the fact is—and I know he would say this if he were standing here on the floor—he could not have done it if it weren't for the partnership of the senior Senator from Washington, Mrs. MURRAY, a member of the other political party. What they showed us is how working together in a bipartisan way can achieve real reform and positive change for the American people. That is the way the process is supposed to work.

Sometimes, though, policies are so bad that the best response is simply to stop it. I don't think we should diminish or deprecate the merits of stopping bad legislation, but where there is an area of common interest, where consensus can be built on what the appropriate legislative response is, that is how it is done—the way Senator ALEXANDER and Senator MURRAY did.

Of course, we are in a political environment where people like to focus on the partisan bickering and gridlock. But passage of this bill serves as just one example of a Senate that has been back to work under new leadership since the last election about a year ago, and we appreciate the willingness of our friends on the other side of the aisle to work with us on a number of areas to try to make those accomplishments a reality.

Another example is in the area of transportation funding. Last week, for the first time in more than a decade, Congress passed a multiyear transportation bill. I think it was more than 30 different times before that Congress had passed short-term patches to those spending bills for transportation, and you can imagine how difficult it was for States to actually plan and then to implement some of their construction projects to improve their transportation infrastructure. In that case, it was the hard work of the senior Senator from Oklahoma, Mr. INHOFE, who chairs the Environment and Public Works Committee, as well as the junior Senator from California, Mrs. BOXER, working together as a team; then, of course, Senator HATCH, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and Senator WYDEN, the ranking member, a Democrat, working together to try to come up with some of the funding mechanisms. But as the majority leader said last week, it would not have been possible to pass this multiyear highway bill for the first time in a decade if it weren't for the bipartisan cooperation we saw and, particularly on the Democratic side, the leadership of Senator BOXER.

Now, with this legislation, States like mine, Texas—growing States can plan and build projects that strengthen our Nation's infrastructure and make our transportation system safer. They can avoid some of that churning, uncertainty, and inefficiency that comes from temporary patches. President Obama signed that legislation last week, and now it is the law of the land.

Like the education bill I mentioned a moment ago, the transportation funding bill, which was called the Fixing America's Surface Transportation, or FAST, Act, passed this Chamber with more than 80 votes—80 votes. With 54 Republicans and 46 affiliated with the Democrats, the minority, the Transportation bill got 80 votes. Obviously this was a strong bipartisan vote and a testament to the bipartisan spirit this year in a Senate that has allowed us to make some progress on long neglected and long overdue goals like transportation funding.

Then I think about other topics we have worked together on, such as trade. When the President said he wanted us to pass the Trade Promotion Authority legislation, only 13 Democrats voted for it. So it was up to the majority—the Republicans, the other party—to provide the votes to pass Trade Promotion Authority.

Not everybody thought it was a good idea, sure. But in my State, one reason our economy continues to do better than most of the rest of the country is that we are the No. 1 exporting State in the Nation. We believe it is good for our economy and for job creation to be able to sell things that we make, agricultural goods we grow, and livestock we raise to markets around the world. That is what Trade Promotion Authority will allow. It will help Texas farmers, ranchers, and manufacturers get the best deal possible out of pending trade agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which is focused on 40 percent of the world's gross domestic product in Asia. It is very important that we stay engaged in Asia because the default is for China to fill that void and set the rules.

The Trade Promotion Authority, which was an important priority for the President, happened to be something that Republicans by and large agreed with and his own party disagreed with. As I said, only 13 Democrats voted for it.

The trade promotion authority legislation is really the first step to opening up the doors of opportunity to our country's businesses worldwide, but particularly in Asia. Like the other bills I mentioned, trade promotion authority was the result of the tireless effort of a bipartisan partnership. In this case, the senior Senator from Utah, Mr. HATCH, chairman of the Finance Committee, and the ranking member of the Finance Committee, RON WYDEN, the Senator from Oregon, spent countless hours negotiating and renegotiating the legislation to bring it to the floor and ultimately to be signed into law by the President.

Another example happened to be the way we pay physicians under the Medicare program that our seniors rely upon. Year after year, we would come up with short-term patches to the so-called doc fix. But this year we passed a permanent fix in a negotiation between Speaker Boehner and the Democratic leader in the House, Congresswoman PELOSI, that actually preserves seniors' access to care under the Medicare program—a noteworthy accomplishment.

Another subject I am particularly proud of is that we passed the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, a bill this Chamber passed with 99 votes. This law will help victims of modern-day slavery recover and rebuild their lives and will make sure these survivors—some of whom are children—are not treated like criminals but given the help they need to heal and to get on with their lives.

We have also passed critical bills to protect our country from cyber attacks—something we saw happen at the IRS, where 100,000 records of taxpayers was hacked in a cyber attack and stolen and compromised. We also saw millions of people's records compromised at the Office of Management and Budget.

Congress has passed legislation, which is now being reconciled with a different House bill to be able to get that to the President, to provide that security that we all need when we are online. And as I said, we passed the first budget that has been passed in 6 years. The point I am trying to convey is that not everything up here is fighting like cats and dogs. It is not the shirts versus the skins. It is not like the Democrats and Republicans can never find anything that we agree on. Sure, there is there is a lot that we disagree on, and that is fine. It is fine to have policy differences. This is the forum where those policy differences are debated and where, if possible, if common ground can be found, we can find that common ground.

I have told this story, and I am going to conclude here since I see our colleague from Georgia waiting to speak. When I came to the Senate, Ted Kennedy, from Massachusetts, the ''liberal lion of the Senate,'' who had been here for so long, was working with one of the most conservative Members of the Senate, the Senator from Wyoming, on the HELP Committee—the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. I asked Mr. ENZI, the Senator from Wyoming: How is it that you and Senator Kennedy, who are polar opposites, can find common ground and actually work productively on the HELP Committee? I have never forgotten it. Senator ENZI told me: It is simple; it is the 80–20 rule. We look for the 80 percent, if possible, that we can find common ground and agree on, and the 20 percent we can't agree on, we leave for another fight another day.

That always stuck with me as a very constructive way to work in a highly polarized environment where many of us share completely different views about public policy. But we owe it to our constituents, to this institution, and to the American people to try to find common ground where we can and offer them constructive solutions, as we have done time and again this Congress.

While there are some who want to distract or misconstrue or deny the fact, the fact is there has been bipartisan accomplishment this year. But it takes leadership, and it appeared to take a new majority and a new majority leader after this last election to get the Senate back on track.

Even many of our Democratic friends who served in the majority previously couldn't even get votes on amendments, on legislation they wanted to offer, because the Senate was basically shut down. But now we are back to work, and the Senate is functioning the way it should.

I wanted to say a few words to note these accomplishments but also to say thank you to those who have worked together to make it possible, who put the American people ahead of party to deliver real results in the Senate this year.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

JOINT SURVEILLANCE TARGET ATTACK RADAR SYSTEM

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I have spoken at length about how our debt crisis and our global crisis are interconnected. Before I speak today, though, I want to thank the Senator from Texas for his leadership this year, as we did get the Senate back to regular order. I know we have much to do, but I appreciate his leadership as whip and as a fellow colleague. Thank you.

Today I rise to speak about how this overlap between our debt crisis and our global security crisis impacts the future of a vital Air Force asset: the Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System, or JSTARS, as they call it. I visited with Team JSTARS to hear about their critical role. We made a visit. We talked about how their role affects our national security and our national defense and countering the global security crisis we face. I have also seen in Iraq and Afghanistan firsthand how this platform is absolutely vital to protect our forces on the ground in harm's way.

The global security crisis facing our Nation continues to grow. First, we face our traditional rivals—China and Russia—as they become ever more aggressive. The persistent threat of nuclear proliferation is now exaggerated and increasing every day with Iran's efforts and, of course, we see what is going on in North Korea as well. Finally, we face threats from radical jihadist terror groups, not just in the Middle East but here at home, unfortunately—and not just from ISIS. AQAP, Boko Haram, and al-Shabaab, to mention a few, are all thinking about how to do harm here in our homeland.

As a result, we know that the need for American leadership in the world isn't going to go away any time soon. Team JSTARS plays a critical role in our response to these threats. JSTARS is an Air Force platform that provides critical intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, or ISR, and ground targeting capabilities in service to all branches of our military. Over the past 25 years, they have flown over 125,000 combat hours in 5 different combatant commands. As a matter of fact, they have flown every day since 9/11.

The ''J'' in JSTARS stands for ''joint.'' Team JSTARS is a blended unit. The Air Force, Army, and National Guardsmen who work on the team, eat, sleep, and deploy together. These men and women leave for days, weeks, and sometimes they deploy for months to protect our men in uniform around the world. Not only are they a joint mission with the Army, but JSTARS also does several mission sets. JSTARS does command and control as well as providing intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. From stakeout to shoot-out, JSTARS is capable of supporting all missions in all phases, with full spectrum capability from low to high intensity conflict.

In the words of General Kelly, SOUTHCOM's commander, JSTARS is quite unique, ''a true force-multiplier, working seamlessly with both the DOD and interagency assets, generating impressive results in our asset-austere environment.'' What makes JSTARS unique from other intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms is that on each JSTARS plane, we have unique manpower at the tactical edge to talk to our servicemembers on the ground with 22 radios, 7 data links, 3 Internets, and a secure telephone system. These are things we cannot take for granted. Our men and women on the ground talk about this incessantly.

As I saw it in Iraq and Afghanistan, we could not fulfill our mission without this type of capability in the air, overseeing our men and women every day. As we see threats around us from an increasingly aggressive Russia and China, the threat of electronic warfare is also a growing concern. If satellite communication radios are targeted—if these systems are degraded by the enemy in any way—JSTARS can in turn provide the same critical capability in theater. This is a redundant capability we cannot do without. This platform has proven itself to be invaluable and indispensable to our Armed Forces—not just in the Air Force and Army but in every service—the Marines, the Navy, the Coast Guard, and even in some counter-drug missions.

In the Pacific, JSTARS has been a key part of the Asia rebalance, helping to maintain stability and assure allies by providing vital insight to maritime forces as they push back against an expansive China. In fact, as China continues to challenge freedom of navigation and asserts itself in the Asia-Pacific region, PACOM is asking for more and more JSTARS presence at a very time when their capability is declining.

Also in Asia, U.S. Forces Korea commander General Scaparrotti calls JSTARS ''very important to us'' as he deters an unpredictable North Korea. Here in this atmosphere, JSTARS has flown in support of homeland defense, doing drug interdiction missions.

General John Kelly, the SOUTHCOM commander, said: ''JSTARS is especially important, providing a detailed maritime surveillance capability that is unsurpassed.''

To give you a comparison, a single JSTARS sortie—a single plane—can cover the same search area as 10 maritime patrol aircraft sorties. But the future of this platform is in jeopardy. As threats against our Nation have evolved, JSTARS has too. But there are only 16 of these planes covering our needs worldwide over the last 25 years. We have relied on JSTARS for 25 years to protect our men and women whom we put in harm's way—to protect them while other people are trying to do them harm.

Unfortunately, in the last 25 years, these planes are beginning to wear out. They are reaching the end of their service life. These planes have been in service since the early 90s. But even then, these planes weren't new when the Air Force acquired them. Each plane on average had over 50,000 hours when we bought them. The average age of the fleet is 47 years.

If you look at just one example in the JSTARS fleet, there is one aircraft that had 16 different owners or lessors over that time before it became a JSTARS, including Pakistani International Airlines and Afghan Airlines. I think it is very ironic that today that very plane flies oversight missions over those two countries.

As these planes near the end of their service life, they are spending more and more time in depot maintenance. More maintains is more costly. Dramatically increased maintenance time is threatening aircraft availability and mission readiness. This in turn impacts the number of JSTARS that can be put into mission at any one time and be out in the combatant commands while doing their job, while day by day the demand from combatant commanders for JSTARS grows.

What is more concerning is that as JSTARS near the end of their service life, as you can see on this chart, there is a gap. If we do nothing, we will have a gap of 10 years. The best we could do starting today is to shorten that gap to 4 years. This is a gap we cannot allow to happen.

This chart shows the declining availability of the current fleet down to zero by 2023. It also shows that under the current plan—pending DOD approval and funding—the replacement fleet does not even come online until 2023, meaning we will have a 10-year gap. They don't get back to full strength until around 2027—again, the 10-year gap. Due to the increased maintenance requirements of this aging fleet, JSTARS is already at a point where we only have about half the fleet available to fly at any point in time. Even if we extend the service life of JSTARS and accelerate the replacement, we can only narrow the gap to 4 years. This is unacceptable.

I have talked about the planes. Let me talk about the men and women who man those planes, who service those planes, who keep those planes in the air. These are talented professionals. I have met with them. They are dedicated professionals, protecting our soldiers on the ground. They are committed to this mission, but they have to have our help. The men and women on the ground in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world deserve our help. But when it happens to have a gap like this, our irresponsibility as a Congress and as military leadership shows up.

We cannot allow this to happen. Recapitalization for the JSTARS fleet needs to happen, and it needs to happen right now. As these aircraft age, depot maintenance is not only more costly but also keeps these aircraft, which are in high demand for every combatant commander, from fulfilling their mission fully and putting our soldiers on the ground in mortal danger. This is precisely where we see the debt crisis and global security crisis intersect.

In the last 6 years, I have spoken about this before, but we borrowed 40 percent of what we have spent as a Federal Government. This puts our ability to support a strong foreign policy backed up by a strong military in jeopardy. As Admiral Mullen, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, once said, the greatest threat to our national security is our own national debt.

The JSTARS Program is an example of how our debt crisis is impacting our ability to fulfill our mission requirements. JSTARS recapitalization, which would replace these planes over time, is the No. 4 priority within the Air Force. The other three priorities ahead of it are very valid, but very expensive platforms.

Just last month, the Air Force acquisition chief, Assistant Secretary LaPlante, said that the JSTARS recap might get scrapped thanks to sequester and tight budget constraints. Again, this is a result of our fiscal intransigence and poor planning by military leaders. This prohibits us from meeting the very basic needs of our men and women on the ground who depend on this critical platform to protect them and provide overarching eyes and ears in the battle space. This should not have happened. The intransigence of Congress over the last decade and the intransigence of our military leadership and procurement planning are all at fault. We can fix this.

This week I am joining Senator ISAKSON and at least 11 other Senators in writing to Secretary of Defense Carter about the importance of funding for the next fleet of JSTARS in next year's budget request.

I wish to thank the defense appropriators as well as the Armed Services Committee for their support for this critical platform and mission. I look forward to continuing to work with them to support JSTARS. Not only do we need to ensure the new JSTARS fleet is funded, but this needs to be done fast. As I said, if we do nothing today, we have at best a 4-year gap, not to mention the problem with the planes. What do we do with these professional military men and women who are irreplaceable—pilots, navigators, engineers, technicians, mechanics, schedulers, and computer experts. This is a capability we cannot do without.

Not only do we need to ensure that the new JSTARS fleet is funded, but again this has to happen immediately if we are going to manage this gap. This gap in capability that we see on this chart will become a reality if the pace of recap doesn't change. We need a faster solution. This chart shows why this recap needs to be a rapid acquisition program and we need to get on that immediately.

We need to ensure that this critical platform stays in theater. Our combative commanders demand it, our troops on the ground depend on it, and they certainly deserve it. We cannot allow Washington's dysfunction to put our men and women in combat theaters in further danger. This needs to get fixed, and it needs to get fixed right now.

I yield my time.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

U.S. COMPUTER EMERGENCY READINESS TEAM

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I mentioned to the Presiding Officer in our brief conversation before I came to the podium that one of the things I try to do every month or so is come to the floor, usually when things are slower and there is not a lot going on, to talk about some of the folks who work for us and serve our country in the Department of Homeland Security.

Earlier this week, as my colleagues may recall, an outfit called the Partnership for Public Service released an annual report in which they rank the best places in which to work in the Federal Government. The report is based on surveys that are conducted literally by hundreds of thousands of Federal employees. This year it showed an increase in overall employee morale for the first time, I think, in 4 or 5 years. That is good news.

Despite the progress that appears to have been made in a number of Federal agencies, not all but many components of the Department of Homeland Security continue to struggle to make their employees feel good about their work and what they do for the rest of us.

I know the Secretary of the Department, Jeh Johnson, and his team have taken a number of significant steps to make the Department a better place to

work for current and future employees. They do outreach and get input from their employees as to what needs to be done to enable them to feel better about the work for greater job satisfaction, to make them want to come to work. I would also say today that the Congress—those of us who serve in the Senate and the House—also has a responsibility to help improve morale, not just at the Department of Homeland Security but in the Federal Government at large.

Considering the fact that we began 2015 with a fight in this body right here over whether we should even fund the Department, I don't believe those of us in the Senate or in the House are doing all we can do, that we are doing our part well. As I said earlier, that is why I come to the Senate floor on a number of occasions throughout the year to highlight some of the extraordinary work done every day by the dedicated men and women at the Department of Homeland Security.

Today I rise to recognize no one individual. Usually I pick one or two people who have done extraordinary things with their lives, but today I am going to focus on a whole team of people who do important work every day to defend our Nation from the growing and evolving threat our country faces in cyber space.

It seems as though we don't go a week without hearing about another major breach at a business or a government agency. We are under unrelenting attack from all over the world—in some cases from sovereign nations, in other cases from criminal organizations, and in other cases just from pranksters. Over these past few years, we have seen major attacks on the Office of Personnel Management, on a great many banks and other businesses, and even the email of the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. These attacks make clear that the threats we face online are complex, and unfortunately we will be struggling with how to deal with them for the foreseeable future.

Fortunately, in Congress we have been making some progress combating these cyber threats through legislation. Last year we passed cyber security legislation—four bills in fact—out of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. These four bills were aimed at strengthening the ability of the Department of Homeland Security to perform their cyber security mission.

Among those bills was one to update how our government protects its own networks. This bill includes language clarifying the role the Department plays in overseeing and enhancing security and other agencies. Two other bills gave the Department some of the tools it needs to strengthen its cyber security workforce, and just last month the Department of Homeland Security announced that it now seeks to hire up to 1,000 new cyber security employees over the next 6 months using the new authorities we have given them.

We also passed legislation that codified the cyber operations center at the Department. It is called the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center, affectionately known as the NCCIC. Our legislation—which former Senator Dr. Tom Coburn and I coauthored, supported by many in our committee and outside of our committee—gave the NCCIC the strong legal foundation it needs, that it lacked, in order to do their job and engage with the private sector in a joint effort to better secure critical cyber networks.

I think we have made real progress on cyber security legislation this year as well. I think we are maybe poised to do even more. I would like to use a football analogy. The team flips a coin and somebody receives and somebody kicks the ball. Receiving takes the ball maybe deep in their own territory, and then they march down the field across the 50-yard line into the other team's territory, then they get to the 20-yard line, and then moving closer to the other team's goal line, they would say they are in the red zone. In terms of our march on cyber security legislation here and in the House, thanks to the good work of the Intel Committee here and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs as well, we are not just in the red zone, we are inside the 10-yard line and it is first down and goal to go.

Unfortunately, the clock is running out and we don't have forever to get the job done, but if we are smart and don't give up, we can have a real success for the American people in strengthening our cyber defenses in a real way.

The legislation we passed this fall was called the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act, and it represents a collaboration on a number of cyber security issues. In the bill the Department of Homeland Security plays a central role as they interface between industry and the government. The bill also includes provisions to enhance the cyber security program at the Department of Homeland Security known as EINSTEIN, which uses classified threat intelligence to protect all of our civilian agencies.

I am mentioning all of this legislation to show the critical role or underline the critical role the Department of Homeland Security plays in security for our Nation. At the center of the Department's cyber security operation is the U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team, which is also known as US–CERT.

To my left is a picture of our President, and the handsome fellow he is speaking to is a fellow named Jeh Johnson, who is the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, a role he has filled for I believe most of 2 years now. I think he is doing a splendid job, with the great support of the Deputy Secretary there, Alejandro Mayorkas, and a couple of thousand people who are committed to defending our homeland.

This is a picture of the President addressing, along with Secretary Johnson, the employees at US–CERT. I think it was taken earlier this year. Again, US–CERT—the U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team—is the main operational team within the NCCIC. It is the operational team within the NCCIC itself.

What do they do? They pool information and they share that information throughout the Federal Government. The US–CERT also shares information with our partners in the private sector across the country and with our allies around the world. It is an important job. It is not a job that is done for 5 days a week, 8 hours a day. It is a 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week operation, and these men and women work to stay ahead of the bad actors who are trying to steal our personal information and trying to really harm our economy. In some cases they are plotting to damage our critical infrastructure such as our electric grid, our financial systems, and our communications systems.

US–CERT was established 12 years ago as the Department of Homeland Security was first being stood up. The mission of US–CERT is simple, I think: to make the Internet a safer place for everyone by helping to improve cyber security across the country. I will say that again. The mission of US–CERT is very simple—not easy but simple. It is to make the Internet a safer place for everyone by helping to improve cyber security across our country. To do this, US–CERT operates a wide variety of programs. These programs include several information sharing collaboration programs, incident response teams that provide onsite assistance to attack victims, programs such as the EINSTEIN intrusion detection and prevention system to protect Federal agencies, education and awareness programs, and deeply technical forensic analysis. The US–CERT partners with a wide variety of organizations. Among them, they partner with powerplants and utilities, they partner with financial institutions, they partner with software companies, with researchers, and they partner with certain teams in other countries and other cyber operation centers such as those over at NSA, the National Security Agency, and the FBI as well.

When a major attack occurs in the Federal Government or the private sector, the men and women at US–CERT mobilize to travel to the victim's location. They help mitigate the attack. They help to strengthen the victim's cyber systems, and then they communicate with their partners so everyone can secure their systems against similar attacks. We learned from that bad experience, and hopefully we can help reduce the likelihood that someone else will suffer a similar fate.

Earlier this year, when the Office of Personnel Management discovered a

data breach of personal data belonging to millions of Federal employees, they called the NCCIC and asked for its team of experts. US–CERT was deployed to play a central role in, first of all, investigating the attack but also in responding to that attack. For the next 4 months, the team worked literally around the clock at OPM to assess and to monitor Federal networks and to develop new protections against this type of intrusion that OPM had experienced.

Now, once US–CERT realized that other Federal agencies were also vulnerable to this kind of a breach, they immediately shared the indicators of the attack with network analysts across the Federal Government. This allowed other Federal agencies to scan their systems and to make sure they had not been compromised by the same hacker and to be on alert for that hacker's attack.

Because of the scale and impact of the OPM breach, which I think actually ended up affecting more than 20 million people, the US–CERT team worked long hours to make sure they could provide guidance to Federal agencies as quickly as possible so they could protect their networks from similar attacks and prevent the attacker from using the information they obtained against us. Their work not only strengthened the Office of Personnel Management's cyber security posture, it also bolstered cyber security across the entire Federal Government.

US–CERT and all the cyber warriors at the NCCIC work tirelessly every day to out-think and out-innovate our cyber enemies. The legislation we enacted last year and the bill we are working hard to send to the President this year with great bipartisan support here in the Senate and the House as well puts the Department of Homeland Security in the spotlight and entrusts them with ever-greater responsibility for years to come. We in Congress recognize the critical role US–CERT plays in strengthening our Nation's cyber security, and we must continue to support these hard-working men and women in their mission.

Mr. President, I will close by telling a story. I have told this story before, but it is a good one, and it is certainly germane to what we talked about here today.

A couple of years ago, I was listening to a radio station on my way to the train station in Delaware, and I caught NPR news right at 7 a.m. as I made my way to the train station in Wilmington. On the news that morning, they gave a report about an international survey that was taken where they asked thousands of people in different countries and here: What is it about your work that you like? What is it about your work that makes you like your job or not like your job?

Some of the people who were asked said: Well, the thing I like about my job is I like getting paid—not that they are in it for the money, but they like getting paid. Others said they like vacations. Some people said they had health care. Others said they like the folks they work with. Other people said they like the environment—a beautiful place like this in which they work. But what most people said they liked were really two things: No. 1, they knew the work they were doing was important, and No. 2, they felt as though they were making progress. Think about that. They knew the work they were doing was important and they felt as though they were making progress.

Well, there is probably nobody in our country—at least working within the Federal Government—who does work more important than the folks at the Department of Homeland Security. The House and the Senate have worked in recent years to strengthen the ability of the Department of Homeland Security, including the US–CERT team, to be able to do their job even better.

My hope is that in years to come, as we hear these annual reports on best places to work within the Federal Government, that we are going to find that the people at the Department of Homeland Security, including NCCIC and US–CERT, will be saying more and more: I like working here because I know the work I do is important, and I feel as though we are making progress.

This Senator would just say to everyone at US–CERT, thank you for all the good you do for us. Thank you for your service to this country. And to each of you, we wish you happy holidays and Merry Christmas. We would also say, here is hoping that we will all have a more peaceful new year. I think the American people are ready for that. I know the Presiding Officer is, and so am I.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. SANDERS pertaining to the introduction of S. 2391, S. 2398, and S. 2399 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. SANDERS. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF SANDY HOOK TRAGEDY

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, next week we will mark the 3-year anniversary, for lack of a better word, of the massacre at Sandy Hook, CT. Senator BLUMENTHAL will be joining me on the floor momentarily. I wanted to come to the floor to speak to our colleagues for a few moments about what this week will mean to us in Connecticut and the challenge it presents to all of us.

I want to open by speaking about one of the young men who perished that day—a little first grader by the name of Daniel Barden. Daniel was a really, really special kid. I talk about him a lot when I am speaking on Sandy Hook because I have gotten to know his parents pretty well over the years, so I feel like I know Daniel pretty well. Now that I have a little 7-year-old first grader at home, too, I, frankly, feel closer than ever before to the families such as the Bardens who are still grieving.

Daniel had this sense of uncanny empathy that, now as a father of a 7-year-old, I know is, frankly, not normally visited upon children that age. Daniel just loved helping people in big and small ways; he was so preternaturally outward in his sympathy for others.

There is a story his dad likes to tell about the challenge of going to the supermarket with Daniel because when they would leave, Daniel always liked to hold the door open for his family. But then he wouldn't stop holding the door open because he wanted to hold it open for all of the rest of the people who were leaving the grocery store. So the family would get all the way to the car, and they would look back and they wouldn't have Daniel because he was still holding the door open. It was small things like that that made him such a special kid.

His father, Mark, wrote one day: ''I'm always one minute farther away from my life with Daniel, and that gulf keeps getting bigger.'' His mother, Jackie, in the months and years following Daniel's death, developed a habit of what grief counselors call defensive mechanisms. She would sometimes pretend that Daniel was at a friend's house for a couple hours, simply in order to give herself the strength to do simple household chores like cooking dinner or returning emails. The only way she could do it is if she pretended for a small slice of time that Daniel was actually still alive.

It is hard to describe for my colleagues here today the grief that still, frankly, drowns Sandy Hook parents and the community at large. It is total, it is permanent, and it is all-consuming. But for many of those parents and many of those community members, the grief now is mixed with a combination of anger and utter bewilderment, all of it directed at us, in the Senate and in the House of Representatives.

On December 14, Adam Lanza walked into Sandy Hook Elementary School armed with a weapon that was designed for the military—designed to kill as many people as quickly as possible. He had 30-round magazines, not designed for hunting or for sport shooting but to destroy as much life as quickly as possible. Importantly, he left at home his lower round magazines. And the design of his weapons worked—to a tee. In approximately 4 minutes, he discharged

154 rounds, and he killed with ruthless efficiency: 27 people shot, 26 dead, including 20 first graders.

Here are their names: Rachel D'Avino, 29; Dawn Hochsprung, 47; Anne Marie Murphy, 52; Lauren Rousseau, 30; Mary Sherlach, 56; Victoria Leigh Soto, 27.

And the students: Charlotte Bacon, Daniel Barden, Olivia Engel, Josephine Gay, Dylan Hockley, Madeleine Hsu, Catherine Hubbard, Chase Kowalski, Jesse Lewis, Ana Marquez-Greene, James Mattioli, Grace McDonnell, Emilie Parker, Jack Pinto.

It keeps going: Noah Pozner, Caroline Previdi, Jessica Rekos, Avielle Richman, Benjamin Wheeler, and Allison Wyatt.

There are a handful of kids who aren't on that list, because there were children in Victoria Soto's classroom who were able to escape, likely—as investigators believe—when Adam Lanza had to reload his weapon to put another 30 bullets in it.

So 3 years later, as we grieve those 26, we are still having these awful, searing questions to ponder: What would have happened if Lanza didn't have an assault rifle? Would he even have had the perverse courage to walk into that school if not aided by the security of having a high powered killing machine? Would less kids have died? What if his cartridges had six or 10 bullets instead of 30? Would more kids be alive if someone had been able to stop him while he fumbled with another reload?

The facts of Sandy Hook are hard to hear over and over, but they are important because they should have educated us on ways that we could come together to make another mass shooting less likely. But we ignored Sandy Hook, and it happened again and again. This year, there have been more mass shootings than there have been days in the year: 9 in Charleston, 5 in Chattanooga, 9 again in Roseburg, 14 in San Bernardino.

As I sat at that firehouse with Senator BLUMENTHAL that afternoon in Sandy Hook, as the news rolled into those parents that the children they loved wouldn't be coming home, if someone had told me that day that we would do nothing—that our response as a Congress and as a country would be utter silence—I wouldn't have believed it—no way. But if somebody then told me that it would happen again and again and again and we still wouldn't do anything, I would have collapsed in disbelief.

I am going to tell my colleagues, that is how the families feel. Whatever we think is the best way to stop this carnage—changing our gun laws, giving more resources to law enforcement, changing our mental health system to get more help to those who are becoming unhinged and thinking about settling their real or imagined grievances with violence—do something to honor those children and adults. Do something to show there is an ounce of compassion as we sit here 3 years after the bloody massacre at Sandy Hook.

Our mental health system is broken. We have closed down 4,000 inpatient beds since the recession began. It is harder than ever for families to get the help they need. If you read the report on Adam Lanza, you will see a very troubled young man who was utterly failed by the behavioral health system that stood around him.

Stronger gun laws do work. They absolutely would have prevented some of those kids from dying. And the data is irrefutable. This mythology that you are safer with more guns has zero basis in fact. The data tells us that in States that have tougher gun laws, they have less gun deaths. In States that have higher rates of gun ownership, they have more gun deaths. Stronger gun laws work.

To be honest, the burden is not just on us; it is also on the administration. I have called, along with many of my colleagues, on the administration to take some steps, if Congress won't, to make sure that those who are truly gun dealers, though they might not have a brick-and-mortar store—those who are selling guns with frequency at places such as gun shows or on the Internet—have to do background checks, a recognition that they are dealers just like people who have stores in your downtown.

So my plea, 3 years after this tragedy that utterly transformed that community, is for us to recognize that there is no other country in the world that would live with this level of slaughter. There is no other nation in the world that would accept 80 people dying every day from preventible gun violence and mass shooting after mass shooting and not even try to fix it. That is what is so offensive to me, and 3 years later that is what is so hard to understand for the families whom we represent in Sandy Hook, CT.

If you don't want to believe me, I am going to close the exact same way I closed 2 years ago on the 1-year anniversary. I am kind of ashamed that I have to read this letter again because every single word of it still applies 2 years later, when the epidemic of mass shootings in this country hasn't abated but simply grown. It is from a mom whose child survived, and I will close with it.

In addition to the tragic loss of her playmates, friends, and teachers, my first grader suffers from PTSD. She was in the first room by the entrance to the school. Her teacher was able to gather the children into a tiny bathroom inside the classroom. There she stood, with 14 of her classmates and her teacher, all of them crying. You see, she heard what was happening on the other side of the wall. She heard everything. She was sure she was going to die that day and did not want to die for Christmas. Imagine what this must have been like. She struggles nightly with nightmares, difficulty falling asleep, and being afraid to go anywhere in her own home. At school she becomes withdrawn, crying daily, covering her ears when it gets too loud and waiting for this to happen again. She is 6.

And we are furious.

Furious that 26 families must suffer with grief so deep and so wide that it is unimaginable.

Furious that the innocence and safety of my children's lives has been taken.

Furious that someone had access to the type of weapon used in this massacre.

Furious that gun makers make ammunition with such high rounds and our government does nothing to stop them.

Furious that the ban on assault weapons was carelessly left to expire.

Furious that lawmakers let the gun lobbyists have so much control.

Furious that somehow, someone's right to own a gun is more important than my children's rights to life.

Furious that lawmakers are too scared to take a stand.

She writes:

I ask you to think about your choices. Look at the pictures of the 26 innocent lives taken so needlessly and wastefully, using a weapon that never should have been in the hands of civilians. Really think. Changing the laws may ''inconvenience'' some gun owners, but it may also save a life, perhaps a life that is dear to me or you. Are you really willing to risk it? You—

Speaking to us—

have a responsibility and obligation to act now and change the laws.

I hope and I pray that you do not fail.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Madam President.

I am honored to follow my colleague and friend Senator MURPHY in an effort that has involved both of us, our minds and our hearts, from the day we stood together on December 14, 2012, in Newtown, Sandy Hook. We have stood together and worked together with the families and community that so inspired us with their strength and courage.

If I have one overriding image and message in my mind and heart, it is those families most directly affected by the deaths of 20 beautiful children and sixth grade educators, the families in the reverberating circle of people so deeply touched, hurt, and harmed by the evil on that day, and the people who exemplified the good of that day, the first responders, the firefighters and police, who saw things no human being should ever have to witness and emerged also deeply hurt and harmed. The courage and strength of Newtown, that community, and the families will always inspire me.

I have worked on gun violence prevention for many years, a couple of decades before December 14, 2012. I was the attorney general of the State of Connecticut and a State legislator advocating for the assault weapon ban and other gun violence prevention measures. Then, as attorney general, I defended the assault weapon ban when it was challenged in court, tried the case, and we successfully argued it in the State supreme court. So I knew intellectually and abstractly why we need in this Nation and in Connecticut stronger measures to stop gun violence. The experience of that day left a

searing mark on my heart and on my conscience, so it became for me the passion and priority it is today, and I will not rest as a Member of this body and as a human being until this Nation does better to make America safer and to prevent the kind of tragedy we saw on that day.

I will never forget being at that firehouse on that afternoon, but I will also never forget that evening at St. Rose of Lima Church when the community came together to light a candle rather than curse the darkness.

I had a conversation with one of the parents who lost a child. It was either that night or in the grief-filled days thereafter, when I said to her at some point: When you are ready, I would like to talk to you about what we can do about this. She said to me: I am ready now.

That is the courage we have seen in the last 3 years from those families. It is the courage we saw this morning at an event in the Capitol. It is the courage we have seen again and again from Newtown, from all over the country, loved ones and victims of all of the places—they become kind of landmarks that we recite. There are 30,000 deaths every year from places whose names we could never recite here because it would be too long and because they are the mundane places that all of us go.

As my colleague Senator MURPHY said this morning, all of us are just one second away from becoming victims. The fact is we are all touched by gun violence and we are all harmed and hurt by it.

I will never forget that evening. I will never forget also the day on the floor of this House when the Senate failed to approve a commonsense package of gun violence prevention measures, universal background checks, banning illegal trafficking, a ban on assault weapons, the mental health initiative, and from the Gallery someone shouted down: Shame. They may have said: Shame on you. There is no record of it because we record only what happens on the floor, but on that day the most profound and eloquent comment was those three words: ''Shame on you.''

Shame on us in the U.S. Senate. We are complicit by our inaction. Congress is complicit by its silence. Moments of silence have their place, but silence by inaction here is complicity. It is not only the failure to act, it is also the obstruction that has been placed in the way of knowledge and research. The so-called rider—nobody outside the U.S. Capitol would talk about riders, an amendment that stops the government from doing research—literally research, fact gathering, investigation on gun violence. The cause of 30,000 deaths every year in this country cannot be researched by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In fact, we face a public health crisis in this country. If it were Ebola or influenza or polio, facing these kinds of epidemics or feared epidemics in this country, we would react with drastic and effective measures, including quarantine, that would mobilize this Nation. The response of the Congress to the epidemic of gun violence is to bar research by the CDC and other public health authorities. The very same public health community that could help us understand and take action is gagged and straitjacketed by the U.S. Congress. Even the initial author of that amendment restricting research, former Congressman Jay Dickey, a Republican from Arkansas, said he has regrets. ''I wish we had started the proper research and kept it going all the time,'' he said.

The Congress owes the American people more, but this promise I can make. We are not going away. We are not abandoning this effort. We will not be silenced. We will not be inactive. We are not giving up.

Twelve years it took to pass the Brady bill, after the President of the United States was almost assassinated just a few miles from here and his Press Secretary, Jim Brady, was paralyzed. It took 12 years to pass, with the support of President Reagan, and we need to be prepared for that kind of marathon.

President Reagan famously said: ''Facts are stubborn things.'' We cannot deny the facts that drive this debate because laws do work. We come here every day with the presumption that what we do makes a difference, that the laws we pass make a difference. Gun violence prevention laws do work.

When the shooter at Sandy Hook had to change magazines, children succeeded in escaping. If he had been barred from having the assault weapon, had it been banned, unable to bring it to the site of that horrific tragedy, it might have made a difference.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent for just 1 minute.

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

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. If the shooter in Charleston had been barred, as he should have been because he was ineligible, rather than having the opportunity to purchase weapons as a result of the 72-hour rule loophole, it might have made a difference there. We can't say for certain.

We know there is no panacea, no magic solution, but the loved ones of the families of Sandy Hook, San Bernardino, Colorado Springs, Roseburg, Roanoke, Charleston, and Lafayette have to make a difference here. Honor them with action is what we should do; inaction is complicity. We owe the American people better. We need to keep faith with its values and keep faith with America.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

TRIBUTE TO GOVERNOR TERRY BRANSTAD

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I wish to honor Iowa Governor Terry Branstad on a very historic milestone. On December 14 of this year, Governor Branstad will become the longest serving Governor in the Nation's history. He breaks a record set by Governor Clinton of New York in the early days of our country, even before the Constitution of our country was established, between the Articles of Confederation into the early years of New York as a State in the United States of America. That is a very large feather in the cap of a farm kid from the town of Leland, population 289, in Winnebago County in northern Iowa.

In many ways, a smalltown farm background prepared Terry Branstad for his success as a State house member, Lieutenant Governor, and then Governor on two separate occasions. If he finishes this term—and he will—it will add up to 24 years as Governor.

The farm crisis of the 1980s hit every farm State hard, and Iowa, at the heart of the Nation's breadbasket, suffered deeply. All of us who lived in Iowa at that time saw friends and neighbors lose their family farms and struggle with what to do next for a living. The State needed men and women with vision and ambition to pull the economy out of the doldrums. It needed people who could see the potential for farmers to add value to their operations and for Iowa to diversify its economy, which it has now done.

Of all the people out there, Terry Branstad stood out as Governor. He was at the forefront of creating a new environment to do business. He welcomed and actively encouraged innovation that would capitalize on Iowa's bedrock work ethic and our strong schools. As a result, agriculture was and continues to be a mainstream of Iowa's economy. But agriculture more than ever is an engine for many other employment sectors: renewable energy, manufacturing, crop research, insurance and financial services, and, of course, as we Iowans know, much more.

As Governor from 1983 to 1999, Terry Branstad took the helm during some of the State's worst economic turmoil in decades and steered the ship toward impressive economic growth. The unemployment rate went from 8.5 percent to a record low of 2.5 percent. The Governor could have rested on those laurels and continued to work outside of State government after he retired after those first 16 years, but he again answered the call when the State needed him again in 2010. He put the State of Iowa's interests ahead of his own and went to work for Iowans this second time, bringing his valuable leadership to the Governor's office for another round. That, in a nutshell, tells you everything you need to know about Terry Branstad.

The State of Iowa comes first for him. Iowans are well acquainted with

Terry Branstad's accomplishments and work ethic. It is gratifying to see those attributes get attention on a national scale and in the history books. He has earned his place in history.

Of course, First Lady Christine Branstad ought to be complimented too. We thank her for her public service and, most importantly, for sharing her family with all Iowans.

We are lucky to have had Governor Terry Branstad for these years as chief executive in Iowa, and, of course, I am lucky to call him a friend.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). The Senator from Maryland.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, it is my understanding that some of my colleagues want to talk about our visit to Paris, but I understand Senator HATCH will be on the floor at 2:45 p.m. and we are recessing at 3 o'clock.

Mr President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Members be recognized for up to 5 minutes between now and 2:45 p.m., but it may not be in this order: Senator CARDIN, Senator SCHATZ, Senator UDALL, Senator SHAHEEN, Senator MERKLEY, Senator MARKEY, and Senator COONS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE TALKS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I had the opportunity of heading a delegation this past weekend of 10 Senators who went to Paris for the COP21 talks, the climate change talks taking place in Paris. I was very proud of our delegation consisting of Senator WHITEHOUSE, Senator FRANKEN, Senator MARKEY, Senator MERKLEY, Senator UDALL, Senator SHAHEEN, Senator COONS, Senator BOOKER, and Senator SCHATZ. All of us participated in the meetings that took place in Paris. We were impressed that 150 leaders of the world were in Paris at one time to show their support for a successful outcome on climate change and to express their urgency for dealing with this issue. I think it was a strong followup to the challenge Pope Francis gave all of us as to the moral challenge of our time to protect our planet for future generations.

At the meeting in Paris, we recognized that our global health is at stake. Whether we are talking about our individual States—and I could talk about the people on Smith Island, as their island is disappearing, or the health of the Chesapeake Bay, and my colleagues in the western part of this country could talk about the wildfires and what is happening there. In Asia, we see climate migrants as a result of climate change. In Greenland, we see the glaciers disappearing. Every nation is at risk as a result of global climate change, and that is why 150 leaders went to Paris.

The objective is clear. We had a chance to talk to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon. He made it clear that our goal at a minimum should be to reduce the increase in warming by 2 degrees Celsius. That is doable. The scientists tell us we can do it. And if we do, we will have a healthier planet, we will create more jobs, and not only America but the world will be more secure.

It was clear that U.S. leadership was critically important to that moment in Paris. President Obama, in getting China and other countries to submit action plans, encouraged over 180 countries that are participating in the Paris talks to submit their own action plans to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. That represents over 97 percent of the world's emitters.

As I mentioned, we met with the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon. We all met with former Vice President Al Gore. I think we all were inspired by his lifelong dedication to this issue. We had a chance to meet with U.S. lead negotiator Todd Stern, who updated us on what was happening.

We were particularly impressed with Secretary Moniz, our Secretary of Energy. He had earlier announced, with other world energy leaders, an innovation initiative showing how we can use U.S. technology to make it easier for the world to meet their goals in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and at the same time create more jobs in America. It was an impressive display.

We had a chance to meet with local leaders. Mayor Bloomberg convened a summit of mayors. I was proud that my mayor from Baltimore City, Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, was there.

My colleagues participated in bilateral meetings of other countries to encourage them to be aggressive in submitting their obligations and how we could follow up and make sure we achieve our goals.

It was clear that Paris is heading toward a successful agreement, and it will have U.S. support. We mentioned our commitment to carry not just our individual commitment but to be part of the global agreements in Paris.

We pointed out that in 1992, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was ratified by the U.S. Senate. This is the legal basis for moving forward. We also pointed out that our obligations to comply with our own commitments are controlled by the Clean Air Act, which is the law of our country. We pointed out the actions taken by the Obama administration. We also pointed out that 69 percent of Americans agree that we should have a multilateral commitment to reduce our carbon emissions.

It was clear to us that by working together, we can have a healthier planet for our children and our grandchildren.

Mr. President, I yield the floor to Senator UDALL, one of the great leaders on the environment and a very active member of our delegation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I wish to first say to Senator CARDIN, who led our delegation—Senator CARDIN is the ranking member on the Foreign Relations Committee. Foreign relations has a lot to do with this issue. He showed great leadership, and I believe he is passionate about this issue and finding solutions.

So we were somewhat disappointed, the 10 of us who went—all Democrats—that Republicans didn't join us. This is an issue that needs bipartisanship. We need to join—Republicans and Democrats—on an issue that threatens our national security, threatens our economy, and threatens our environment. It is an issue that is looming out there and needs attention. So we look forward to working with our friends on the other side of the aisle to move forward on this issue.

As I looked over there and saw what was happening, I remembered many of the briefings we have had. Everyone who has looked at this challenge of global warming and climate change says that we need to do two things. First, we need to drive capital to new energy sources, to clean energy sources. We need to innovate is what they are talking about. If you get the capital there and you get the private sector working, you can come up with the solutions. Secondly, we need to put a signal in the marketplace to invest in clean energy and renewable energy.

I was so proud of what happened over there in terms of the world joining together. More than 184 countries came together, and we are going to see the conclusion of their action this week. They have stepped forward and said: We are going to have targets, we are going to have goals, and we are going to be transparent. We are going to let people know we are moving in the direction of solutions and doing something about this immense problem.

So it was a major step forward to see those 184 countries step up and decide to do something.

In addition, Bill Gates led a group of entrepreneurs over to Paris to announce and to challenge the world about energy research and development. As everyone knows, Bill Gates is one of our great entrepreneurs. He and his wife are also philanthropists. He stepped up with 27 other billionaires to say: We are going to put billions into research and development, and we are going to put it into innovation. They called this project Mission Innovation, and they challenged other countries around the world to do the same thing—double their energy research and budget.

So seeing 184 countries step up to the plate and say ''We are going to do this''—and I think we will see those announcements in the next couple of days—and seeing these entrepreneurs step forward I think was a signal—and a bold signal—to the marketplace that we are changing and moving in a new

direction and that we are going to get this done.

I am very proud of my State of New Mexico because we have all sorts of energy—uranium, coal, oil, gas—and we have many renewable sources—wind, biomass, solar, geothermal, but we have taken a strong step in New Mexico to push for renewable resources. In our State statutes, we pushed for a renewable electricity standard of 10 percent by 2010. We met that early, so we put another standard in place of 20 percent by 2020.

We are really in the bull's-eye in terms of climate change in New Mexico because of what we see and what we know happens in the Southwest. The temperatures are twice as high. We have seen those temperatures increase over the last 50 years. So we know there is a crisis, we know there is an issue, we know we need to do something about this, and we are very willing to step forward.

Mr. President, according to a study at Los Alamos National Laboratory, by 2050—not far away—we may not have any forests left in my State. It will be as if New Mexico were dragged 300 miles to the south. Our climate will resemble land that is now in the middle of the Chihuahuan desert.

Now, I am not a scientist. Neither are my colleagues. But the experts at LANL—and scientists all over the world—are clear. If we do nothing, global warming will only get worse.

The nations of the world know this. That is why over 190 nations are in Paris: To meet the challenge of climate change, and to do it together.

The Paris agreement will not solve the problem of global warming by itself, but it is a major step forward. It is what we need to ensure every country does its part, and does its fair share on climate change.

The largest emitters in the developing world—China and India—are making serious commitments. They understand, they have to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels.

This is about their economy, and it is about a commitment to future generations.

Opponents of U.S. climate action have argued that other nations—especially China—would never act to limit their emissions. Well, now they are. This is encouraging—and something we need to encourage further. That is what the world's scientists tell us. That is what our own Department of Defense tells us. We can make progress now—or face ever greater instability later.

More than 180 nations are on board with individual commitments. They will take concrete steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is historic. This will slow global warming—and it must be done now, not later. The world cannot afford to wait.

These nations see the threat. They see the mounting danger. A representative from Bangladesh told me that in his country every day, they face the threat of rising sea levels.

These countries came to Paris with a commitment to succeed.

And the work began before Paris—such as when the U.S. and China announced major mitigation commitments last year.

Our task now is to keep up the momentum, to keep moving forward—both at home and abroad. I believe there are two things we can do right now:

No. 1, work to drive capital to new energy efficient technologies. We need to renew the Production Tax Credit for renewables. Tax incentives have been in place for decades for oil and gas.

Wind, solar and biofuels need that investment as well.

No. 2, send a positive signal to the markets. That means keeping our own climate goals on track, and stopping efforts that would turn back progress. That means encouraging capital investment in sustainable energy—not just in the U.S, but, throughout the world.

We are seeing a growing investment in new technologies with public and private resources. Last week, 28 of the world's billionaires committed to investing in energy research and innovation.

And we are seeing a major market signal that there is demand for those technologies—here in the U.S. through the Clean Power Plan and other measures, and across the globe, especially in developing countries, that have demonstrated a commitment to grow their economies in a cleaner, more sustainable way.

Now is the time for action. America must lead, because we cannot ignore the danger—to our planet, to our economy, and to our security. The science is clear, the threat is growing, and time is running out.

This is not news to people in my State. In New Mexico, temperatures are rising 50 percent faster than the global average—not just this year or last year, but for decades.

We have seen historic droughts. When it does rain we have seen terrible flooding. And we have seen the worst wildfires in New Mexico's history. What we have not seen—what we have waited for—is for Congress to act.

It has not been for lack of trying. There have been many attempts—including bipartisan ones. But each and every time Congress failed to make it to the finish line, failed to pass comprehensive legislation—in both Houses—to curb our greenhouse gas emissions.

Just this week, the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Science held a hearing focused on whether climate change is real. This is settled science. The world has moved on. The United States Congress should, too.

So the President and the EPA have used their authority under the Clean Air Act to lead. They have done what needs to be done, with the support of many of us here in Congress—and of the American people.

The Clean Power Plan is reasonable, and it will make a difference to restrict emissions from new and existing power plants.

Mr. President, I hope that going forward Congress will work on solutions—rather than wasting time on Resolutions of Disapproval, rather than wasting time on questioning science.

The American people do not want a science debate. They want action. The world has come together in Paris. Nations are moving forward. The very real question now is—how do we keep that going?

As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I will continue to fight against dangerous environmental riders.

I am encouraged by the conference in Paris, and I am confident that the United States will continue to lead—even if our Republican colleagues continue to block.

With increased U.S. leadership over the last 5 years we have made great international progress. The Paris conference is evidence of that.

Another sign of progress—the world's largest oil and gas companies are supporting a climate agreement.

BP, Shell—and the massive state oil companies of Saudi Arabia and Mexico—are among the ten major oil companies making commitments.

The United States can help lead this effort—not only at the negotiating table in Paris, but on the front lines in New Mexico and every other State.

Because in this great challenge, there is also great opportunity. Our country can lead the world in a clean energy economy. We have the technology, we have the resources. We need the commitment.

That means finding solutions, developing technology, and not denying scientific reality; not wasting time on empty resolutions that come from nowhere and go nowhere.

There are now more solar jobs in the United States than coal jobs.

My state has every kind of energy resource: Coal, oil, gas, uranium, solar, wind, algae biofuel and more. We are doing all we can to diversify—and reduce carbon emissions. A clean energy economy protects our communities and creates jobs.

A renewable electricity standard—which I have long fought for—would create 300,000 jobs. Most of these jobs are high-paying, they are local, and they cannot be shipped overseas.

Support for renewable energy is strong. Nearly half of the U.S. Senate supported my amendment in January for a Renewable Electricity Standard that would mandate that 30 percent of our energy come from renewable resources by 2030. Over half the States already have renewable energy portfolios. Many of them are being met and exceeded.

In New Mexico, we are blessed with great natural resources and with great human resources as well. Researchers at Sandia and Los Alamos national

labs are studying climate change—not with an agenda, but with a commitment—to tackling the problem, with real science and with real innovation.

Together, we can meet this challenge. We can find a path forward that works. We can work with the global community. We can protect our planet. But, America must lead and help drive progress across the world.

Mr. President, 48 national security and foreign policy leaders—Democrats and Republicans alike—have sounded the alarm. From Chuck Hagel to William Cohen, from Madeleine Albright to George Schultz, in a joint statement they urge us to fight climate change. They urge us to ''think past tomorrow.''

The Paris agreement is a starting point and a historic opening for a global effort to address climate change. It is an opportunity, it is an obligation, and it is something that history will show was the right thing to do.

Mr. President, I see my colleagues have joined me on the floor. Senator SCHATZ, Senator SHAHEEN, and Senator CORY BOOKER are down here, and they have done excellent work. I yield at this time to Senator SCHATZ. I would just say by the way of introduction that I am so impressed with his State and the leadership in his State. Hawaii is going to be a 100-percent renewable State in 2040. A lot of that is due to his leadership and his legislature and Governor stepping up to the plate.

With that, Senator SCHATZ.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I thank the senior Senator from New Mexico for his longtime leadership on climate and conservation issues.

I have been working on this for a long time, as many of us on the floor have been working on this for a long time, and I have not been so hopeful in a very long time. I am reminded of the essential elements of success when it comes to an international agreement, and that is American leadership. We still remain the indispensable Nation, and we finally reasserted ourselves and reclaimed the moral high ground and the political high ground that put us in a position to stitch together an international agreement.

One observation I will offer from the Paris climate talks is how positive the response was. I think we anticipated that we were going to have to do perhaps more troubleshooting, more allaying of concerns about America's commitment to climate action than we ended up having to do. That is because people understand that the President is committed, and people understand that the Clean Power Plan is going forward, and we are making progress and there is no turning back.

I will offer seven very quick observations about the Paris climate talks. The first is this: It is already a success. If you had told any knowledgeable observer that they were going to get 185 countries—representing 97 percent of countries and 98 percent of emissions—and 150 heads of State in the same place at the same time—the most in history—if you had said that 2 years ago, that would have sounded wildly optimistic. We really are making progress.

No. 2, this is not going to require Senate approval. There have been more than 18,000 such agreements that our President and Presidents in the past have entered into over time not requiring Senate approval.

No. 3—and this is important and can't be overstated—it is not enough. If we want to hit the 2-degree Celsius target, this only gets us about 40 percent there. But 40 percent there is 40 percent there. We were at zero 3 weeks ago. So I think getting 40 percent there is very important.

I think the other thing we have learned from other states and other countries and even in the private sector is that once you unleash the power of clean energy on the private sector, there is no turning back. So we anticipate being able to ratchet up these agreements every 3 to 5 years on an international basis.

No. 4, it is way more than expected and way more than ever before.

No. 5, I think we need to know that there are some pretty good accountability and transparency mechanisms in there. This was a key element of the negotiations that Secretary Kerry and the President himself have insisted upon. We need to know—the United States has a robust reporting mechanism. At the public utilities commission level, at the regional level, we know exactly what our energy portfolio is. That is a little bit more of a challenge in the developing world, so we had to develop a matrix so we know that countries aren't cheating or they are not getting their own data wrong. I feel satisfied that it is likely to hit those marks.

No. 6, it is wildly popular in the United States. Two-thirds of Americans support an international climate agreement. A bare majority of Republicans, a decisive majority of young Republicans, and decisive majorities of Democrats and Independents support international climate action.

No. 7 is this: People are going to try to undo this. They are going to do it through the Congressional Review Act. They are going to try to do it through the appropriations process. They are going to try to do it through the electoral process. That is the democratic process, and that is OK. But there is no turning back either legislatively, politically, or in terms of the momentum we have in the private sector.

I would like to introduce someone who has come at climate from a different perspective, as he always does, who has become a leader on these issues, and who was an incredible asset during the weekend we were in Paris, and that is the junior Senator from New Jersey, Mr. CORY BOOKER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, just a brief moment. First and foremost, I want to thank the group of Senators who went over to Paris on the codel. It was very important that the United States of America was well represented there and that this body was well represented there.

I especially thank Senator CARDIN for leading that codel. His leadership was critical. As the ranking member of Foreign Relations, to have him lead and understand that this is a critical issue not just in regard to the climate in general but also to our national defense, to our strength as a Nation, and to our economy—it was good to have him leading and understanding the breadth of these issues.

When I was over there, I was moved to see virtually all of the globe represented by leaders, heads of state, members of Parliament, NGOs, corporations—major, global, dominant corporations. Everyone was there. There was an array of the planet coming together, focused on this issue of the impacts of climate change. Conversations ranged from focusing on us being innovative and how we are dealing with renewable technology so that technology can be a great pathway toward sustainability in the future, all the way to resiliency and making sure we were doing the things to protect populations from the effect of climate change, especially when it comes to poor populations who are disproportionately affected.

I had the chance, the honor while I was there of leading a bilateral conversation with Bangladesh, talking to peer leaders—the United States sitting down at a table with and across the table from Ministry and Parliamentary members from Bangladesh.

By many estimates, Bangladesh is the most vulnerable country on the globe to climate change—the most vulnerable large country to climate change. It is about the size of Iowa. It faces serious challenges with melting off the Himalayas as well as rising sea levels.

Due to climate change, right now Bangladesh is losing 1 percent of its arable land each year, and it is projected over the next decade or so—leading into 2030—to lose a large percentage of its land, displacing millions of Bangladeshis, literally creating climate refugees. The sea level rising is predicted to inundate about 15 percent of the land area and create refugees, making it a reality for them that is so urgent that they went there with a large degree of mission to join with other global actors.

I was proud to be able to sit with them and talk to them about New Jersey—not only a State that has 75,000 people who are Bangladeshis but also a State that knows that our economy and our strength as a State will be affected by climate change as well. We are already seeing what is happening with the warming of our oceans, the acidification of our oceans, how it is affecting the many jobs related to our

fishing industry. We are already seeing the challenges with our climate in terms of increased weather activity and severe storms.

This is an issue that affects America that we cannot solve without joining with the rest of the globe. We know that the injustices that are happening to our Nation in terms of increased fires, in terms of despoliation of our seas, the challenges being faced with weather activity internally in our country—we know these issues cannot be solved locally unless we deal with them globally. That is why I am grateful for all of those who understand that American leadership is incredibly needed.

I am proud to stand here with colleagues of mine and continue to send a strong message to the rest of the globe that we are here in the United States strongly supporting the ambitious commitments of President Obama, the ones that he is making, and that we will defend those communities that are facing this crisis in the immediate and long term. We will be leaders.

One of my colleagues and someone whom I have come to respect quite a bit was an incredibly strong voice in Paris, someone who is committed to these issues not only in her home State but, as an American, across our country. I wish to now engage and acknowledge Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am pleased to be here on the floor with my colleagues—those of us who went to Paris, led by Senator CARDIN, for this climate summit.

At the conference in Paris, more than 180 countries accounting for over 90 percent of global emissions were there. They all submitted their plans for how they are going to reduce emissions, with the goal of keeping global warming below 2 degrees Centigrade by the end of this century.

One of the things I was impressed with in Paris was that the countries that were there represented everybody from China to the Marshall Islands, and all of them understood that climate change is real, that it is a threat to our planet, and that we have to do something about it. They understand that because they have seen it. They have seen it in their home countries. They have seen rising sea levels, extreme weather events, environmental changes—all linked to global warming.

Here in the United States, we see it too. According to a recent Pew poll, two-thirds of all Americans recognize that climate change is real and that action must be taken to address it. We see it in my home State of New Hampshire, where we are seeing a change in our wildlife population, a change in our snowpacks that affects our ski season, our foliage season is affected, and it has an economic impact on our State. But the exciting thing is—and we saw this very clearly in Paris—that at the local level, mayors, Governors, local leaders around the world understand that we have to take action to address it, and they were there in Paris urging the negotiators to come to some sort of an agreement.

In New Hampshire, we have taken action. With nine other Northeastern States, we have been part of a regional cap-and-trade program called the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. As a result of that and other actions that we have taken, we are going to meet the goals of the Clean Power Plan 10 years early.

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative has generated $1.6 billion in net economic value. It has created more than 16,000 jobs across the region. That is one of the benefits of the action we can take to address climate change. As we all know here, it doesn't matter what we do in New Hampshire. It doesn't matter what we do in this country. Unless we get a global agreement in Paris so we are all going to move forward together to address the harmful impacts of climate change, we are going to see the continued sea level rise, the continued extreme weather events, all of the continued negative impacts of that global warming.

Finally, I want to say that for me one of the most exciting things about meeting with people when we were in Paris was hearing that they were cautiously optimistic that we will get an agreement, that we will take action, and we will be able to make a difference for our planet and for future generations.

I was pleased to have Senator CHRIS COONS from Delaware with us on this trip. I know he is going to talk about what he observed when we were in Paris.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I wish to express my gratitude to Senator CARDIN for leading this great delegation of 10 Senators to the Paris Conference of Parties—the COP21, the global climate change conference in Paris—and to Senator SHAHEEN of New Hampshire for her tireless leadership on energy efficiency. The least expensive, most powerful way we can reduce our energy consumption is by investing in new technologies and new approaches that help create jobs and manufacturing in the United States and reduce our total energy consumption and footprint.

I think the Paris conference has already been a success from the outset. As we heard directly from the head of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon, 150 heads of state gathered at the very outset of that conference, and 184 countries made voluntary national commitments to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions, to reducing their carbon footprint, and to working together to find sustainable solutions to this very real challenge.

The other thing I found most encouraging about the many conversations we had with governmental leaders, with advocates, with nonprofit leaders was a commitment to bring together developed countries such as the United States and European and Asian allies of ours and the developing world—the very large countries such as India and China which have become major emitters of greenhouse gases—to bring them all together in one common agreement.

One other comment I wish to make that comes out of what we saw going through an Innovation Fair that was hosted by Secretary Ernie Moniz of our Department of Energy was that governments alone can't solve climate change. Global conferences, such as the one we attended, are important—they are critical—but making real and sustained impact on fighting climate change is also going to require new and innovative approaches, and that requires investment by the private sector and by the Federal Government in clean energy and energy efficiency research and development.

Commitments made in Paris, such as the announced new mission innovation and the breakthrough energy coalition, which are public-private partnerships to ramp up and accelerate our investment in research and development are more important than ever.

We also had a chance to attend a meeting of some national leaders, of mayors and county executives, of Governors, and folks who lead regions and provinces around the world where remarkable progress has been made. At the same time that we are moving forward through this global conference as a group of nations, it is also important to recognize what subnational groups have done.

Senator SHAHEEN referenced the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, which New Hampshire and my home State of Delaware participate in. It has been a remarkable and effective way for a whole group of Mid-Atlantic and Northeastern States to work together. The nine participating States have reduced our emissions by nearly 20 percent while also seeing stronger economic growth than the rest of the country, I think, suggesting it is possible for us to both reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and continue to grow a strong economy.

In fact, my home State of Delaware has reduced its GHG emissions more than any other State in the last 6 years. That is partly due to the great leadership of my Governor, Jack Markell, and partly due to the deployment of a lot of new solar systems and a lot of investment in energy efficiency.

If I might, let me mention one important piece of bipartisan legislation that I think is part of solving this challenge of how do we achieve an ''all of the above'' energy future that has sustained long-term investments in clean energy and energy efficiency research and deployment; that is, the Master Limited Partnerships Parity Act. This is a very bipartisan bill that has long

had the support of Republican Senators MURKOWSKI, MORAN, COLLINS, and GARDNER. Even Congressman TED POE, of Houston, TX, who represents a great deal of oil and gas in his district, is an advocate for this bill. I have been leading it, along with Senator STABENOW, Senator BENNET, Senator KING, and others in this Chamber. It is an important way that we can allow master limited partnerships, long available to the oil and gas industry, to be opened up to all forms of energy to make it a level playing field and to provide opportunities going forward to finance renewable energy products and energy efficiency projects. This small tweak to our Tax Code could make a cumulative big difference going forward.

In conclusion, let me renew my point that government alone can't solve climate change, but it has a central role to play in bringing together the people who can. Let's pass the MLP Parity Act, and let's make long-term, sustained investments in Federal R&D. Let's bring together public, private, and nonprofit leaders because there is no limit to what we can accomplish when our brightest scientific minds, business leaders, and our diplomats working for us in Paris come together to lay out a positive, sustained goal.

I wish to yield the floor to my colleague, the junior Senator from the State of Rhode Island, who has been a tremendous and tireless champion for conservation and in particular for our oceans, which are such a vital part of our climate future.

I yield the floor to Mr. WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, one of the features of our trip to Paris was the presence of America's corporate leaders there urging us on. We not only met with significant corporate leaders like people from Citigroup, PG&E, VF Industries, and others, but they were cheering us on publicly in advertisements like this one taken out by the food and beverage industry, calling on a strong Paris climate agreement. The companies who signed this include Mars—if you like M&Ms, you like Mars—General Mills, Coca-Cola and PepsiCo, Hershey and Nestle, Kellogg, Unilever, and others.

The food and beverage industry was joined by an advertisement from some of America's apparel leaders: VF Corporation, based in North Carolina, which produces North Face, Timberland, and a whole variety of other very well-known and popular brands—Adidas, the shoe manufacturer; Levis, if you know jeans you know Levis; Gap, which has stores all over the country; and others from the apparel industry. Perhaps the biggest advertisement that the American business community took out was this one: Companies like not only Johnson & Johnson, the bandaid people, but Johnson Controls, Colgate-Palmolive, Owens Corning, Procter & Gamble, Dupont, and utilities like National Grid and PG&E. So corporate America made a very strong statement in support of a strong Paris climate deal.

The last one I will show is this one, which was taken out by America's financial leaders—Bank of America, Citi, Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, and Wells Fargo. There was a strong, powerful message from America's corporate leadership that I very much hope our colleagues on the other side will begin to listen to; that Paris is a good thing, a strong agreement is a good thing, and we need to make progress together.

With that, I will turn over the floor to my terrific colleague Senator MERKLEY from Oregon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, a huge thanks to my colleagues who have been presenting so many important dimensions of this battle against a major threat to the health of our planet. Indeed, Henry David Thoreau asked, ''What's the use of a fine house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on?'' That was an excellent question decades ago but an even more important one today, when we have a significant threat that endangers our forests, our farming, our fishing, and human civilization on this planet. This is the challenge of our generation, to bring human civilization together to address carbon pollution and its impacts.

While in Paris something very exciting was going on—150 world leaders came together to kick off the final negotiations. That is unprecedented in human history. Why were so many leaders there? They were there because they are seeing the impacts in their own individual nations that are coming from the rising temperatures. They came together not just with their voice but with their pledges. In fact, more than 180 countries put forward pledges about how they were going to reduce the trajectory of their carbon pollution footprints. They know what is at stake.

We certainly know in Oregon what is at stake. We see the pine beetle devastating forests, creating a red zone of dying trees. We see the longer forest fire season having a big impact, with more intense blazes and more of them over more months. We see the impact of the loss of snowpack in the Cascades impacting our streams and impacting the water supply for agriculture. The Klamath Basin, along with California, is locked into a deep drought with devastating consequences. We see it over on our coast, where the more acidic Pacific Ocean is creating problems for our shellfish industry because the baby oysters have trouble making their shells. How is this connected? Because the carbon pollution in the air is absorbed into the ocean via waves and creates carbonic acid, and that more acidic water is eroding the ability of our shellfish to operate as they have for a millennium in making shells.

We know this is not just something in Oregon, not just something in Maryland, and not just something in this State or that State but worldwide, where 2014 was the warmest year on record. In fact, 14 of the 15 warmest years on record have happened in this century. Now we see 2015 on the trajectory, and it is going to be warmer than 2014.

There is nothing disputable about the facts: rising carbon dioxide and methane pollution, rising consequences for our States across America, rising consequences for the world. Scientists tell us it will get worse. We have only had a 0.9-degree centigrade increase. If we get to 2 degrees, it is catastrophic. It is pretty bad now. We must come together as an international community and address that.

In Paris we know we need to have a more ambitious agenda than the one we have laid out, even with these wonderful pledges, and we need to come back every 5 years and keep driving the process forward. We know we have to lower the costs for renewable energy so we can come back together and increase the pace at which we pivot from a fossil fuel energy economy to a renewable energy economy.

We know we need to invest in solar deployment, and there is the International Solar Initiative that India is going to host a secretariat for and work to deploy a trillion dollars in solar panels. We know innovation matters, and mission innovation with the United States and other nations doubling their investment over the next 5 years will do a lot more to lower costs and increase the efficiency of technologies in clean power and clean power storage.

Well, it is a big challenge, and I am so delighted to be able to be part of a community of legislators. One of those legislators who has led on this in the House for decades, brought his expertise to the Senate, is my colleague from Massachusetts Senator MARKEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Oregon for his leadership, bringing the message of the harm being done to our natural world, I thank Senator CARDIN for taking this delegation of 10 Members to Paris, and I thank the Senator for having this session on the floor.

We are at an inflection point. We are at a point where the danger to the planet is clear.

Mr. President, 2014 was the warmest year ever recorded. This past November was the warmest November ever recorded. October was the warmest October ever recorded. There is now a warming of our planet that is intensifying dangerously, and we have to act in order to avoid the most catastrophic consequences, and that is what is happening in Paris right now. The United States is leading the way. The rest of the world is coming together, and we have a chance to have a very good agreement.

We are going to have the President's back because the 1992 treaty, under

which he is negotiating, was ratified by this body. The Clean Air Act that he is operating under was passed by this body. The clean power rules and increase in fuel economy standards——

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for an additional 1 minute to speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, this afternoon—and I think it will continue over the next week—the Republicans and the American petroleum industry are going to try to lift the ban on the exportation of American oil, which could lead to more drilling for millions of barrels of oil on our soil, while at the same time not giving a simultaneous, equal extension of wind and solar tax breaks so that we can continue this revolution that we are bragging about in Paris right now to the rest of the world. These two things do not go together.

You cannot simultaneously drill for more oil that is not drilled for today and then have an ending of the wind and solar tax breaks as they are kicking in. You cannot preach temperance from a barstool. You cannot preach temperance as you are putting up new oil rigs and simultaneously say that the wind and solar tax breaks are going to end and end soon. We have to have both if there is going to be a deal, and right now that is in question in this Chamber. It is important for the American people to know that answer because in Paris they are waiting for this answer. There are 190 nations that want to know that we are actually going to do what we are saying we are going to do in this agreement that we are trying to reach—the most important agreement for this century in terms of the well-being of the planet.

I thank the Presiding Officer for allowing me that courtesy, and I thank the Senator from Utah for his forbearance.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 116, H.R. 2250.

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2250) making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Appropriations, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury and otherwise appropriated, for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

SENATE

EXPENSE ALLOWANCES

For expense allowances of the Vice President, $18,760; the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, $37,520; Majority Leader of the Senate, $39,920; Minority Leader of the Senate, $39,920; Majority Whip of the Senate, $9,980; Minority Whip of the Senate, $9,980; Chairmen of the Majority and Minority Conference Committees, $4,690 for each Chairman; and Chairmen of the Majority and Minority Policy Committees, $4,690 for each Chairman; in all, $174,840.

REPRESENTATION ALLOWANCES FOR THE MAJORITY AND MINORITY LEADERS

For representation allowances of the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate, $14,070 for each such Leader; in all, $28,140.

SALARIES, OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

For compensation of officers, employees, and others as authorized by law, including agency contributions, $179,185,311, which shall be paid from this appropriation without regard to the following limitations:

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

For the Office of the Vice President, $2,417,248.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

For the Office of the President Pro Tempore, $723,466.

OFFICES OF THE MAJORITY AND MINORITY LEADERS

For Offices of the Majority and Minority Leaders, $5,255,576.

OFFICES OF THE MAJORITY AND MINORITY WHIPS

For Offices of the Majority and Minority Whips, $3,359,424.

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

For salaries of the Committee on Appropriations, $15,142,000.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

For the Conference of the Majority and the Conference of the Minority, at rates of compensation to be fixed by the Chairman of each such committee, $1,658,000 for each such committee; in all, $3,316,000.

OFFICES OF THE SECRETARIES OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE MAJORITY AND THE CONFERENCE OF THE MINORITY

For Offices of the Secretaries of the Conference of the Majority and the Conference of the Minority, $817,402.

POLICY COMMITTEES

For salaries of the Majority Policy Committee and the Minority Policy Committee, $1,692,905 for each such committee; in all, $3,385,810.

OFFICE OF THE CHAPLAIN

For Office of the Chaplain, $436,886.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

For Office of the Secretary, $24,772,000.

OFFICE OF THE SERGEANT AT ARMS AND DOORKEEPER

For Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper, $69,000,000.

OFFICES OF THE SECRETARIES FOR THE MAJORITY AND MINORITY

For Offices of the Secretary for the Majority and the Secretary for the Minority, $1,762,000.

AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS AND RELATED EXPENSES

For agency contributions for employee benefits, as authorized by law, and related expenses, $48,797,499.

OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL OF THE SENATE

For salaries and expenses of the Office of the Legislative Counsel of the Senate, $5,408,500.

OFFICE OF SENATE LEGAL COUNSEL

For salaries and expenses of the Office of Senate Legal Counsel, $1,120,000.

EXPENSE ALLOWANCES OF THE SECRETARY OF THE SENATE, SERGEANT AT ARMS AND DOORKEEPER OF THE SENATE, AND SECRETARIES FOR THE MAJORITY AND MINORITY OF THE SENATE

For expense allowances of the Secretary of the Senate, $7,110; Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate, $7,110; Secretary for the Majority of the Senate, $7,110; Secretary for the Minority of the Senate, $7,110; in all, $28,440.

CONTINGENT EXPENSES OF THE SENATE

INQUIRIES AND INVESTIGATIONS

For expenses of inquiries and investigations ordered by the Senate, or conducted under paragraph 1 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, section 112 of the Supplemental Appropriations and Rescission Act, 1980 (Public Law 96–304), and Senate Resolution 281, 96th Congress, agreed to March 11, 1980, $133,265,000, of which $26,650,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2018.

EXPENSES OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE CAUCUS ON INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL

For expenses of the United States Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, $508,000.

SECRETARY OF THE SENATE

For expenses of the Office of the Secretary of the Senate, $8,750,000 of which $4,350,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2020 and of which $2,500,000 shall remain available until expended.

SERGEANT AT ARMS AND DOORKEEPER OF THE SENATE

For expenses of the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate, $130,000,000, which shall remain available until September 30, 2020.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

For miscellaneous items, $21,390,270 which shall remain available until September 30, 2018.

SENATORS' OFFICIAL PERSONNEL AND OFFICE EXPENSE ACCOUNT

For Senators' Official Personnel and Office Expense Account, $390,000,000 of which $19,121,212 shall remain available until September 30, 2018.

OFFICIAL MAIL COSTS

For expenses necessary for official mail costs of the Senate, $300,000.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

REQUIRING AMOUNTS REMAINING IN SENATORS' OFFICIAL PERSONNEL AND OFFICE EXPENSE ACCOUNT TO BE USED FOR DEFICIT REDUCTION OR TO REDUCE THE FEDERAL DEBT

SEC. 1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any amounts appropriated under this Act under the heading ''SENATE'' under the heading ''CONTINGENT EXPENSES OF THE SENATE'' under the heading ''SENATORS' OFFICIAL PERSONNEL AND OFFICE EXPENSE ACCOUNT'' shall be available for obligation only during the fiscal year or fiscal years for which such amounts are made available. Any unexpended balances under such allowances remaining after the end of the period of availability shall be returned to the Treasury in accordance with the undesignated paragraph under the center heading ''GENERAL PROVISION'' under chapter XI of the Third Supplemental Appropriation Act, 1957 (2 U.S.C. 4107) and used for deficit reduction (or, if there is no Federal budget deficit after all such payments have been made, for reducing the Federal debt, in such manner as the Secretary of the Treasury considers appropriate).

AUTHORITY FOR TRANSFER OF FUNDS

SEC. 2. Section 1 of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 1991 (2 U.S.C. 6153) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as subsections (d) and (e), respectively;

(2) by inserting after subsection (b) the following:

''(c)(1) The Chaplain of the Senate may, during any fiscal year, at the election of the Chaplain of the Senate, transfer funds from the appropriation account for salaries for the Office of the Chaplain of the Senate to the account, within the contingent fund of the Senate, from which expenses are payable for the Office of the Chaplain.

''(2) The Chaplain of the Senate may, during any fiscal year, at the election of the Chaplain of the Senate, transfer funds from the appropriation account for expenses, within the contingent fund of the Senate, for the Office of the Chaplain to the account from which salaries are payable for the Office of the Chaplain of the Senate.'';

(3) in subsection (d), as so redesignated—

(A) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''or the Office of the Chaplain of the Senate, as the case may be,'' after ''such committee'' each place it appears; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by inserting ''or the Chaplain of the Senate, as the case may be,'' after ''the Chairman''; and

(4) in subsection (e), as so redesignated, by inserting ''or the Chaplain of the Senate, as the case may be,'' after ''The Chairman of a committee''.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

PAYMENT TO WIDOWS AND HEIRS OF DECEASED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

For payment to Tori B. Nunnelee, widow of Alan Nunnelee, late a Representative from the State of Mississippi, $174,000.

For salaries and expenses of the House of Representatives, $1,180,736,000, as follows:

HOUSE LEADERSHIP OFFICES

For salaries and expenses, as authorized by law, $22,278,891, including: Office of the Speaker, $6,645,417, including $25,000 for official expenses of the Speaker; Office of the Majority Floor Leader, $2,180,048, including $10,000 for official expenses of the Majority Leader; Office of the Minority Floor Leader, $7,114,471, including $10,000 for official expenses of the Minority Leader; Office of the Majority Whip, including the Chief Deputy Majority Whip, $1,886,632, including $5,000 for official expenses of the Majority Whip; Office of the Minority Whip, including the Chief Deputy Minority Whip, $1,459,639, including $5,000 for official expenses of the Minority Whip; Republican Conference, $1,505,426; Democratic Caucus, $1,487,258: Provided, That such amount for salaries and expenses shall remain available from January 3, 2016 until January 2, 2017.

MEMBERS' REPRESENTATIONAL ALLOWANCES INCLUDING MEMBERS' CLERK HIRE, OFFICIAL EXPENSES OF MEMBERS, AND OFFICIAL MAIL

For Members' representational allowances, including Members' clerk hire, official expenses, and official mail, $554,317,732.

COMMITTEE EMPLOYEES

STANDING COMMITTEES, SPECIAL AND SELECT

For salaries and expenses of standing committees, special and select, authorized by House resolutions, $123,903,173: Provided, That such amount shall remain available for such salaries and expenses until December 31, 2016.

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

For salaries and expenses of the Committee on Appropriations, $23,271,004, including studies and examinations of executive agencies and temporary personal services for such committee, to be expended in accordance with section 202(b) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 and to be available for reimbursement to agencies for services performed: Provided, That such amount shall remain available for such salaries and expenses until December 31, 2016.

SALARIES, OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

For compensation and expenses of officers and employees, as authorized by law, $175,713,679, including: for salaries and expenses of the Office of the Clerk, including the positions of the Chaplain and the Historian, and including not more than $25,000, of which not more than $20,000 is for the Family Room and not more than $2,000 is for the Office of the Chaplain, for official representation and reception expenses, $24,980,898; for salaries and expenses of the Office of the Sergeant at Arms, including the position of Superintendent of Garages and the Office of Emergency Management, and including not more than $3,000 for official representation and reception expenses, $14,827,120 of which $4,784,229 shall remain available until expended; for salaries and expenses of the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer including not more than $3,000 for official representation and reception expenses, $115,010,000, of which $1,350,000 shall remain available until expended; for salaries and expenses of the Office of the Inspector General, $4,741,809; for salaries and expenses of the Office of General Counsel, $1,413,450; for salaries and expenses of the Office of the Parliamentarian, including the Parliamentarian, $2,000 for preparing the Digest of Rules, and not more than $1,000 for official representation and reception expenses, $1,974,606; for salaries and expenses of the Office of the Law Revision Counsel of the House, $3,119,766; for salaries and expenses of the Office of the Legislative Counsel of the House, $8,352,975; for salaries and expenses of the Office of Interparliamentary Affairs, $814,069; for other authorized employees, $478,986.

ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES

For allowances and expenses as authorized by House resolution or law, $281,251,521, including: supplies, materials, administrative costs and Federal tort claims, $3,625,236; official mail for committees, leadership offices, and administrative offices of the House, $190,486; Government contributions for health, retirement, Social Security, and other applicable employee benefits, $254,447,514, to remain available until March 31, 2017; Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery, $16,217,008 of which $5,000,000 shall remain available until expended; transition activities for new members and staff, $2,084,000, to remain available until expended; Wounded Warrior Program $2,500,000, to remain available until expended; Office of Congressional Ethics, $1,467,030; and miscellaneous items including purchase, exchange, maintenance, repair and operation of House motor vehicles, interparliamentary receptions, and gratuities to heirs of deceased employees of the House, $720,247.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

SEC. 101. (a) REQUIRING AMOUNTS REMAINING IN MEMBERS' REPRESENTATIONAL ALLOWANCES TO BE USED FOR DEFICIT REDUCTION OR TO REDUCE THE FEDERAL DEBT.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any amounts appropriated under this Act for ''HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—SALARIES AND EXPENSES—MEMBERS' REPRESENTATIONAL ALLOWANCES'' shall be available only for fiscal year 2016. Any amount remaining after all payments are made under such allowances for fiscal year 2016 shall be deposited in the Treasury and used for deficit reduction (or, if there is no Federal budget deficit after all such payments have been made, for reducing the Federal debt, in such manner as the Secretary of the Treasury considers appropriate).

(b) REGULATIONS.—The Committee on House Administration of the House of Representatives shall have authority to prescribe regulations to carry out this section.

(c) DEFINITION.—As used in this section, the term ''Member of the House of Representatives'' means a Representative in, or a Delegate or Resident Commissioner to, the Congress.

DELIVERY OF BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

SEC. 102. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to deliver a printed copy of a bill, joint resolution, or resolution to the office of a Member of the House of Representatives (including a Delegate or Resident Commissioner to the Congress) unless the Member requests a copy.

DELIVERY OF CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

SEC. 103. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to deliver a printed copy of any version of the Congressional Record to the office of a Member of the House of Representatives (including a Delegate or Resident Commissioner to the Congress).

LIMITATION ON AMOUNT AVAILABLE TO LEASE VEHICLES

SEC. 104. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used by the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives to make any payments from any Members' Representational Allowance for the leasing of a vehicle, excluding mobile district offices, in an aggregate amount that exceeds $1,000 for the vehicle in any month.

LIMITATION ON PRINTED COPIES OF U.S. CODE TO HOUSE

SEC. 105. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to provide an aggregate number of more than 50 printed copies of any edition of the United States Code to all offices of the House of Representatives.

DELIVERY OF REPORTS OF DISBURSEMENTS

SEC. 106. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to deliver a printed copy of the report of disbursements for the operations of the House of Representatives under section 106 of the House of Representatives Administrative Reform Technical Corrections Act (2 U.S.C. 5535) to the office of a Member of the House of Representatives (including a Delegate or Resident Commissioner to the Congress).

DELIVERY OF DAILY CALENDAR

SEC. 107. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to deliver to the office of a Member of the House of Representatives (including a Delegate or Resident Commissioner to the Congress) a printed copy of the Daily Calendar of the House of Representatives which is prepared by the Clerk of the House of Representatives.

JOINT ITEMS

For Joint Committees, as follows:

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

For salaries and expenses of the Joint Economic Committee, $4,203,000, to be disbursed by the Secretary of the Senate.

JOINT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON INAUGURAL CEREMONIES OF 2017

For salaries and expenses associated with conducting the inaugural ceremonies of the President and Vice President of the United States, January 20, 2017, in accordance with such program as may be adopted by the joint congressional committee authorized to conduct the inaugural ceremonies of 2017, $1,250,000 to be disbursed by the Secretary of the Senate and to remain available until September 30, 2017: Provided, That funds made available under this heading shall be available for payment, on a direct or reimbursable basis, whether incurred on, before, or after, October 1, 2016: Provided further, That the compensation of any employee of the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate who has been designated to perform service with respect to the inaugural ceremonies of 2017 shall continue to be paid by the Committee on Rules and Administration, but the account from which such staff member is paid may be reimbursed for the services of the staff member out of funds made available under this heading: Provided further, That there are authorized to be paid from the appropriations account for ''Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations'' of the Senate such sums as may be necessary, without fiscal year limitation, for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the joint congressional committee.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON TAXATION

For salaries and expenses of the Joint Committee on Taxation, $10,095,000, to be disbursed by the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives.

For other joint items, as follows:

OFFICE OF THE ATTENDING PHYSICIAN

For medical supplies, equipment, and contingent expenses of the emergency rooms, and for the Attending Physician and his assistants, including:

(1) an allowance of $2,175 per month to the Attending Physician;

(2) an allowance of $1,300 per month to the Senior Medical Officer;

(3) an allowance of $725 per month each to three medical officers while on duty in the Office of the Attending Physician;

(4) an allowance of $725 per month to 2 assistants and $580 per month each not to exceed 11 assistants on the basis heretofore provided for such assistants; and

(5) $2,486,000 for reimbursement to the Department of the Navy for expenses incurred for staff and equipment assigned to the Office of the Attending Physician, which shall be advanced and credited to the applicable appropriation or appropriations from which such salaries, allowances, and other expenses are payable and shall be available for all the purposes thereof, $3,371,000, to be disbursed by the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives.

OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For salaries and expenses of the Office of Congressional Accessibility Services, $1,387,000, to be disbursed by the Secretary of the Senate.

CAPITOL POLICE

SALARIES

For salaries of employees of the Capitol Police, including overtime, hazardous duty pay, and Government contributions for health, retirement, social security, professional liability insurance, and other applicable employee benefits, $300,000,000 of which overtime shall not exceed $30,928,000 unless the Committee on Appropriations of the House and Senate are notified, to be disbursed by the Chief of the Capitol Police or his designee.

GENERAL EXPENSES

For necessary expenses of the Capitol Police, including motor vehicles, communications and other equipment, security equipment and installation, uniforms, weapons, supplies, materials, training, medical services, forensic services, stenographic services, personal and professional services, the employee assistance program, the awards program, postage, communication services, travel advances, relocation of instructor and liaison personnel for the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, and not more than $5,000 to be expended on the certification of the Chief of the Capitol Police in connection with official representation and reception expenses, $66,465,499, to be disbursed by the Chief of the Capitol Police or his designee: Provided, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the cost of basic training for the Capitol Police at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center for fiscal year 2016 shall be paid by the Secretary of Homeland Security from funds available to the Department of Homeland Security.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISION

DEPOSIT OF REIMBURSEMENTS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE

SEC. 1001. (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2802(a)(1) of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2001 (2 U.S.C. 1905(a)(1)) is amended by striking ''District of Columbia)'' and inserting the following: ''District of Columbia), and from any other source in the case of assistance provided in connection with an activity that was not sponsored by Congress''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 2802(a)(2) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 1905(a)(2)) is amended by striking ''law enforcement assistance to any Federal, State, or local government agency (including any agency of the District of Columbia)'' and inserting ''any law enforcement assistance for which reimbursement described in paragraph (1) is made''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall only apply with respect to any reimbursement received before, on, or after the date of the enactment of the Act.

OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For salaries and expenses of the Office of Compliance, as authorized by section 305 of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1385), $3,959,000, of which $450,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2017: Provided, That not more than $500 may be expended on the certification of the Executive Director of the Office of Compliance in connection with official representation and reception expenses.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For salaries and expenses necessary for operation of the Congressional Budget Office, including not more than $6,000 to be expended on the certification of the Director of the Congressional Budget Office in connection with official representation and reception expenses, $45,700,000.

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

CAPITOL CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATIONS

For salaries for the Architect of the Capitol, and other personal services, at rates of pay provided by law; for all necessary expenses for surveys and studies, construction, operation, and general and administrative support in connection with facilities and activities under the care of the Architect of the Capitol including the Botanic Garden; electrical substations of the Capitol, Senate and House office buildings, and other facilities under the jurisdiction of the Architect of the Capitol; including furnishings and office equipment; including not more than $5,000 for official reception and representation expenses, to be expended as the Architect of the Capitol may approve; for purchase or exchange, maintenance, and operation of a passenger motor vehicle, $91,589,000.

CAPITOL BUILDING

For all necessary expenses for the maintenance, care and operation of the Capitol, $45,546,000, of which $21,237,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2020.

CAPITOL GROUNDS

For all necessary expenses for care and improvement of grounds surrounding the Capitol, the Senate and House office buildings, and the Capitol Power Plant, $11,973,000, of which $2,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2020.

SENATE OFFICE BUILDINGS

For all necessary expenses for the maintenance, care and operation of Senate office buildings; and furniture and furnishings to be expended under the control and supervision of the Architect of the Capitol, $84,221,000, of which $26,283,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2020.

HOUSE OFFICE BUILDINGS

For all necessary expenses for the maintenance, care and operation of the House office buildings, $149,962,000, of which $23,886,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2020, and of which $62,000,000 shall remain available until expended for the restoration and renovation of the Cannon House Office Building.

In addition, for a payment to the House Historic Buildings Revitalization Trust Fund, $10,000,000, to remain available until expended.

CAPITOL POWER PLANT

For all necessary expenses for the maintenance, care and operation of the Capitol Power Plant; lighting, heating, power (including the purchase of electrical energy) and water and sewer services for the Capitol, Senate and House office buildings, Library of Congress buildings, and the grounds about the same, Botanic Garden, Senate garage, and air conditioning refrigeration not supplied from plants in any of such buildings; heating the Government Printing Office and Washington City Post Office, and heating and chilled water for air conditioning for the Supreme Court Building, the Union Station complex, the Thurgood Marshall Federal Judiciary Building and the Folger Shakespeare Library, expenses for which shall be advanced or reimbursed upon request of the Architect of the Capitol and amounts so received shall be deposited into the Treasury to the credit of this appropriation, $101,601,000, of which $19,635,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2020: Provided, That not more than $9,000,000 of the funds credited or to be reimbursed to this appropriation as herein provided shall be available for obligation during fiscal year 2016.

LIBRARY BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

For all necessary expenses for the mechanical and structural maintenance, care and operation of the Library buildings and grounds, $29,132,000, of which $3,994,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2020.

CAPITOL POLICE BUILDINGS, GROUNDS, AND SECURITY

For all necessary expenses for the maintenance, care and operation of buildings, grounds and security enhancements of the United States Capitol Police, wherever located, the Alternate Computer Facility, and AOC security operations, $22,535,000, of which $4,376,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2020.

BOTANIC GARDEN

For all necessary expenses for the maintenance, care and operation of the Botanic Garden and the nurseries, buildings, grounds, and collections; and purchase and exchange, maintenance, repair, and operation of a passenger motor vehicle; all under the direction of the Joint Committee on the Library, $11,980,000, of which $2,100,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2020: Provided, That, of the amount made available under this heading, the Architect of the Capitol may obligate and expend such sums as may be necessary for the maintenance, care and operation of the National Garden established under section 307E of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 1989 (2 U.S.C. 2146), upon vouchers approved by the Architect of the Capitol or a duly authorized designee.

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER

For all necessary expenses for the operation of the Capitol Visitor Center, $20,844,000.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

NO BONUSES FOR CONTRACTORS BEHIND SCHEDULE OR OVER BUDGET

SEC. 1101. None of the funds made available in this Act for the Architect of the Capitol may be used to make incentive or award payments to contractors for work on contracts or programs for which the contractor is behind schedule or over budget, unless the Architect of the Capitol, or agency-employed designee, determines that any such deviations are due to unforeseeable events, government-driven scope changes, or are not significant within the overall scope of the project and/or program.

SCRIMS

SEC. 1102. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used for scrims containing photographs of building facades during restoration or construction projects performed by the Architect of the Capitol.

ACQUISITION OF PARCEL AT FORT MEADE

SEC. 1103. (a) ACQUISITION.—The Architect of the Capitol is authorized to acquire from the Maryland State Highway Administration, at no cost to the United States, a parcel of real property (including improvements thereon) consisting of approximately 7.34 acres located within the portion of Fort George G. Meade in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, that was transferred to the Architect of the Capitol by the Secretary of the Army pursuant to section 122 of the Military Construction Appropriations Act, 1994 (2 U.S.C. 141 note).

(b) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The terms and conditions applicable under subsections (b) and (d) of section 122 of the Military Construction Appropriations Act, 1994 (2 U.S.C. 141 note) to the property acquired by the Architect of the Capitol pursuant to such section shall apply to the real property acquired by the Architect pursuant to the authority of this section.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses of the Library of Congress not otherwise provided for, including development and maintenance of the Library's catalogs; custody and custodial care of the Library buildings; special clothing; cleaning, laundering and repair of uniforms; preservation of motion pictures in the custody of the Library; operation and maintenance of the American Folklife Center in the Library; preparation and distribution of catalog records and other publications of the Library; hire or purchase of one passenger motor vehicle; and expenses of the Library of Congress Trust Fund Board not properly chargeable to the income of any trust fund held by the Board, $421,607,000, of which not more than $6,000,000 shall be derived from collections credited to this appropriation during fiscal year 2016, and shall remain available until expended, under the Act of June 28, 1902 (chapter 1301; 32 Stat. 480; 2 U.S.C. 150) and not more than $350,000 shall be derived from collections during fiscal year 2016 and shall remain available until expended for the development and maintenance of an international legal information database and activities related thereto: Provided, That the Library of Congress may not obligate or expend any funds derived from collections under the Act of June 28, 1902, in excess of the amount authorized for obligation or expenditure in appropriations Acts: Provided further, That the total amount available for obligation shall be reduced by the amount by which collections are less than $6,350,000: Provided further, That, of the total amount appropriated, not more than $12,000 may be expended, on the certification of the Librarian of Congress, in connection with official representation and reception expenses for the Overseas Field Offices: Provided further, That of the total amount appropriated, $8,231,000 shall remain available until expended for the digital collections and educational curricula program: Provided further, That, of the total amount appropriated, $750,000 shall remain available until expended for upgrade of the Legislative Branch Financial Management System.

COPYRIGHT OFFICE

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For all necessary expenses of the Copyright Office, $56,490,000, of which not more than $30,000,000, to remain available until expended, shall be derived from collections credited to this appropriation during fiscal year 2016 under section 708(d) of title 17, United States Code: Provided, That the Copyright Office may not obligate or expend any funds derived from collections under such section, in excess of the amount authorized for obligation or expenditure in appropriations Acts: Provided further, That not more than $5,777,000 shall be derived from collections during fiscal year 2016 under sections 111(d)(2), 119(b)(2), 803(e), 1005, and 1316 of such title: Provided further, That the total amount available for obligation shall be reduced by the amount by which collections are less than $35,777,000: Provided further, That not more than $100,000 of the amount appropriated is available for the maintenance of an ''International Copyright Institute'' in the Copyright Office of the Library of Congress for the purpose of training nationals of developing countries in intellectual property laws and policies: Provided further, That not more than $6,500 may be expended, on the certification of the Librarian of Congress, in connection with official representation and reception expenses for activities of the International Copyright Institute and for copyright delegations, visitors, and seminars: Provided further, That, notwithstanding any provision of chapter 8 of title 17, United States Code, any amounts made available under this heading which are attributable to royalty fees and payments received by the Copyright Office pursuant to sections 111, 119, and chapter 10 of such title may be used for the costs incurred in the administration of the Copyright Royalty Judges program, with the exception of the costs of salaries and benefits for the Copyright Royalty Judges and staff under section 802(e).

CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses to carry out the provisions of section 203 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 166) and to revise and extend the Annotated Constitution of the United States of America, $106,945,000: Provided, That no part of such amount may be used to pay any salary or expense in connection with any publication, or preparation of material therefor (except the Digest of Public General Bills), to be issued by the Library of Congress unless such publication has obtained prior approval of either the Committee on House Administration of the House of Representatives or the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate.

BOOKS FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For salaries and expenses to carry out the Act of March 3, 1931 (chapter 400; 46 Stat. 1487; 2 U.S.C. 135a), $50,248,000: Provided, That, of the total amount appropriated, $650,000 shall be available to contract to provide newspapers to blind and physically handicapped residents at no cost to the individual.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISION

REIMBURSABLE AND REVOLVING FUND ACTIVITIES

SEC. 1201. (a) IN GENERAL.—For fiscal year 2016, the obligational authority of the Library of Congress for the activities described in subsection (b) may not exceed $186,015,000.

(b) ACTIVITIES.—The activities referred to in subsection (a) are reimbursable and revolving fund activities that are funded from sources other than appropriations to the Library in appropriations Acts for the legislative branch.

GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

CONGRESSIONAL PUBLISHING

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For authorized publishing of congressional information and the distribution of congressional information in any format; expenses necessary for preparing the semimonthly and session index to the Congressional Record, as authorized by law (section 902 of title 44, United States Code); publishing of Government publications authorized by law to be distributed to Members of Congress; and publishing and distribution of Government publications authorized by law to be distributed without charge to the recipient, $79,736,000: Provided, That this appropriation shall not be available for paper copies of the permanent edition of the Congressional Record for individual Representatives, Resident Commissioners or Delegates authorized under section 906 of title 44, United States Code: Provided further, That this appropriation shall be available for the payment of obligations incurred under the appropriations for similar purposes for preceding fiscal years: Provided further, That, notwithstanding the 2-year limitation under section 718 of title 44, United States Code, none of the funds appropriated or made available under this Act or any other Act for printing and binding and related services provided to Congress under chapter 7 of title 44, United States Code, may be expended to print a document, report, or publication after the 27-month period beginning on the date that such document, report, or publication is authorized by Congress to be printed, unless Congress reauthorizes such printing in accordance with section 718 of title 44, United States Code: Provided further, That any unobligated or unexpended balances in this account or accounts for similar purposes for preceding fiscal years may be transferred to the Government Publishing Office business operations revolving fund for carrying out the purposes of this heading, subject to the approval of the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and Senate: Provided further, That, notwithstanding sections 901, 902, and 906 of title 44, United States Code, this appropriation may be used to prepare indexes to the Congressional Record on only a monthly and session basis.

PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAMS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For expenses of the public information programs of the Office of Superintendent of Documents necessary to provide for the cataloging and indexing of Government publications and their distribution to the public, Members of Congress, other Government agencies, and designated depository and international exchange libraries as authorized by law, $30,500,000: Provided, That amounts of not more than $2,000,000 from current year appropriations are authorized for producing and disseminating Congressional serial sets and other related publications for fiscal years 2014 and 2015 to depository and other designated libraries: Provided further, That any unobligated or unexpended balances in this account or accounts for similar purposes for preceding fiscal years may be transferred to the Government Publishing Office business operations revolving fund for carrying out the purposes of this heading, subject to the approval of the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and Senate.

GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE BUSINESS OPERATIONS REVOLVING FUND

For payment to the Government Publishing Office Business Operations Revolving Fund, $8,764,000, to remain available until expended, for information technology development and facilities repair: Provided, That the Government Publishing Office is hereby authorized to make such expenditures, within the limits of funds available and in accordance with law, and to make such contracts and commitments without regard to fiscal year limitations as provided by section 9104 of title 31, United States Code, as may be necessary in carrying out the programs and purposes set forth in the budget for the current fiscal year for the Government Publishing Office business operations revolving fund: Provided further, That not more than $7,500 may be expended on the certification of the Director of the Government Publishing Office in connection with official representation and reception expenses: Provided further, That the business operations revolving fund shall be available for the hire or purchase of not more than 12 passenger motor vehicles: Provided further, That expenditures in connection with travel expenses of the advisory councils to the Director of the Government Publishing Office shall be deemed necessary to carry out the provisions of title 44, United States Code: Provided further, That the business operations revolving fund shall be

available for temporary or intermittent services under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, but at rates for individuals not more than the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title: Provided further, That activities financed through the business operations revolving fund may provide information in any format: Provided further, That the business operations revolving fund and the funds provided under the heading ''Public Information Programs of the Superintendent of Documents'' may not be used for contracted security services at GPO's passport facility in the District of Columbia.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses of the Government Accountability Office, including not more than $12,500 to be expended on the certification of the Comptroller General of the United States in connection with official representation and reception expenses; temporary or intermittent services under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, but at rates for individuals not more than the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay for level IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of such title; hire of one passenger motor vehicle; advance payments in foreign countries in accordance with section 3324 of title 31, United States Code; benefits comparable to those payable under sections 901(5), (6), and (8) of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 4081(5), (6), and (8)); and under regulations prescribed by the Comptroller General of the United States, rental of living quarters in foreign countries, $525,000,000: Provided, That, in addition, $25,450,000 of payments received under sections 782, 3521, and 9105 of title 31, United States Code, shall be available without fiscal year limitation: Provided further, That this appropriation and appropriations for administrative expenses of any other department or agency which is a member of the National Intergovernmental Audit Forum or a Regional Intergovernmental Audit Forum shall be available to finance an appropriate share of either Forum's costs as determined by the respective Forum, including necessary travel expenses of non-Federal participants: Provided further, That payments hereunder to the Forum may be credited as reimbursements to any appropriation from which costs involved are initially financed.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISION

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DETAILS

SEC. 1301. Section 731 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(k) FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DETAILS.—The activities of the Government Accountability Office may, in the reasonable discretion of the Comptroller General, be carried out by sending or receiving details of personnel to other branches or agencies of the Federal Government, on a reimbursable, partially-reimbursable, or nonreimbursable basis.''.

OPEN WORLD LEADERSHIP CENTER TRUST FUND

For a payment to the Open World Leadership Center Trust Fund for financing activities of the Open World Leadership Center under section 313 of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2001 (2 U.S.C. 1151), $5,700,000: Provided, That funds made available to support Russian participants shall only be used for those engaging in free market development, humanitarian activities, and civic engagement, and shall not be used for officials of the central government of Russia.

JOHN C. STENNIS CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

For payment to the John C. Stennis Center for Public Service Development Trust Fund established under section 116 of the John C. Stennis Center for Public Service Training and Development Act (2 U.S.C. 1105), $430,000.

TITLE II

GENERAL PROVISIONS

MAINTENANCE AND CARE OF PRIVATE VEHICLES

SEC. 201. No part of the funds appropriated in this Act shall be used for the maintenance or care of private vehicles, except for emergency assistance and cleaning as may be provided under regulations relating to parking facilities for the House of Representatives issued by the Committee on House Administration and for the Senate issued by the Committee on Rules and Administration.

FISCAL YEAR LIMITATION

SEC. 202. No part of the funds appropriated in this Act shall remain available for obligation beyond fiscal year 2016 unless expressly so provided in this Act.

RATES OF COMPENSATION AND DESIGNATION

SEC. 203. Whenever in this Act any office or position not specifically established by the Legislative Pay Act of 1929 (46 Stat. 32 et seq.) is appropriated for or the rate of compensation or designation of any office or position appropriated for is different from that specifically established by such Act, the rate of compensation and the designation in this Act shall be the permanent law with respect thereto: Provided, That the provisions in this Act for the various items of official expenses of Members, officers, and committees of the Senate and House of Representatives, and clerk hire for Senators and Members of the House of Representatives shall be the permanent law with respect thereto.

CONSULTING SERVICES

SEC. 204. The expenditure of any appropriation under this Act for any consulting service through procurement contract, under section 3109 of title 5, United States Code, shall be limited to those contracts where such expenditures are a matter of public record and available for public inspection, except where otherwise provided under existing law, or under existing Executive order issued under existing law.

COSTS OF LBFMC

SEC. 205. Amounts available for administrative expenses of any legislative branch entity which participates in the Legislative Branch Financial Managers Council (LBFMC) established by charter on March 26, 1996, shall be available to finance an appropriate share of LBFMC costs as determined by the LBFMC, except that the total LBFMC costs to be shared among all participating legislative branch entities (in such allocations among the entities as the entities may determine) may not exceed $2,000.

LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

SEC. 206. For fiscal year 2016 and each fiscal year thereafter, the Architect of the Capitol, in consultation with the District of Columbia, is authorized to maintain and improve the landscape features, excluding streets, in Square 580 up to the beginning of I–395.

LIMITATION ON TRANSFERS

SEC. 207. None of the funds made available in this Act may be transferred to any department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States Government, except pursuant to a transfer made by, or transfer authority provided in, this Act or any other appropriation Act.

GUIDED TOURS OF THE CAPITOL

SEC. 208. (a) Except as provided in subsection (b), none of the funds made available to the Architect of the Capitol in this Act may be used to eliminate or restrict guided tours of the United States Capitol which are led by employees and interns of offices of Members of Congress and other offices of the House of Representatives and Senate.

(b) At the direction of the Capitol Police Board, or at the direction of the Architect of the Capitol with the approval of the Capitol Police Board, guided tours of the United States Capitol which are led by employees and interns described in subsection (a) may be suspended temporarily or otherwise subject to restriction for security or related reasons to the same extent as guided tours of the United States Capitol which are led by the Architect of the Capitol.

BATTERY RECHARGING STATIONS FOR PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLES IN PARKING AREAS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS AT NO NET COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

SEC. 209. (a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''covered employee'' means—

(1) an employee of the Library of Congress; or

(2) any other individual who is authorized to park in any parking area under the jurisdiction of the Library of Congress on the Library of Congress buildings and grounds.

(b) AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (3), funds appropriated to the Architect of the Capitol under the heading ''Capitol Power Plant'' under the heading ''ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL'' in any fiscal year are available to construct, operate, and maintain on a reimbursable basis battery recharging stations in parking areas under the jurisdiction of the Library of Congress on Library of Congress buildings and grounds for use by privately owned vehicles used by covered employees.

(2) VENDORS AUTHORIZED.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Architect of the Capitol may use one or more vendors on a commission basis.

(3) APPROVAL OF CONSTRUCTION.—The Architect of the Capitol may construct or direct the construction of battery recharging stations described under paragraph (1) after—

(A) submission of written notice detailing the numbers and locations of the battery recharging stations to the Joint Committee on the Library; and

(B) approval by that Committee.

(c) FEES AND CHARGES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the Architect of the Capitol shall charge fees or charges for electricity provided to covered employees sufficient to cover the costs to the Architect of the Capitol to carry out this section, including costs to any vendors or other costs associated with maintaining the battery charging stations.

(2) APPROVAL OF FEES OR CHARGES.—The Architect of the Capitol may establish and adjust fees or charges under paragraph (1) after—

(A) submission of written notice detailing the amount of the fee or charge to be established or adjusted to the Joint Committee on the Library; and

(B) approval by that Committee.

(d) DEPOSIT AND AVAILABILITY OF FEES, CHARGES, AND COMMISSIONS.—Any fees, charges, or commissions collected by the Architect of the Capitol under this section shall be—

(1) deposited in the Treasury to the credit of the appropriations account described under subsection (b); and

(2) available for obligation without further appropriation during the fiscal year collected.

(e) REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the end of each fiscal year, the Architect of the Capitol shall submit a report on the financial administration and cost recovery of activities under this section with respect to that fiscal year to the Joint Committee on the Library and the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and Senate.

(2) AVOIDING SUBSIDY.—

(A) DETERMINATION.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act and every 3 years thereafter, the Architect of the Capitol shall submit a report to the Joint Committee on the Library determining whether covered employees using battery charging stations as authorized by this section are receiving a subsidy from the taxpayers.

(B) MODIFICATION OF RATES AND FEES.—If a determination is made under subparagraph (A) that a subsidy is being received, the Architect of

the Capitol shall submit a plan to the Joint Committee on the Library on how to update the program to ensure no subsidy is being received. If the Joint Committee does not act on the plan within 60 days, the Architect of the Capitol shall take appropriate steps to increase rates or fees to ensure reimbursement for the cost of the program consistent with an appropriate schedule for amortization, to be charged to those using the charging stations.

(f) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall apply with respect to fiscal year 2016 and each fiscal year thereafter.

COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT

SEC. 210. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no adjustment shall be made under section 601(a) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4501) (relating to cost of living adjustments for Members of Congress) during fiscal year 2016.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendment be withdrawn; that the McConnell substitute amendment, which is the text of H.J. Res. 75, be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and the Senate vote on passage of the bill with no intervening action or debate.

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

The committee-reported amendment was withdrawn.

The amendment (No. 2922) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: Making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2016, and for other purposes)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

That the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016 (Public Law 114–53) is amended by striking the date specified in section 106(3) and inserting ''December 16, 2015''.

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

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

The bill was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 2250), as amended, was passed.

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

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the title amendment at the desk be agreed to.

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

The amendment (No. 2923) was agreed to, as follows:

To amend the title to read:

''Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016''.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to finish my remarks.

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

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today I complete the series of floor speeches on religious freedom that I began in September. My purpose in this series is to present the full story of religious freedom in the hope that we may better understand and appreciate it and draw guidance for the future. Charting a path forward requires understanding where we have been and taking stock of where we are right now.

The story of religious freedom, as I have laid it out, shows that we must choose between two starkly different paths. The story begins with religious freedom itself and why it is uniquely important and requires special protection. I said in September:

> No decision is more fundamental to human existence than the decision we make regarding our relationship to the Divine. No act of government can be more intrusive or more invasive of individual autonomy and free will than the act of compelling a person to violate his or her sincerely chosen religious beliefs.

The story continues with the central place of religious freedom in America's identity. At no time in world history has religious freedom been such an integral part of a nation's origin and character. The seeds were planted centuries before the actual founding of this country with one religious community after another coming to these shores to freely practice their faith.

When Congress enacted the International Religious Freedom Act less than two decades ago, we declared that religious freedom ''undergirds the very origin and existence of the United States.''

The story of religious freedom in America includes understanding both its status and its substance. In October, I explained how the status of religious freedom can be summarized as both inalienable and preeminent. Religious freedom is inalienable because, as the Declaration of Independence asserts, it comes from God, not from government. And because it is endowed, that is part of our very humanity. Religious freedom is preeminent or, as James Madison put it, ''precedent, both in order of time and in degree of obligation to the claims of civil society.''

I also explained that the substance of religious freedom can be understood in terms of its depth, or what it includes, and its breadth, or to whom it applies. Religious freedom, for example, includes much more than religious belief or speech. In fact, protecting in law both religious belief and the exercise of that belief preceded the First Amendment by 150 years. Madison again gives us guidance to finding the exercise of religion as the freely chosen manner of discharging the duty an individual believes he or she owes to God. This includes both belief and behavior in public and in private, individually and collectively. The substance of religious freedom also includes its breadth of application to all human beings.

The First Amendment protects not certain exercises of religion or the exercise of religion by certain persons, but the free exercise of religion itself.

As I mentioned, Congress unanimously enacted the International Religious Freedom Act. The vote in this body was 98 to 0, and 21 Senators serving today—12 Republicans and 9 Democrats—voted for this legislation, as did Vice President BIDEN and Secretary of State John Kerry, who were serving here at that time. That law declares our religious freedom to be a universal human right, a pillar of our Nation, and a fundamental freedom. This is the path of religious freedom on which we have traveled for three centuries, before a very different path emerged.

In November, I outlined how the courts have begun to distort the First Amendment's protection for religious freedom. America's Founders included a narrow prohibition on government establishment of religion as a support for the broad individual freedom to exercise religion. Since the mid-20th century, however, courts have instead expanded the establishment clause into a virtual ban on religion in public life and narrowed the free exercise clause so that government may more easily restrict the practice of religion itself.

I also examined how the courts, the Obama administration, and State legislatures are contributing to attacks on religious freedom right here in America. The common theme in these attacks is that far from being special, religious freedom must yield to other values or political objectives. Even worse, some are arguing that religious freedom is actually something negative that should be limited or even suppressed. These attacks not only target particular exercises of religion but undermine religious freedom itself.

Rather than inalienable, these attacks would turn religious freedom into something granted or restricted by the government at its whim. Instead of preeminent, these attacks would reduce religious freedom to something optional and subservient. Rather than something deep and broad, these attacks would turn religious freedom into something shallow and narrow.

State courts, for example, have imposed heavy fines on business owners who decline, based on their religious beliefs, to provide services such as photography, flowers or catering for same-sex marriages. The decision by these business owners did not prevent anyone from getting married or from having the wedding they chose. Other photographers, florists, and bakers gladly stepped up to do business. The only real effect of these fines was to punish these individuals for exercising their religious beliefs. By punishing the exercise of religion itself, these courts are saying that religious freedom must necessarily yield to other political priorities.

ObamaCare made the same two-part attack on religious freedom but on a much larger scale. First, far from trying to accommodate religious freedom in developing ObamaCare or its implementing regulations, neither Congress

nor the Obama administration gave religious freedom any consideration whatsoever. This is appalling in several different ways. Not only does it reflect a callous attitude toward this fundamental right, but it ignores the Religious Freedom Restoration Act's command that Federal law properly accommodate religious freedom. The only way to avoid that requirement is for Congress explicitly to exempt a statute from RFRA's standards. Congress did not do so.

But consider this. On January 15, 2010, President Obama issued his first Religious Freedom Day proclamation. He reaffirmed ''our nation's enduring commitment to the universal human right of religious freedom.'' Just 2 months later, he signed into law the statute that so blatantly ignored and would be used to undermine that very universal human right.

The second way that ObamaCare undermines religious freedom is by imposing significant burdens on the actual exercise of religion. The Department of Health and Human Services, for example, tried to force business owners to provide insurance coverage for methods of birth control that violate their religious beliefs. Thankfully, last year the Supreme Court said the Obama administration should have more properly accommodated religious freedom.

Another case is now before the Supreme Court in which the Obama administration is demanding that a religious organization be forced to participate in providing insurance coverage for practices that violate their religious beliefs. The Obama administration, with its army of smart lawyers and deep well of taxpayer dollars, is fighting tooth and nail to make sure its political objectives quash religious freedom.

Last week, I outlined the benefits that religion and religious freedom provide. It is essential to forming and securing our basic rights. Religion was the engine driving great social movements, such as abolition and civil rights. It motivates significantly greater contributions by individuals to charities of all kinds and inspires many of the largest charitable organizations in the country. But religion is not simply beneficial to society; it is an indispensable feature of any free government. Without religion and the moral instruction it provides, freedom falters and democracy all too easily dissolves into tyranny.

In the 18th Century, the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 declared that ''the happiness of a people and the good order and preservation of civil government essentially depend upon piety, religion, and morality.''

In the 21st Century, Harvard professor Mary Ann Glendon argues persuasively that religious freedom reduces societal violence and correlates with democratic longevity.

The story of religious freedom that I have offered over the last few months presents a choice that we must make as we consider the way forward. On one path, religious freedom is an inalienable and preeminent right of all people; on the other path, it is an uncertain and optional possibility for some people. On one path the government must accommodate religious freedom; on the other path religious freedom must accommodate the government. One path is consistent with our history, founding, character, commitments, and an example to the rest of the world. The other path rejects that history, turns its back on our commitments, and abandons human rights in favor of shifting political agendas.

Here is how I put it in one of my speeches last month:

> Subjugating religious freedom beliefs to government decrees is not the price of citizenship. To the contrary, respecting and honoring the fundamental rights of all Americans is the price our government pays to enjoy the continued consent of the American people.

We must decide whether we still believe what our Nation, our people, and our leaders have said and done. James Madison wrote that religious freedom is an inalienable right that takes precedence over the claims of civil society.

Thomas Jefferson said that religious freedom is ''the most inalienable and sacred of all human rights.''

Franklin Roosevelt said that religious freedom is a fundamental and essential human freedom.

The United States voted for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, signed the Helsinki Accords in 1975, and ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1992.

Each of these identifies religious freedom as a fundamental human right that includes both belief and behavior in public and in private, individually and collectively.

Congress enacted the Religious Freedom Restoration Act almost unanimously in 1994. I should know; I was the principal advocate for it. It sets a tough standard for allowing government interference with religious freedom and offers this protection for all exercises of religion by all people. Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, adherents of different faiths—everyone joined hands on these basic principles. And I might add that HATCH and Kennedy joined hands as well.

In the 2013 Religious Freedom Day proclamation, President Obama said that religious freedom is an essential part of human dignity. This is the path on which America began, the path America's Founders embraced, the path that all three branches of government have recognized, and the path we have reaffirmed countless times.

The burden is on those who believe that we should now leave this path. Those who no longer believe that religious freedom is an inalienable right and an essential human freedom should say so. Those who no longer believe that, as our statutes and treaties assert, religious freedom is a fundamental right and a pillar of our Nation should be honest and up front about it. Those who believe that the shifting political priorities of the day trump religious freedom should candidly make their case.

In the last week, since the terrorist attack in San Bernardino, we have glimpsed some of the ugliness that is down the path where politics trumps religious freedom. Many of our leaders expressed support and offered thoughts and prayers for the victims and their families. Those expressions were met by some with disdain, ridicule, and scoffing.

Reporters, bloggers, activists, and even Members of Congress sent the message that thoughts and prayers are really not much of anything and in any event are legitimate only if they come from those who want more gun control.

Finally, I want to highlight for my colleagues another source of guidance in choosing the future path for religious freedom. In June 1988, the most diverse group of leaders in American history presented the Williamsburg Charter to the Nation. Its purpose was to reaffirm religious freedom for all citizens, to set out the place of religious freedom in American public life, and to offer guiding principles for the future. Former Presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford and the chairmen of the two political parties signed it. The president of the AFL–CIO and the chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce signed it. Presidents of universities and bar associations signed it. Leaders of faith communities, including the National Council of Churches and National Association of Evangelicals, Seventh-day Adventists, the Synagogue Council of America, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints signed it.

What could possibly unite such a disparate group? It would have to be something too general to be useful—perhaps something like sunshine or friendship—or something so profound that we simply must sit up and pay attention. The first principles of religious freedom affirmed by the Williamsburg Charter are these:

First, religious freedom is an inalienable right that is ''premised upon the inviolable dignity of the human person. It is the foundation of, and is integrally related to, all other rights and freedoms secured by the Constitution.''

Second, the ''chief menace to religious liberty today is the expanding power of government control over personal behavior and the institutions of society, when the government acts not so much in deliberate hostility to, but in reckless disregard of, communal belief and personal conscience.''

Third, limiting religious liberty ''is allowable only where the State has borne a heavy burden of proof that the limitation is justified—not by any ordinary public interest, but by a supreme

public necessity—and that no less restrictive alternative to limitation exists.''

These are the principles that should guide our way forward.

Religious freedom is inalienable. Religious freedom is threatened when government either directly burdens or fails to accommodate it. Government burdens on religious freedom must be the least restrictive means of achieving a compelling government purpose or supreme public necessity.

These principles inform proper resolution of the challenges that religious freedom will certainly face ahead.

Some are calling for government to revoke or deny such things as tax-exempt status, certifications, or licenses for religious organizations with certain beliefs. I already mentioned how some courts are using anti-discrimination statutes to trump religious freedom.

Applying the principles I have discussed would require the government to make the case that such impositions are the least restrictive way to further a supreme public necessity.

Another challenge will be in the development, rather than the implementation, of anti-discrimination laws. Applying the appropriate principles requires that such legislation properly accommodate religious freedom.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, for example, includes a religious exemption. I supported the Employment Non-Discrimination Act in the 113th Congress because, in addition to incorporating that exemption, it also prohibited retaliation against those who qualify for the exemption. My State of Utah this year enacted an anti-discrimination statute that similarly included a robust exemption for religious organizations.

Earlier this year, however, Senators introduced the Equality Act, which would prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity across several areas such as employment, housing, and education. It not only fails to incorporate the existing title VII religious exemption, it contains no accommodation for religious freedom at all.

This is an example of the path that rejects religious freedom as even worthy of consideration. Such legislation should not become law unless it properly accommodates religious freedom.

This is a time for choosing. The story of religious freedom is both an inspiring narrative and a cautionary tale. It brings to mind the inscription on a statue fronting the National Archives that ''eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.''

The heritage of religious freedom that took centuries to build could be dismantled in a fraction of that time. The right path means balance of accommodation; the wrong path means exclusion and suppression. The way forward requires us to choose the right path to make sure our actions speak louder than our words.

Mr. President, I apologize for going over by 5 minutes.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 4:30 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 3:06 p.m., recessed until 4:30 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. TILLIS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). The Senator from North Carolina.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 6 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

CAMP LIBERTY REFUGEES

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, the President of the United States has fully refused to acknowledge the depth and prevalence of the savagery of Islamic terrorism, and he has refused to offer and implement a strategy to permanently defeat it.

We are all too familiar with the consequences of Islamic terrorism: Fort Hood, Boston, Oklahoma, Chattanooga, Ankara, Mali, Beirut, Paris, and more recently, San Bernardino.

While the President was in Paris recently, he lectured the American people not on the moral necessity to destroy ISIS but instead on our supposed lack of compassion and understanding regarding his latest plan to resettle 10,000 Middle Eastern refugees in America.

I represent the great State of North Carolina. It is a State that has provided refuge to those who have fought and died on America's side—the South Vietnamese, Laotians, Montagnards, and Cambodians. But the President's remarks were disingenuous, because what he didn't tell the American people is that his own FBI Director has warned of America's inability to properly vet the refugees—an inability that only requires a 1 in 10,000 chance to produce a catastrophic and tragic result.

Instead of acknowledging these well-founded concerns, the President hectored the critics of his plan—Republicans, Democrats, and everyone else in between—even after French authorities told him several members of the terrorist cell got into France masquerading as Syrian refugees. Syrian refugees with fake passports were caught trying to reach America through Honduras, and Syrians have been arrested trying to cross into Texas.

Let me tell you why this administration's rebuke is indicative of a foreign policy that is completely detached from reality. On October 29, 23 refugees died in a rocket attack at Camp Liberty in Iraq. Camp Liberty is a former U.S. military base outside of Baghdad that is home to more than 2,000 Iranian refugees who are members of the main opposition group to the ayatollahs in Tehran. The refugees at Camp Liberty have been fully vetted by American intelligence services. Eighty Iranian-built rockets struck the camp that has been home to the People's Mojahedin, an organization that has tried to fight the mullahs in Tehran. The ayatollahs want the leaders and the families of these inhabitants at Camp Liberty eliminated, and their friends in Baghdad are doing their bidding.

The men, women, and children at Camp Liberty have suffered numerous attacks resulting in hundreds of casualties. Nor has Camp Liberty, which was supposed to be a temporary home before the refugees were settled outside of Iraq, met the most basic humanitarian needs. They lack clean water, decent food, medical supplies, and decent living facilities; and every single day they go to bed at night worried if it is their last day on Earth.

The Obama administration pledged to protect these refugees who put their lives and their children's lives on the line for freedom. Yet it has done absolutely nothing to keep America's word. Why take in unvetted Syrian refugees and not a handful of refugees from Iran that are fully vetted? To curry favor with the same regime that killed American soldiers during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn? I hope not.

President Obama has willfully ignored 40 years of hostility from Tehran. If the President does not recognize that we are at war, the ayatollahs certainly do. They are the chief sponsors of global terror. They have imprisoned American journalists. They have tested long-range missiles. They just completed another test in violation of international treaties over the last couple of weeks. They have never stepped back from their desire to obliterate Israel and to destroy the United States.

This is the Obama doctrine. The President sees American foreign policy as the problem. He views Israel as an obstacle to peace, and Iran is treated as another oppressed constituency with legitimate grievances against the West, so much so that when millions of Iranians took to the streets against the mullahs, President Obama did nothing and said nothing. The old American alliances are collapsing in confusion and fear, and the only answer from the administration seems to be to clear Iran's path to a nuclear weapon.

Section 1227 of this year's National Defense Reauthorization Act memorializes Congress's desire to see that our friends at Camp Liberty are protected and relocated outside of Iraq in accordance with international conventions.

The children of Camp Liberty are dying and the bad guys are watching.

They are watching to see if the President of the United States tosses aside another American friend, clearing the way for a new Persian empire—a tyrannical empire armed with nuclear weapons.

I will end with the thoughts of Natan Sharansky, a survivor of the Soviet Gulag. He said:

> Today an American President has once again sought to achieve stability by removing sanctions against a brutal dictatorship without demanding anything in return. . . . We are at a historic crossroads, the United States can either appease a criminal regime—one that supports global terror, relentlessly threatens to eliminate Israel and executes more political prisoners than any other—or stand firm in demanding change in its behavior.

I don't think a lot of people know about Camp Liberty, but I want you all to know that there are 2,000 people over there who were fighting for freedom in Iran. The American people committed to protecting them and to getting them to a place where they can be safe. These are refugees who are fully vetted. They have gone through all the processes that we are wondering and worrying whether the Syrian refugees can. Let's show good faith by fulfilling our promise to the people at Camp Liberty and making sure that the American people know and the people at Camp Liberty know that we care about them and we wish them the very best that they can achieve—and that is not in a camp somewhere in Iraq.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO GOVERNOR TERRY BRANSTAD

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I rise today to honor my good friend and the Governor of Iowa, Terry Branstad. Monday marks his historic milestone as the Nation's longest serving Governor with 7,642 days in office working for our great State of Iowa. Our Governor has devoted his life to public service and has worked tirelessly through his 99-county tour to ensure that Iowans' voices are heard.

I have also had the great honor of serving under the Governor during my time in the Iowa Army National Guard. Through the years, Governor Branstad and I have had countless conversations about the military and our veterans. We both know these men and women are well trained and have selflessly sacrificed in defense of our freedoms and our way of life. That is why we must ensure that our veterans are properly prepared to transition back to civilian life.

As a veteran himself, Governor Branstad recognizes just that. It was Governor Branstad who led significant efforts to help veterans find work across Iowa, following their launch of the Home Base Iowa public-private initiative in November of 2013. Since then, Home Base Iowa has succeeded in helping over 1,500 veterans in Iowa find work, getting 900 businesses to join the Home Base Iowa initiative. There are also 24 Home Base Iowa communities around the State, and we have 16 educational institutions that are working with the initiative and have been deemed Certified Higher Academic Military Partners. All that great participation and success is thanks to the Governor's leadership.

Through the years, our State has been incredibly fortunate to have a Governor who truly cares about the people and our veterans. The fact that he continues to wear his uniform for various veterans' events in Iowa further illustrates his support, his leadership, and his commitment to our men and women in uniform. Our Governor is someone who truly cares about serving others, and we are incredibly fortunate to have a leader such as he.

In light of his major and well-deserved milestone, we honor Governor Branstad's steadfast commitment and leadership to the people of Iowa.

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

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

IRS REPORTING REGULATION ON CHARITABLE DONATIONS

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I rise to alert the Senate and all of my colleagues to yet another—yes, yet another—egregious action by the Internal Revenue Service, one that will affect every charity, every church, every nonprofit, and the communities they work so hard to serve. I emphasize ''another'' because it seems that the IRS continues a march toward regulations and practices that target and burden hard-working Americans.

Let me just recap. First, we learned that the IRS had released confidential tax return information on companies the IRS believed opposed the administration. Then we uncovered that the IRS had illegally targeted groups whose views differed from the White House, followed by an extensive effort to hide information on these actions—i.e., Lois Lerner, her so-called ''lost e-mails,'' which weren't ever really lost. It was true injustice to law-abiding organizations and American citizens, which is why I should not have been surprised—but I was—to learn of the IRS's latest scheme.

Hot off the press is a new IRS proposed regulation that needlessly targets charitable contributions. Right now, when you make a contribution of $250 or more, charities will send you a ''written acknowledgement'' confirming the details of the donation, including the amount of the donation. The taxpayer uses this acknowledgement to document his or her tax deductions should there be any question.

Most charities take the time to send out a written confirmation of the donation as part of their thank-you to the donor. It is simple, it is inexpensive, and it builds good will. In short, it works for the taxpayer and also for the charity. That is it—a straightforward, commonsense method to confirm a donation was made, and no one, not even the IRS, argues that it is not working well.

But now the IRS has proposed a new method to substantiate donations—a method that could do great harm to the charitable sector and give the IRS more tools to go after taxpayers they may not like, as we know they have done before. The IRS wants to set up a new, more formal system where the charity would have to gather information about its donors, keep that information, and—here is the rub—report the information to the IRS.

What type of information are we talking about? The return would include the charity's name and address, the donor's name and address and—here is the scary piece—the donor's Social Security number. Again, all of this new information would have to be sent to the donor and the IRS and kept on file by the charity at considerable cost. Even more disturbing, the IRS would store, maintain, and use this information in case the donor is audited.

Although this is described as an option, given the IRS's recent track record, do we really trust the agency to store this information and not use it for other purposes? I, for one, do not. I don't think we can trust them with a new source of data on donors. We must do all we can to prevent the IRS from gaining access to this sensitive data.

I am also alarmed at the thought of whether the IRS can properly safeguard this information because the agency has demonstrated zero capacity to keep similar data out of the hands of people who commit fraud, and thieves. Charities and churches that routinely receive thousands of dollars from their supporters now become greater targets for people to commit fraud.

Earlier this year, the IRS admitted that it had been hacked and private taxpayer information had been compromised. If they can do it to the IRS, you had better believe they can do it to your local nonprofit. And while the IRS today says this rule as proposed would simply be voluntary, suffer no illusion: The IRS will eventually move to make this a mandatory requirement.

Charitable organizations are also speaking out against the IRS proposal. They understand the chilling—chilling—effect this would have on

their donors, but, more importantly, on the communities they serve.

Tim Delaney, president and CEO of the National Council of Nonprofits, recently wrote:

> The IRS proposal would open the door for scam artists. . . . Nonprofits have neither the financial resources nor sufficient staffing to combat hackers who will see an easy source for Social Security information. This also creates a liability nightmare for innocent nonprofits. . . . To be asked to share their address, their credit card number and their Social Security number all in the same place would be enough to scare even the most committed donor to decline to give.

Tim Delaney has aptly summarized this pending and serious problem. He poses very legitimate concerns, especially regarding how scam artists might operate, explaining:

> Imposters' phone scripts will go something like this: ''Hi . . . I'm working for several nonprofits here in Kansas to make sure that generous donors like you get full credit for your wonderful contributions. . . . The nonprofits asked me to thank you for your generosity and confirm your name and address. . . . Also, the IRS has a new regulation that nonprofits need your Social Security number so we can send you a form confirming your contribution in case you get audited. What's your Social Security number so we can send you the form?''

Sadly, many people who want to be sure to support their charity will give the scam artists exactly what they want.

To protect the mission of our nonprofit community and the taxpayers who share their hard-earned dollars with those in need, I have introduced legislation to block this regulation and to maintain current law. The Protecting Charitable Contributions Act would maintain current IRS rules governing the substantiation of charitable contributions, and prohibit the IRS from issuing, revising, or completing any new regulation that would alter the existing rules. This just makes sense. And I would think the IRS would agree when in their own description of the proposal they state that the present system works effectively.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and to join me in stopping this dangerous and unneeded proposal from moving forward.

I urge all those who play a role in supporting nonprofits to go to the IRS Web site before December 16 to provide written comments to the IRS about this proposal. Yep, the IRS would like to have your comments.

Let me repeat that. I would urge all those who play a role in supporting nonprofits to go to the IRS Web site before December 16 to provide written comments to the IRS about this proposal. The message should be simple: No.

This is one Christmas greeting you had better send.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PERKINS LOANS, HARDEST HIT FUND, AND ENFORCE ACT

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about a couple of areas where I think we can make progress on legislation before the end of the year. This has been a legislative session in which we passed a number of important bills, and I think there is more we can do. Specifically, I am going to talk about some legislative initiatives that will give a leg up to American workers—Ohio workers—and also to help our families and help our students.

I will start with students. There is an opportunity over the next couple of weeks for us to ensure that we reauthorize the Perkins Loan Program. Perkins is an incredibly important program, particularly for low-income students. In my view, of all the student loan programs out there, Perkins is by far the most flexible. This is an urgent matter because if we don't pass an extension, new loans will not be rewarded, even in January as students start this next semester. Let's not allow college tuition to become even less affordable for low-income students. Let's ensure that they can get a college degree to pursue their dreams and that we do move forward with this Perkins reauthorization.

I spoke about this on the floor a month or so ago. I talked about it as a program that was incredibly important for students in my State. I talked about the fact that there are 60 schools in the Buckeye State, in Ohio, that have received loans from this program. Over the last school year, more than 25,000 Ohio students received financial aid through Perkins—including about 3,000 students at Kent State University and about 1,700 students at the Ohio State University.

I was in Columbus last weekend and had a chance to meet with some Ohio State students who care a lot about this. They want to ensure that this Perkins is going to be there for them so they can stay in school. Some of them already have help from other programs, but they know that if they don't have the Perkins Loan Program, they can't afford to make ends meet and to stay in school. It is very important.

I have also heard from our college Presidents from around the State—particularly from Dr. Beverly Warren from Kent, who was here a couple of weeks ago to talk to me about this, and Dr. Michael Drake, whom I saw last week at Ohio State. They want to ensure that their students have this possibility.

One of the students I talked to is Keri Richmond. Keri is a junior at Kent State, and she interned at my office this past summer. Keri was an incredible intern. She is a student who is working hard. She is at Kent State, likely to graduate a little bit early. She spent her teenage years going from foster home to foster home. She fought the odds, and she is now excelling in college. She is bright. She is ambitious. Even with her Pell Grant, she has to have that Perkins loan in order to be able to stay in school, in order to make ends meet.

This is an important program, but it is not about a program. It is not about numbers. It is about people. It is about Keri Richmond and others like her. The impact goes well beyond Ohio. Over 1,7000 colleges and universities across the country participate in this program. Low-income students everywhere rely on it. If it expires, it is only more difficult to pay for school. Instead, what we should be doing in the Senate is making it easier, not harder, to afford to go to school. Some of these tuitions have gone up and up. We have to be sure every kid has a chance to be able to get ahead by going to college or university.

If we don't move, students who previously received a Perkins loan will lose their eligibility if they change institutions or academic programs. It is a big deal for them. If we don't act soon, students who are seeking loans for the winter and spring semesters will be ineligible. In total, it is possible that 150,000 freshmen will lose their eligibility this fall. We can't let that happen. Let's not allow college tuition to become this roadblock for low-income students who are looking for a college degree. Let's give them this chance. Let's give them this opportunity. By the way, let's extend it but at the same time work on ways to improve the program. I know there are some Members on my side of the aisle—and I think on the other side as well but certainly on my side of the aisle—who said they have concerns about some of these student loan programs and would like to reform them to make them work better. That is great. Let's take the time to do that.

In the meantime, let's not eliminate this program and have these kids fall between the cracks. I am there on the reforms. I would like to help on that. I think we can do better for all of our student loan programs and help all of our kids be able to have a better chance to succeed. Let's not create this terrible uncertainty for these students in the meantime. Let's extend this program and then work on those reforms.

I thank Senator CASEY, Senator BALDWIN, Senator COLLINS, and others for their strong leadership on this. I want to ask my colleagues in the Senate to do simply what the House has done and do an extension of this program. The House has already passed this legislation. There is no reason it shouldn't be in the omnibus legislation, and there is no reason we shouldn't move forward with ensuring that these kids have the certainty they need to be able to stay in school.

Mr. President, the second issue I want to talk about is that while students get the education they need, we also have to ensure that the communities they are going back to are safe and make sure those communities can thrive and grow.

One of the issues we have in Ohio and unfortunately in too many neighborhoods all around this country is that you have a lot of blight, a lot of homes that have been abandoned. Two things happen: One, when homes are abandoned, they become a magnet for crime, for drugs, and for other criminal activity to the point that they are dangerous for the community, but, second, they drive down the cost of the other houses—sometimes by as much as 80 percent. If you are in a community or you have a beautiful home you are taking care of but your neighbor's house becomes abandoned and becomes a magnet for crime and an eyesore, it drives down all of the property values.

In Congress we have spent a lot of money, taxpayer money, on helping people deal with their mortgages when they are underwater—particularly after the financial crisis. In my view we ought to focus more on taking down these abandoned homes and creating safer neighborhoods but also, through market forces, allowing the property values of all of these homes to increase.

I think this is an honorable effort, and it is one that a lot of people are focused on now around the country. I don't think we are quite caught up to where our neighborhoods are here in Washington, DC, because when I go home to Ohio I hear about this all the time. We have about 80,000 of these dangerous abandoned homes in Ohio.

Again, to address public safety concerns and tumbling home values in these struggling neighborhoods, one of the best alternatives is to demolish these abandoned structures. Sometimes another structure can be rebuilt there. That is what we want. We want more economic development in these communities. In some cases, I have seen where there was an abandoned home, it was torn down and made into a community garden and the community can all participate. The point is to get these homes down so we can have the redevelopment we all want.

I have walked the streets with local officials in Cleveland, Warren, Lima, and Toledo, OH, and I have seen these problems firsthand. As I do that, I talk to the residents. I ask them what they think. You can imagine the response I get. First, for them, it is an eyesore. It is a danger for their kids, grandkids. Second, they are worried about their property values.

I had one occasion to speak to someone in Toledo, OH, that was particularly concerning to me. This was a woman who had three kids. Her home was right next to an abandoned home, literally feet away—6 or 7 feet away, sort of like a row house. She said: ROB, every night I go to bed worrying that the home next to me, which is abandoned, is going to be torched by arsonists. At that point in time—this was in Toledo, OH—there was about one arson a night, where these abandoned homes were not just targets for crime but they were also being used by arsonists as practice for burning down a home. She was worried about her kids. She was worried she couldn't go to sleep at night because if that home caught fire next to her, her home could be next.

This is something we ought to focus on and we can focus on. Land banks in some of our hardest hit areas of Ohio, Michigan, and other States have gotten to work on attacking this problem. They have done a great job. They don't have the resources they need to demolish as many properties as they would like to help some of these struggling neighborhoods. That is why these land banks have come to us and asked: Can you help us a little more?

After talking to them, after visiting these neighborhoods, we did take action. We authored legislation called the Neighborhood Safety Act of 2013, which was a bipartisan effort and a bicameral effort. In the House, you had Members like DAVE JOYCE, MARCY KAPTUR, and MARCIA FUDGE working on this. Our legislation called for what is called the Hardest Hit Fund to be used not just to help people pay down their mortgages but also to help people be able to knock down these abandoned homes. We pushed it aggressively, and this important change was made administratively. It has provided nearly $66 million in Ohio and around the country to deal with these thousands of abandoned homes in our State. Michigan also got funds, as did other States.

Now, in many of these States, these Hardest Hit Funds have run out. In other words, there are more abandoned homes than there is money to be able to deal with the problem. Given the success rate we have and the fact that these land banks are doing a great job, we think it is time to provide some more funding. That is what we proposed to do in the Omnibus appropriations bill.

I am working with Senator STABENOW, Senator BROWN, and others to transfer funds from what is called the Home Affordable Modification Program, which is a program that would be eliminated under our proposal, and shift some of those funds into the Hardest Hit Fund for demolition purposes. I have repeatedly discussed this issue with our leadership, Senator MCCONNELL and others, our leadership here on the committees in the Senate and in the House, and I am very hopeful this can be done before year-end. It is the right thing to do. It is an opportunity for us to be able to shift some of these funds from a program that is not working as well into a program we know works and to make progress in some of our struggling neighborhoods in Ohio and around the country.

I give special thanks to these land banks in Ohio that have taken the lead on this issue back home. Particularly, I want to thank the tireless efforts of Jim Rokakis, director of the Thriving Communities Initiative at the Western Reserve Land Conservancy. He has done excellent work in helping to lead this effort and highlight this issue. I hope we can get this done, even in the next week here, to be able to help our communities in Ohio and around the country.

Mr. President, finally, when we talk about keeping our communities safe and the need to help our students, we also have to be sure that we are helping our workers. We need to ensure we are protecting jobs in our States that are threatened by unfairly traded imports.

I am pleased that we will soon be voting to pass the conference report for the Customs bill. It is my understanding that this may come up as early as Monday or Tuesday next week. I hope we can pass that here in the Senate and send it to the President for his signature.

There are a number of aspects of the Customs bill I support, but one aspect of it that I think is really important is legislation that is called the ENFORCE Act, to ensure that we are enforcing our laws properly. This is on the heels of legislation we already passed as part of the trade promotion authority earlier this year. That legislation is called Level the Playing Field Act. Senator SHERROD BROWN, my colleague from Ohio, and I offered this legislation, and it is now part of our law and ammunition we can use against unfairly traded imports. It is already working because it has already been signed into law, and it is helping to deal with dumping when people are selling below costs or when they unfairly subsidize imports. It is helping workers in Ohio. It is helping our tire workers, paper workers, and steel workers, and we are proud of that.

The problem is that although the legislation that we have already passed, the Level the Playing Field Act, helps with regard to taking on countries that are sending their products here unfairly, sometimes those countries then decide to try to evade the provisions we put in place, the higher tariffs for their dumped products or their higher tariffs for their subsidized products. That is what the ENFORCE Act is about. It is about ensuring that although we have this legislation in place, countries and their companies don't go around those regulations and still try to get products here into the United States by illegally sending it through another country or relabeling the product so that it doesn't fall under the tariffs that might be levied against them.

I am really hopeful that we will able to pass this additional legislation. It is incredibly important, as I said, not only for Ohio, but it is also important for the country. Time after time we

have seen that once we put these protective orders in place against these unfairly traded imports, these countries continue to illegally enter our country through illegal transshipments to other countries or through relabeling these products.

I think we have an opportunity to move forward on something that is really important to help protect workers to ensure that we can closely examine these schemes and stop them.

This effort, by the way, is backed by the National Association of Manufacturers, the American Iron and Steel Institute, and the United Steelworkers. They have a common cause because they understand that it is so critical that we ensure that our workers get a fair shake.

I got an email last week from workers at Pennex Aluminum in Leetonia, OH, in the Mahoning Valley. They have 78 workers at their facility, and they won an important case against aluminum extrusions from China. The email said that this relief really helped us.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 1 additional minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. PORTMAN. These workers said: Senator PORTMAN, ''this relief enabled our company to compete once again on a fair and level playing field.'' That is the relief we helped to provide by enforcing our laws against this product coming in.

They then said:

> As a result, we recently completed an investment of $38 million to expand our facility in Leetonia and create significant new jobs. Our great concern is that this trade relief is now at risk due to the efforts by Chinese producers to avoid paying duties by, among other schemes, manipulating the alloy content of their extruded aluminum products and shipping their products under a different name.

In other words, they were getting around the protections that are in place by simply relabeling the product. Again, this also happens by going around to other countries. That is why the ENFORCE Act is so important. Those 78 workers at Pennex Aluminum know it is important, and they know this legislation will help them to be able to get a fair shake.

Finally, I wish to thank the members of the conference committee on the customs bill for putting our BDS language into this legislation. It will help to avoid boycotts and divestment in sanctions of Israel. This is a way that some countries around the world are trying to delegitimize Israel. It is something that is important for us to take a stand on as a Congress, and we do that in this Customs legislation.

So again, I think there is some good legislation we can pass here in the next week or so in the Senate. I hope we will do it.

I thank the Presiding Officer for giving me the time tonight. We need to continue to stand up for our families, our students, and our workers and ensure that, indeed, we do give the people we represent a fair shake.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

HONORING INDIANA SERVICEMEMBERS AND ALL AMERICANS WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the service and sacrifice of Indiana servicemembers and their families and of all Americans who served during the Vietnam war, as this year marks the 40th anniversary of the end of that war.

Here is picture from the Indiana Historical Society of some of the amazing Americans who served during that time. Tens of thousands of Hoosiers bravely answered the call when they volunteered or were drafted to serve in Vietnam in almost every single capacity you could think of.

Bravely, and sadly, 1,243 Hoosier soldiers gave their lives in service to our country in Vietnam. In Vietnam, our vets endured 100-plus degree heat, monsoon rains, snake-infested rice paddy fields, staggering conditions, and incredibly dangerous situations.

Our servicemembers would rather have been at home in Terre Haute, Richmond, Indy, Evansville or Fort Wayne, but they served because they loved our country and they answered when our Nation called them, and their answer was: Count on me.

At the end of the war, many of our Vietnam vets didn't receive the welcome home or the recognition they deserved. Not all received huge hugs when they hit the tarmac back in America, but our Vietnam vets are heroes just like those who stormed the beaches in Normandy, trudged through frozen rivers in Korea, and went through the deserts of Iraq and the mountains of Afghanistan. Our Vietnam vets deserve to be held—and are held—in the same high regard as those who fought in World War I, World War II, Korea, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Our Vietnam vets are part of the seamless fabric that has saved our country and made it such a blessed place.

Today, our Vietnam vets get amazing receptions everywhere they go. In my home State of Indiana, a town in northern Indiana, LaPorte, IN, in LaPorte County, has their big parade every year on July 4. The streets are filled—5, 6, 7, 8 people deep for 2½ miles long—and every year the parade is led off by the Vietnam veterans of LaPorte County, and it happens all over our State. When the parade starts off, everyone gets out of their chairs and stands up—even those who have challenges and have difficulties—to applaud our men and women who were in Vietnam, and for 2½ miles they get an amazing standing applause the entire way. These vets are our parents, our brothers and sisters, our aunts and uncles, our grandparents, friends, neighbors, and the folks who are sitting next to us in church on Sunday.

Our Vietnam veterans support and lead our communities as public servants, teachers, lawyers, nurses, business owners, factory workers, and bankers. Just about anything you can imagine—that is what our Vietnam vets are doing to make our country a greater place. They are a generation of veterans who have taught us about love of country and service, and they deserve to be honored for their selflessness and sacrifice.

Today, Indiana is home to nearly 150,000 Vietnam war veterans. We have a responsibility to provide them with the benefits and support they have earned and to show them the same commitment they demonstrated while they fought to protect us and our freedoms more than 4 decades ago.

We must ensure our veterans have access to timely and quality care at local VAs across our State and country, and that this care is delivered in a way that meets their needs. Expanding access to health care for our Hoosier vets has been and will continue to be a constant top priority of mine.

We recently broke ground in St. Joseph County, IN, on the new St. Joseph County Health Care Center. It will mean that many of our local vets in northern Indiana will be just a short ride away from the health services they have worked so hard to earn and receive.

We must continue to expand options for care, for example, through the Veterans Choice Program, which is bipartisan legislation that is now law. Provisions from our bipartisan servicemember and veteran mental health care package were signed into law recently as part of the national defense bill.

We are working every day to try to make sure our veterans have the chance to receive good physical health care and good mental health care and that we stand next to them and with them every step of the way. Our bipartisan Community Provider Readiness Recognition Act was included, and it helps connect Hoosier servicemembers and vets with local providers who can deal with the unique challenges that folks who were in our military face.

The demand for care among our vets has never been greater and our obligation to them has never been greater. In recognition of their service and sacrifice, we must deliver on our promise to care for all veterans long after their last day in uniform.

I have another picture here from the Indiana Historical Society. This is another group of our young soldiers. When they went off, as I said earlier, they didn't complain and didn't make excuses, and when our Nation called, as I said before, they said: Count on me.

We must keep the promises we made to our vets. We must keep those promises for their entire lives. Our Vietnam vets and their families made incredible sacrifices. We can do a better job of

giving them the recognition and support they deserve. We must do so through words and action. In our everyday daily lives let us remember those who have sacrificed so much to defend our Nation and our freedom. Let us preserve their legacy and follow their example of service to others.

When you see someone wearing a ball cap that says Vietnam vet, World War II vet, Korean vet, Iraq or Afghanistan vet, say thanks. My guess is they will say: Thank you; I was just doing my job. But they were doing so much more than just their job. They were protecting our Nation and making sure that our children and our children's children had a chance to grow up in this most blessed of all places.

God bless every American and Hoosier veteran who served in Vietnam. God bless their families. God bless Indiana, and God bless America.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Indiana for his great remarks. I thank him for making them today.

PUERTO RICO

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor tonight to discuss Puerto Rico, a territory of the United States since 1898. Millions of residents have been citizens since 1917, nearly 100 years. This community of 3.5 million people is facing economic, fiscal, and liquidity problems. What are we doing about it here in Congress? We are not doing anything. That needs to change, and it needs to change now.

We spent 10 years watching Puerto Rico suffer through a recession. We spent months here in Congress discussing what to do. There have been a lot of ideas—some popular, some controversial. I can say that, as the ranking member on the Energy Committee, I have heard many ideas, but now is the time to act.

We need to allow Puerto Rico to restructure. That is, we need to give them the same opportunities that we gave to average American citizens and municipalities to restructure their debt—the same that we gave to Wall Street when they were in a financial crisis, the same brink that we were almost on when we had our own economic problems. Yet there are some here in the halls of Congress who would rather listen to hedge funds and make sure they are prioritized in a debt restructuring than actually putting in place debt restructuring.

I propose a two-part, no-cost approach that will be most effective and least controversial to help us out of this situation.

The Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which has jurisdiction over territories, has heard from experts from the Department of Treasury and other government officials about how dire this situation is now. Just yesterday, a group of six CEOs sent a letter to congressional leaders urging swift legislative action on the Puerto Rico situation.

I can tell my colleagues the whole issue of what to do about Puerto Rico in the long term has many divergent views, but all those divergent views in Puerto Rico are singing the same tune right now: Restructure before January 1 or they will face serious issues of default. Why do we care? We care because the U.S. Government will have an impact of between $1 billion and $2 billion of more service demands if we do not allow them to restructure.

This year, the government and electric utilities failed to make their payments. Government workers are being cut to three days a week. Patients are now waiting months for medical care. Hospitals are going bankrupt. And the health care industry is threatened by a complete collapse. Forty-five percent of the population is living in poverty—including 58 percent of them who are children—and the unemployment rate is stuck at 12.2 percent, more than double the highest State's unemployment rate.

So what does it cost us to act here in the United States? It costs the U.S. taxpayers zero. It costs us zero because if we think about it, this is about debt restructuring. This about setting up a process which they are denied just because Puerto Rico is a territory; they cannot get the relief of restructuring. They tried. They tried to pass their own bankruptcy law. They tried, and then basically were told that it didn't meet a Federal standard.

They are not like a municipality that has this authority. They are a territory. They are our territory. If we want them to restructure successfully and keep more debt from coming to the shores of the United States because of—I would say that we have had a huge increase in population. So the cost of inaction is this acceleration of the Puerto Rico population coming to the United States. In 2014, we see that the number jumped to almost 70,000 people in one year. The net migration has been more than 500 percent in the last 10 years.

If we do nothing in the next week and don't act on this problem, more migration of Puerto Ricans is going to come to the United States. When they come, what will happen? They will be demanding more services, such as Head Start, SNAP, unemployment insurance, and Pell Grants. So default equals more Federal spending.

The notion that my colleagues think that somehow this inaction is the way out of this equation—they are just adding more responsibility to the U.S. taxpayer. Why? Is it because they want to protect hedge funds in a bankruptcy process? Do they want to decide in the Halls of the U.S. Congress who gets in line first and who gets paid?

I will remind my colleagues, particularly since the Presiding Officer knows the Deepwater Horizon issue very well, we did not make decisions here in the U.S. Congress—in the Senate and in the House of Representatives—as to who would get paid in the Deepwater accident implosion. We appointed a receiver. They made the tough decisions. When it came to Detroit's bankruptcy, we did not make the decision.

I guarantee my colleagues that of 100 Members of the U.S. Senate, there are probably 100 opinions in both of those cases as to how we thought each of those payments or restructurings should be done. But we are not the experts, and just because we have an opinion about what we would like to see Puerto Rico do doesn't mean we should be writing that into legislation and prejudging what should be an official, legal process of restructuring debt that we need to give Puerto Rico the authority to have.

This is what newspapers across the United States are saying, including the Los Angeles Times, the Miami Herald, the Boston Globe, the New York Times, and others: Give Puerto Rico the ability to restructure their debt.

So why are people here failing to take up this mantle? People have been arguing for months about different ideas. Some of our colleagues want to increase the Medicaid reimbursement rate. Some of our colleagues want to have an EITC increase. Some of our colleagues want Puerto Rico to do away with their pensions before they go into a bankruptcy structure. Those are all political opinions by individuals that one could say are worth debate.

Now we are at the point of default. Just as we need to make decisions before January 1, our colleagues are now trying to say that we can continue to discuss this issue. We don't have time to continue to discuss this issue. We have next week, and, as a member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee that oversees territories, I feel it is our responsibility to propose a policy and get it in place so that we can find some resolution of this issue.

I think this two-part fix about making sure there is the ability to restructure and a council to oversee it in coordination with Treasury is the best we can do at this point in time to save the U.S. Government from further costs and to give relief to Puerto Rico.

The notion that people here in the U.S. House of Representatives or the U.S. Senate are trying to protect hedge funds so that they can maximize their return is despicable. It is despicable. The notion that somebody is trying to protect these fundamental questions that need to be decided in a formal process of bankruptcy or reform, as we are calling it within the territory, is the fair and even process that should take place without prejudice.

We are going to, as a body, have a very robust discussion, I guarantee my colleagues, for years and years and years to come about what the United States is going to do about the territory of Puerto Rico. Let's at least give

ourselves the luxury of having that discussion when the territory is not in default. Let's come together and pass some legislation for them to restructure their debt. Let a professional organization take the politics out of this and make the best financial decisions that can be made now to save the U.S. taxpayer from further expense.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

BEING HONEST WITH THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, earlier today it was reported that the President's Deputy National Security Adviser was asked about my call that the President and the administration speak clearly about the nature of the enemy we face—about my call that we be honest with the American people and with ourselves about the fact that we are at war with militant Islam, we are at war with jihadi Islam, and we are at war with violent Islam.

In response, the White House was quoted in the World-Herald this morning as saying this:

> Our strong belief is to not treat these ISIL terrorists as leaders of some religious movement. Even if you have a derogatory adjective attached to it—radical Islam or Islamic extremism—essentially you are saying they are the leaders of a religious movement. And that is what they want. They want to be seen not as terrorists and killers and thugs, as the president said, but as leaders who speak on behalf of religion. And that is why we have not identified them as the enemy in this effort.

This is lunacy. First, while the White House is insisting that no one use the word ''Islamic'' or note any connection between the war that we are facing and some subset of Islam—even as the White House insists that no one use the word, their own preferred adjective, ''ISIL'' or ''ISIS,'' begins with an ''I.'' Every fourth grader in America can deduce without any assistance from Vanna White what the rest of the word that begins with an ''I'' is. Yet the White House insists that no one should use the word.

They are dealing with a world they wish were so, as opposed to the world with which we are called to struggle. The world in which we live is a world where we are going to be facing a decades-long battle with militant Islam, with jihadi Islam, with violent Islam. We are obviously not at war with all Muslims, but we are at war with those who believe they would kill in the name of religion, and the White House insists that we muzzle ourselves and not tell the truth.

Second, the White House's logic for why we shouldn't tell the truth to the American people or to ourselves is because the leaders of ISIL supposedly want to be identified with a religious movement. The leaders of the ISIL movement and the broader jihadi movement that is trying to kill Americans and all those who believe in freedom and in open society—the leaders of this movement also want to be martyred. Isn't the President's position that we should not kill them because they desire to be martyred? This is lunacy.

We have to speak the truth not because it alone will somehow diminish ISIS or ISIL, but because speaking the truth is actually the only way we can begin to develop policies that will not lead to more failed States in the Middle East, which are producing the terror training camps of next year.

Despite the fact that we are actually and obviously at war with militant Islam, there is a terrible leadership vacuum in this country. The American people know this, and, frankly, those of us who are getting our classified briefings and having to engage the leadership of our national security and intelligence communities know this leadership vacuum exists. Those who are trying to keep Americans safe—there are many wonderful, freedom-loving civil servants fighting to protect our kids, and they know and experience this vacuum of leadership every day.

This vacuum is felt outside the beltway and everywhere in America, as is obvious in many of our towns. But even more dishearteningly and more dangerously, it is increasingly obvious to the professionals working in our intelligence community and in our national security structure that this vacuum is harming our national security and our intelligence community as they try to fight for our freedom.

Here is why this matters. This vacuum prevents them from doing their jobs. They have no strategy to deploy, they have no rational policy to implement, and they have been asked to defeat an enemy that their Commander in Chief refuses to name. This is lunacy, it is absurd, and it is unacceptable.

Mr. President: Please lead.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I appreciate the words of the Senator from Nebraska, Mr. SASSE, with whom I enjoy serving on the banking committee, and I appreciate his good work. I take a bit of issue with his comments. I know there are more than two options. But I hear the greatest criticisms of the President from those same people, urging—not necessarily Senator SASSE in this case, but many of the leaders in this body on the Republican side who were some of the strongest advocates for the war in Iraq. Some of those same people are saying, back into the Middle East, sending combat troops.

Going back to war is something that the American people—we all come to the floor claiming to speak for the American people, perhaps, but we know that is not good policy and that is not what most people in this country want to do. But I appreciate the comments of the Senator.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question? Do you believe there is any connection between our enemy and Islam?

Mr. BROWN. Excuse me?

Mr. SASSE. Do you believe there is any connection between our enemy and Islam?

Mr. BROWN. I am not here to debate this. I don't know exactly what that means: a connection between the enemy and Islam. I know that semantics matter, and I know the criticism of the President in this body is sort of front and center no matter what he does.

When he gave what I thought was a coherent speech, often with restraint, where we have taken the—I think we have taken the fight to ISIL in this country. I think we have done it domestically. I think the President wants to do it internationally, and this body doesn't seem to have the courage to debate whether or not we actually look at an authorization resolution—an authorization for use of force. The President is still forced to rely on a resolution that President Bush pushed through that led to disastrous policies in Iraq. I don't think that was right.

But I apologize. I want to speak on something else, Mr. President, and that is why I came to the floor.

SUPPORING OUR VETERANS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, 2 weeks ago most of us went home to our families to celebrate and give thanks for the many blessings we have in this country. We all look forward to spending more time with family during this holiday season, but for far too many Americans the holidays are just another time when they struggle to put food on the table or even to have a roof over their heads. This is sadly particularly true of our Nation's veterans.

Again, to go back 15 years, we take people into war in this country—sometimes for very good reason. Our sending troops to Afghanistan was exactly the right policy back in 2002 and 2003. Going into the war in Iraq was something very different.

If we in this body are going to send people into war, it is time we think about the costs of war, not come to the Senate floor and make speeches about how tough we are as Senators, when most Senators don't have children—some do, but most don't have children who go off to war. We are willing to send people into combat, and then we too often turn our backs on those soldiers once they come home and become our Nation's veterans.

The suicide rate is too high among veterans, many of them suffering from PTSD or traumatic brain injury or a host of other illnesses or afflictions. The suicide rate is too high, the unemployment rate for veterans is too high, and the drug addiction rate is too high. Yet, how often our colleagues come and talk about, let's send combat troops, let's go to war. How rarely they talk

about what we do with these men and women when they come home, whose lives have been changed dramatically. These are the costs of war, and they don't get nearly the attention on the Senate floor, in the media, or among policymakers as do the actually going to war and sending our troops.

It is shameful that veterans have these rates of unemployment, addiction, suicide, and homelessness. We have made progress on homelessness through a combination of increased Federal investments and improved services. Over the past 5 years, homelessness among veterans has declined 36 percent, but too many remain on the streets.

Veterans comprise 12 percent of the Nation's adult homeless population. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, some 48,000 veterans were homeless—including 1,200 in my State of Ohio—on a given night in January when a census, if you will, was taken about homelessness. That is 48,000 too many. It is a disgrace that they serve our country with honor, and thousands are left without a roof over their head. Think about that. We send them off to war. They are sometimes damaged by their time in combat or their time in the military, and we don't care enough to find them places to live and find them drug treatment and find them jobs and give the kind of help to them that they gave to our country.

I met the veterans the organizations serve—organizations such as the VFW, American Legion, these groups and counties called veteran service organizations. My State is blessed to have one in each of our 88 counties. I hear about their stories of perseverance. They are inspiring.

I visited the Joseph House in Cincinnati, where Nathan Pelletier and his team of dedicated staff and volunteers provided addiction treatment and transitional housing to veterans. We heard from Britton Carter, who was formerly homeless. He completed the treatment program at Joseph House. He now works as a case manager helping other struggling veterans. He spoke about the trials he has overcome. He said:

> As a small youth I fell in love with playing army men. My mom would buy me little army men, and I dreamed of one day being a soldier.
>
> God had given me the gift of being a pretty good basketball player and as such I became the first freshman to play and start on any varsity team. With success came fans and countless people, many of whom had an agenda that didn't necessarily have my best interest at stake.
>
> From the early years of high school I found myself star struck, and I would end up in the company of those who used drugs—first pot and wine, later I was introduced to heroin and cocaine.
>
> With the grace of God, I was given the opportunity to attend college at New Mexico Military Institution in Roswell, NM. There were other offers from schools, but I was attracted to the opportunity of being able to play army man once again.
>
> I was caught with drugs and kicked out of school, and as a result I lost the chance to become an officer in the United States military. I went to another college—only to have my drug addiction lead me to poor choices that brought my career closer and closer to an end, where the only thing I felt I had to hold onto would be a career in the Army.
>
> I enlisted, and discovered that being away from home . . . left me face-to-face with those old demons, and once again I was being discharged. . . . It wasn't long after my return . . . that I found myself in and out of trouble. Having no insurance to pay for the treatment I truly needed to address my addiction, and nearly a life sentence on the installment plan and years of struggle. . . .

He goes on.

> [The Joseph House] was the one place that believed in never leaving any soldier behind—the Joseph House.
>
> It was while at the Joseph House that I had the opportunity to get the treatment I so badly needed. . . . Today, thanks to God and his mercy. . . .

He goes on to talk about some of the things he has done. He has written a play. He has produced a play. He has done wonderful things, especially for his fellow veterans. His story should serve as a reminder to all of us that we should not leave the men and women who serve this country.

There are so many stories like his. In October I was in Dayton, where I met with Robert White at the Homefull organization—Homefull as opposed to the homeless. He served 4 years in the Army Reserves and 1 year on Active Duty. He was honorably discharged in 1980 and spent years working, facing challenges that he said left him ''lower than low.'' He said, ''As soon as I left for basic training, I was homeless.'' He talked about his work, his time in shelters. He said the result was always the same. He said, ''I entered homeless, and no matter how good I did, I still left homeless.''

Then, on the July Fourth weekend 7 years ago, he entered Homefull's VA per diem transitional supportive housing program. He became a model guest at Homefull. He got a job in Trotwood, a community near Dayton. He still has the same job. Homefull connected Mr. White with its partner organization, which helped him achieve home ownership. Today he has gone from homeless veteran to owner of his own home. That is because of his community in Dayton, because of this organization Homefull, and it is because of the partnership with the Veterans' Administration, whose funding is always under jeopardy because of many Members of the Senate and House who simply don't put the same effort into helping veterans as they do into funding the military.

Last month I was in Cleveland. I visited the Supportive Housing Home for Veterans. I visited the Trumbull Metropolitan Housing Authority in Youngstown. These organizations are providing work that is so important. We owe them our support.

Even one veteran on the street means Congress isn't doing enough to tackle this problem. That is why I joined my colleagues in introducing the Veteran Housing Stability Act of 2015, which would make meaningful improvements to services for homeless veterans and give more veterans access to housing opportunities.

President Kennedy, in his 1963 Thanksgiving proclamation—I believe the week before he died—said, ''As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.''

Sure, we come to this floor. We send people off to battle. Surely we need to do that sometimes. Sure, we come to the floor and talk about veterans, but so often we don't live up to the obligations to help these veterans deal with their homelessness, to help veterans deal with suicide, with the threat of suicide, the likelihood of suicide for some of them, help our veterans deal with drug addiction, help our veterans deal with mental health issues. Often these are costs of war that we simply don't discuss on the Senate floor. It is so important that we do. I hope my colleagues will join me in ensuring every veteran has an opportunity to succeed.

TRIBUTE TO MEGHAN DUBYAK

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, in closing, I want to recognize a long-term staff member, a young woman who has served in my office, Meghan Dubyak. She has been my communications director for most of my years in the Senate. She comes from Shaker Heights, OH. She has been a terrific public servant. Today is her last day. This is about her last hour on the job, although she is going with me tonight to do one other appearance. Meghan is planning to get married this summer. She is taking tomorrow off and is going on Monday to join the staff of the Vice President of the United States, JOE BIDEN. She has been an incredible employee. I wish her well. My wife Connie and I will love Meghan as long as we have the privilege of knowing her in the years ahead.

So thank you to Meghan.

I yield the floor.

REMEMBERING OFFICER DANIEL ELLIS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to a Kentucky police officer who was tragically lost in the line of duty. Officer Daniel Ellis of the Richmond Police Department was shot while searching an apartment for a robbery suspect on November 4, 2015, and died from his wounds 2 days later. He was 33 years old.

''Our lives will never be the same again, the lives of his fellow officers and of his family will never be the same,'' Richmond Police Chief Larry Brock said during Officer Ellis's funeral. ''He turned out to be a great police officer. He was one of those guys that just got it and got it early.''

Officer Ellis started at the department on August 11, 2008. He was known as a kindhearted man who treated others with dignity and respect. One day

while on duty, he saw a man in business clothes carrying a tent and walking down the street. When asked, the man told Officer Ellis that he had a job interview the next morning and had nowhere to spend the night. Officer Ellis paid to get him a room.

Daniel graduated from Eastern Kentucky University, where his funeral service was held. Most of the school coliseum's 7,000 seats were full for the service. Hundreds of fellow police officers from across Kentucky and other States poured into Richmond to pay their respects.

Members of Officer Ellis's family who are suffering from this loss include his wife, Katie; his son, Luke, who is only 4 years old; his parents, Kelly and Nancy West Ellis; two brothers; a sister; and his paternal grandmother.

I know my colleagues in the United States Senate join me in wishing the Ellis family our utmost condolences after their horrible loss. We are humbled and we are grateful for Officer Daniel Ellis's service and his enormous sacrifice in the line of duty. I hold the deepest admiration and respect for every brave police officer across the Bluegrass State, all of whom put their lives in danger to protect us. Kentucky is thankful these men and women have made a sacred pledge to protect and defend.

Local news Web site WLKY.com published a moving article about Officer Ellis and the outpouring of grief in the Richmond community after his death. I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From WLKY.com, Nov. 12, 2015]

THOUSANDS SAY GOODBYE TO SLAIN RICHMOND OFFICER DANIEL ELLIS—CHIEF SAYS ''GRIEF IS NEARLY INCONSOLABLE''

(By Carolyn Callahan and Emily Maher)

RICHMOND, KY.—He lost his life doing the job he loved.

Thousands of people were in Richmond on Wednesday to say goodbye to Officer Daniel Ellis.

The 33-year-old was shot a week ago during a robbery investigation.

He died two days later.

The funeral service was held at Alumni Coliseum at Eastern Kentucky University.

Both Daniel and his wife, Katie, graduated from the school.

For the first time since the deadly shooting, Richmond's police chief spoke publicly.

''We have lost our Daniel,'' Chief Larry Brock said. ''Our collective grief is nearly inconsolable.''

Ellis started with the Richmond Police Department in 2008.

While Brock hoped Ellis would finish his career with the department, he never imagined it would end the way it did.

''Today we say goodbye to Officer Daniel Ellis. Our Daniel. But we will never forget him, his service, or his sacrifice,'' Brock said.

Ellis leaves behind a wife and young son.

''Katie, I pledge to you and Luke that you will remain a part of our family. That we will always be there for you, and that you will never walk alone,'' Brock said.

The chief said it rained after Ellis died.

''It was as if the angels themselves were crying at the loss of this special young man,'' Brock said.

Then hours later, a rainbow appeared over the Richmond Police Department. The chief takes that as a sign that Ellis is still with them.

''Rest easy, Daniel. You have left us too early,'' he said.

Shortly before he was killed, Ellis found out he was being promoted to detective.

It's a job at which the chief said he would have excelled.

''From the kindergarten classrooms that he visited, to the courtrooms where his testimony could be counted on to be straightforward and truthful, he will be greatly missed,'' East End Church of Christ minister Phillip Shumake said.

Hundreds lined downtown Richmond streets as Ellis received a hero's escort to his final resting place.

Residents in Richmond said they wanted to show their thanks to the man who gave his life protecting theirs.

Black and blue pinwheels and white ribbons with Ellis's badge number line the Eastern Bypass.

Hundreds of officers drove down the street, escorting Ellis to his final resting place, while the community watched and supported an officer who was loved.

''Even though we wear a different badge, he is my brother,'' Shane Allen with Richmond Rescue said.

''You're grieving for someone that's not a family member, but he feels like a family member,'' community member Shelley Johnson said.

''We were actually on shift the day it happened and we were all trying to find out who it was. He is family,'' Allen said.

A kind of family that is brought closer together in times of loss.

''And I was trying to explain to the kids, 'Mommy, why do you cry?' And it's like something unexplainable and maybe they can understand that,'' Johnson said.

The community stood together to pay their final respects holding signs calling Ellis a hero.

''It's unbelievable. It's really touching to see the support—that even though it's something tragic that has brought this community together so tightly, to see the support for somebody they might not even know. And to see them come out on a day and support him as he goes by to lay at rest,'' Allen said.

Hundreds of officers from across the state escorted Ellis on a 100-mile journey to his final resting place.

''We just wanted to show what his service has meant to us,'' community member Sarah Roof said.

As he passed by, blue balloons were released into the air as a final tribute to a man the community said will never be forgotten.

''He loved his job. He helped the community and that was his job. And that's what he wanted to do,'' Allen said.

Ellis will be laid to rest in Adair County.

The family has asked for donations to be made to the Kentucky Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation or Supporting Heroes.

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I wish to speak about the Every Student Succeeds Act that the President signed into law today.

I want to first congratulate my colleagues Senator PATTY MURRAY and Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER, who have effectively been able to guide this bill through the Senate. It has been an honor to watch and participate in this process—a process that has served as a great example of the way the Senate is supposed to work.

When the original Senate version of the Every Child Achieves Act came to the floor for a vote on July 22, 2015, I could not support it because, while it made necessary changes to the No Child Left Behind law, I could not in good conscience support a bill that fell short of investing in the potential and promise of all of our children, especially New Jersey's most vulnerable students. I stood resolute in the belief that if Congress was truly going to invest in our children and grandchildren's future, it was vital that any legislation passed provide support, access, and opportunity to equip the next generation to succeed, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

These needs were particularly poignant given the historic context of the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act as a civil rights bill. Created the same year as the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and just 11 years after the landmark Brown v. Board of Education decision, President Lyndon B. Johnson's original piece of legislation intended to address the gaping gulf in the quality of education received by low-income students in an intensely segregated country. Indeed, this piece of legislation was a vital tool in President Johnson's arsenal on the War on Poverty. It is undeniable that education is a cornerstone of the American Dream to achieve success and financial security. We do our Nation and our children a disservice if we do not do everything in our power to ensure that President Johnson's arsenal is not only maintained, but honed and replenished with robust provisions to fight an evolving battle for educational equity in our schools.

Although I did not vote for the original Senate version of ESEA that passed the Senate in July, I am glad to see a conference report, the Every Student Succeeds Act, ESSA, that takes elements from both the House and Senate bill and ultimately is a better bill for all children, teachers, and parents in our country.

Chief among provisions that I believed were problematic was the lack of accountability measures to ensure America's most vulnerable students have access to a quality education. With regards to accountability, it was critical not to be overly prescriptive while still acknowledging an intense need to identify and ask schools and districts to figure out specific plans to turn things around in the lowest performing schools and high schools who fail to graduate one-third of their students. It is also critical to identify where there are groups of students who are consistently performing worse than their peers. I do not believe these changes should come from Washington. Local teachers, principals, and parents are best equipped to know how best to

turn around a failing school, and this bill gives them the arsenal to do so. I believe the new accountability provisions empower local leaders, with State and Federal guidance, to pursue the improvement strategies best suited to their local needs.

These accountability measures are vital if we are to guarantee that the ideals our students pledge allegiance to every day, justice and liberty for all, are manifest in the education we provide for our youngest Americans.

With this goal in mind, I am also pleased that ESSA includes my amendment to support homeless and foster youth, by ensuring educators and the public are aware of how foster and homeless children and youth are performing on critical elements compared to their peers by adding reporting for these groups on graduation rates to the State and school district report cards.

The role of teachers is also prioritized in ESSA, and I was especially proud to see the amendment I authored that helps support teachers by asking school districts to identify opportunities to make working conditions better and more sustainable.

With these improvements made and the spirit of the bill as an important piece of civil rights legislation maintained, I wholeheartedly support the reconciled version that has passed the House and Senate and that was signed by the President today.

TRIBUTE TO REAR ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER J. PAUL

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the service of RADM Christopher J. Paul, Deputy Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, who is retiring from the United States Navy after more than 38 years of faithful service to our Nation.

Having enlisted in the Navy in 1977, Rear Admiral Paul went on to attend the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School and U.S. Naval Academy, where he distinguished himself as a valued leader of the varsity cross country, indoor, and outdoor Track teams under famed coach Al Cantello and a 10-time letterman. After graduating from the Naval Academy in 1982 with a Bachelor of Science degree in physical science, RADM Paul served on USS *KIDD*, DDG 993, a destroyer homeported in Norfolk, VA, until 1987 and qualified as a surface warfare officer during deployments to the Atlantic and Indian Oceans; the Mediterranean, Black, North, Baltic, Red, and Caribbean Seas; and the Arabian Gulf.

Rear Admiral Paul's Pentagon staff assignments included service on the Joint Staff as an action officer in the Operations Directorate J–3 and U.S. Senate liaison officer and assistant surface warfare program officer in the Secretary of the Navy's Office of legislative affairs from 1987 to 1991. During that assignment, Rear Admiral Paul had the opportunity to work on behalf of Members of Congress on the Senate Armed Services Committee and was subsequently assigned to serve in my office to help write a $600 million package of veterans benefits for servicemembers and veterans of Operation Desert Storm. While working on that legislative matter, I had the privilege of promoting then Lieutenant Paul to the grade of lieutenant commander, when he transitioned to the Navy Reserve, which allowed him to continue to serve on my staff in Washington, DC, while also serving at the Pentagon's Navy Command Center as assistant operations department head.

Rear Admiral Paul went on to faithfully serve on my Senate legislative staff for a total of 16 years, followed by 6 years as a professional staff member on the U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services, while simultaneously serving in numerous Navy positions of increasing responsibility over the course of more than 22 years. Those assignments included serving on the Chief of Naval Operations staff as executive officer of Reserve Component Augment Units to the director of Surface Warfare OPNAV N86 and the director of Expeditionary Warfare OPNAV N85 between 1997 and 1999.

Rear Admiral Paul's Navy Reserve unit command assignments included CVNE–0109, from 1999 to 2001, supporting AIRLANT aircraft carriers, during which he was recognized with the Commander Naval Air Force Reserve Robert I. Barto Award; Naval Surface Warfare Center Indian Head, from 2001 to 2003; and, rapid response to full unit-mobilization in support of Operation Noble Eagle, which was recognized by the Secretary of the Navy with the Meritorious Unit Commendation. His command assignments also included Navy Region, Mid-Atlantic, from 2003 to 2005, where he was mobilized in support of Joint Task Force Katrina as chief of staff, Joint Force Maritime Component Commander; U.S. Forces, Japan from 2005 to 2007, where the unit received the Joint Meritorious Unit Award for its contingency and exercise support that greatly enhanced the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance; and deputy regional commander to Commandant, Naval District Washington, from 2007 to 2008, supporting the Navy Total Force in the national capital area.

During Rear Admiral Paul's flag officer assignments, he led several type commands responsible for manning, training, and equipping naval warships and expeditionary forces. In his first flag assignment, Rear Admiral Paul served as deputy commander, Navy Expeditionary Combat Command from 2008 to 2011, receiving the Navy Unit Commendation for its outstanding success in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom; deputy commander, Naval Surface Forces Atlantic from 2011 to 2012; and deputy commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet from 2012 to 2015, where he culminated his Navy career. During his flag officer positions, Rear Admiral Paul distinguished himself in the performance of his duties while demonstrating a uniquely comprehensive knowledge of manpower, personnel, training, enlisted personnel distribution, and surface warfare officer career management issues. His effective leadership and initiatives helped transform how surface forces are trained and prepared to fight in naval warships during a vital period of change in the surface warfare community.

As a loyal and dedicated member of my staff for over 22 years, Rear Admiral Paul worked tirelessly as a valued legislative aide to me in my U.S. Senate office and on the professional staff of the Senate Armed Services Committee. In that capacity, Rear Admiral Paul played an important role in policy matters affecting our Nation and the U.S. military, helping to advance countless legislative initiatives enacted into law that will have a lasting impact on U.S. policy, including the Detainee Treatment Act of 2005, which prohibits the inhumane treatment of prisoners of the United States; legislation that reauthorized the FAA in 1996, which is still recognized as the largest aviation reform law since the deregulation act of 1977; laws that help improve the lives of our servicemembers, veterans, and military families; and numerous provisions that have improved the ability of the military to procure needed combat capability, enhanced the readiness of ships, submarines, and aircraft, and maintained global superiority—all while ensuring that the Department of Defense acts as a responsible steward of diminishing defense dollars.

As a determined Reserve Component surface warfare leader and dedicated public servant, it is fitting that we honor Rear Admiral Paul's service during the centennial of the U.S. Navy Reserve. Rear Admiral Paul embodies the moral character and dedication of our Nation's citizen-sailors who bring unique skill sets through their military and civilian training and serve our country honorably by the core values of the United States of America. I heartily thank Rear Admiral Paul; his wife, Shannon; daughter, Catherine; and son, Christopher, for their honorable service to our Nation and the U.S. Navy; and wish Rear Admiral Paul fair winds and following seas as he concludes a career in the U.S. Navy exemplary in honor and distinction.

Thank you.

TRIBUTE TO JIM SMITH

• Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, today I wish to honor a great South Dakotan on his notable accomplishments and his career, starting as an elevator operator in the Senate. His career spanned seven decades, 10 Presidents, and 32 Congresses. To say Jim Smith is an institution in Washington, DC, would be an understatement.

Jim Smith was born in Aberdeen, SD, but spent the majority of his childhood

in my hometown of Pierre, SD. After graduating from Pierre High School in 1948, Jim attended the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, where he was the quarterback for the Miners when they won a championship in 1951.

After graduating from SDM&T in 1952, Jim decided law school was the best route for him, and this South Dakota boy moved to the big city to attend George Washington School of Law in Washington, DC. Like many hard-working South Dakotans, Jim worked his way through law school, starting his career operating the very same Senate elevators we take today in the U.S. Capitol.

Jim's work ethic caught the eye of many, and he eventually moved on to work for his home State Senator, Karl Mundt. Jim worked as a legislative assistant for Senator Mundt and went on to become minority counsel on the Senate Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations.

After his time working on Capitol Hill, Jim began a successful career in the banking sector until he was called back to government service, this time with the U.S. Treasury where he served as Deputy Undersecretary. In 1973, Jim became the first South Dakotan appointed as Comptroller of the Currency, an office created by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863.

Jim Smith served as Comptroller of the Currency under two Presidents and eventually left to rejoin the private sector in 1976. He went on to have a successful career partnering with another government relations professional to establish their own firm, which will continue to bear his name even after his retirement.

Jim Smith embodies the work ethic and attitude we are known for in our State. He has earned his place on the pages of South Dakota history books.

To Jim Smith and his wife of 37 years, Karen, I wish you the best on your retirement, and I thank you for your years of dedicated public service. Thank you for making South Dakota proud.●

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DR. CARL ZULAUF

● Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I wish to honor today the distinguished career of Dr. Carl Zulauf on the occasion of his retirement from the faculty of the Ohio State University.

Raised on a farm himself, Carl's passion for agriculture began at an early age. His family's diversified farm raised livestock and crops. His connection to the land has remained a common thread throughout his life and career, and Carl hopes to use his retirement as an opportunity to refocus on his family's farm.

With the seeds of interest firmly planted, Carl pursued his education in what he knew best: agriculture. First, where he earned a degree in Agricultural Economics at the Ohio State University and later at Stanford University where he obtained his PhD. Dr. Zulauf credits his upbringing on a farm as the foundation for his interest in strengthening our Nation's domestic farming and the special appreciation he has for the issues facing American farmers and the agricultural sector.

Since 1980, Carl had been a pillar of OSU's College of food, agricultural, and environmental sciences. The depth and breadth of his research portfolio is impressive and includes dozens of peer-reviewed journal articles and over 1,000 articles developed for broader public consumption. Not just a researcher, Carl is a dedicated educator. Thousands of students have benefited from his teaching, leadership, and mentoring. Carl served as academic adviser to more than 200 students. For over a decade, he has been a faculty adviser for Ohio State's SPHINX Senior Honorary—which each year pays tribute to 24 students who ''embody the highest ideals of scholarship, leadership, camaraderie, citizenship, and service at The Ohio State University.'' Additionally, he has helped organize programs with students to travel to China and the Czech Republic to study agriculture. As a professor, his interest in his students can be seen by the large number of farmers across my State that talk about their time in Dr. Zulauf's classroom. The dozens of accolades that have been awarded to him throughout his tenure at OSU serve as witness to his impact as both a teacher and scholar. Carl's many contributions are a reminder that the values of the SPHINX—service, camaraderie, leadership, and scholarship—are not solely the domain of OSU's students.

Beyond his exemplary work as a researcher and educator, Carl has been an engaged member of both Ohio's and the broader agriculture community. He has been a leader in the Ohio agribusiness community, taking part in a number of strategic planning committees. He continues to be a regular contributor to FarmDoc, a project of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, which serves as an online resources for farmers across the country.

He inspired many students in his work at OSU, and one cannot fully understand Ohio's agricultural sector without knowing the name Carl Zulauf. However, his most noteworthy contribution to agriculture in the United States must be his work on farm policy. In 1985, Carl joined Senator John Glenn's office to help with agriculture policy, an experience he described as eye-opening. With his academic background and experience growing up on a farm, Carl brought an informed and diverse perspective. Though he went back to teaching following his time in Washington, Carl's time in Senator Glenn's office left an indelible mark and would guide his work on agriculture policy in the decades to come.

One pivotal example of Carl's work on agriculture policy was for the 2008 farm bill with the development of the Average Crop Revenue Election, ACRE, program, which represented a novel approach to risk management for our Nation's farmers. Carl worked with my office in 2008, as well as the office of Senator DURBIN, to draft legislation that would become the ACRE program. ACRE was based on years of research and conversations with farmers and some of the best minds in our agriculture industry. My staff worked on ACRE which later became the ARC, Average Risk Coverage, program—legislation that I worked on with Senator THUNE and which we were able to include the 2014 farm bill. Over 90 percent of our Nation's corn and soybean farmers choose to enroll in the ARC program which will serve as a crucial safety net for farmers at risk of low yields and was the first revenue-based rather than fixed-price program. The overwhelming participation in these programs serves as validation of Carl's work and cements his reputation as a key architect of our Nation's food and farm policy. Carl's fingerprints will be on agriculture policy for many future iterations of the farm bill.

From his tenure as a motivating and engaging professor at OSU to the role and voice he continues to play in Ohio and across the Nation as a leading thinker on the future of our farm and food policy, Carl has served as a resource guide and mentor for many. Thousands of students have benefited from his teaching, and thousands of farmers will benefit from his work that has informed our Nation's agricultural policies. I wish him the best in his retirement and applaud his contributions to his profession and thank him for his service to America's farmers, his university, and our Nation.●

RECOGNIZING THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN RIFLE CLUB

● Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I would like to recognize the Rocky Mountain Rifle Club, RMRC, for their efforts to support the Teton County 4–H Shooting Sports Air Rifle and Air Pistol clubs. I appreciate RMRC's efforts to honor Montana's strong hunting legacy and protect our Second Amendment rights.

There are currently 20 Montana kids enrolled in the Teton program. Three students are among the top 10 Montana shooters for their age groups: Berit Bedord, age 14; Ashley Pearson, age 13; and Luke Ostberg, age 12. These three have been the longest lasting members of the Teton club and have steadily earned top scores in State competitions.

The aim of the Teton County 4–H program is to introduce young Montanans to shooting with a focus on safety and the proper and ethical use of firearms. The shooting sports program is one of the most popular 4–H programs in the country, according to Brian Bedord, the coordinator for the Teton 4–H shooting program.

The Rocky Mounty Rifle Club has been a strong supporter of the Teton

County 4–H Shooting Sports Air Rifle and Air Pistol clubs and is currently raising funds to purchase top-of-the-line air rifles and air pistols in addition to target equipment for the 4–H program.

It is my honor to thank the Rocky Mountain Rifle Club and all of its members and employees for continuing to work towards the responsible education of firearms for young Montanans. The right to keep and bear arms is an issue that is of upmost importance to me and the people of Montana. I am grateful for all of RMRC's hard work to educate Montanans and support our State's strong tradition of responsible firearm ownership.●

TRIBUTE TO JULIO N. INFIESTA

● Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I wish to speak today in recognition of Mr. Julio N. Infiesta of Lynbrook, NY, who served in the Social Security Administration for 42 years in the New York region. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Mr. Infiesta for his years of dedication and public service and to congratulate him on his retirement.

In 1973, Julio began his career with the Social Security Administration, serving in various local offices in the New York metropolitan region, including in the South Bronx, where he was an operations supervisor, and in Long Beach, where he was selected as branch manager. In 1976, he became a social insurance specialist in the New York regional office in field operations. Mr. Infiesta also served as assistant district manager and district manager in the Jamaica and Flushing offices until 2001, when he entered the agency's Advanced Leadership Program. Mr. Infiesta was promoted to the position of deputy assistant regional commissioner for management and operations support and also served as the acting assistant regional commissioner for management and operations support. As a member of the Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program, he served as an area director and as the director for disability in the office of the deputy commissioner for operations. In 2003, Mr. Infiesta was selected as the region's assistant regional commissioner for management and operations support and was elevated to deputy regional commissioner in 2014.

As Social Security's second senior ranking official in the New York metropolitan region, Mr. Infiesta oversaw Social Security operations in New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. These operations included an annual administrative budget of $400 million for more than 3,900 employees in 113 field offices, four teleservice centers, four Social Security Card Centers, the Northeastern Program Service Center, and the New York regional office. In the New York metropolitan region, Social Security pays $7.3 billion in monthly cash benefits to 6 million retirees, workers with disabilities and their families, and the families of workers who have died. Social Security pays an additional $461 million in monthly Supplemental Security Income cash benefits to 835,000 people aged 65 and older, as well as people who are blind or disabled, regardless of age.

Mr. Infiesta and his wife, Joanne, are longtime residents of Lynbrook, in Nassau County, Long Island.

Mr. President, I ask that we give tribute on December 10, 2015, to the 42 years of service that Mr. Julio N. Infiesta gave to the Social Security Administration and to the people of the United States.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. ROBERT O. KELLEY

● Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, after 7 and a half years of leadership educating the best and brightest minds not only in North Dakota, but from around the world, University of North Dakota, UND, president, Dr. Robert O. Kelley, is retiring. I want to take the time to thank him for his service and send my best wishes to President Kelley, his wife, Marcia, and his family for their commitment to the students, faculty, and families served by the university.

President Kelley joined the University of North Dakota in 2008, serving as the school's 11th president and providing the university, its students, the city of Grand Forks, and the State of North Dakota the steadfast direction needed to strengthen the legacy and leadership of the institution.

As an alumna, the University of North Dakota will always hold a special place in my heart. The University of North Dakota is where I gained knowledge and skills that helped me in both the private and public sectors. So I am proud President Kelley similarly ensured that students continue to receive the skills they need to succeed. Under his steady guidance, the University of North Dakota has grown significantly.

Nearly $225 million in building projects are underway at the university, including the school of law building addition and renovation and the new school of medicine and health sciences building, which will open in the fall of 2016. Each and every time I return to the campus to visit with students and faculty, I see firsthand the exceptional college experience UND offers. I know these accomplishments are in large part attributed to Dr. Kelley's direction and will be an element of his legacy for years to come.

Since the university's founding in 1883, it has been an academic center for North Dakota, where young minds have had the opportunity to learn and grow to become the leaders of the State and the country. President Kelley's leadership has worked to navigate the university through sometimes controversial reforms including the process to change the school's nickname and logo. Under his guidance, the school worked to ensure a smooth transition.

As UND looks to the future, I recognize that President Kelley's work over these last 7 and a half years has strengthened the institution's foundation for excellence and will help those who follow in his stead to maintain the school's legacy. On behalf of the students, families, and citizens of North Dakota, I wish him and his family the best and thank them for their hard work and service to the University of North Dakota and our great State.●

RECOGNIZING CARSON TAHOE HEALTH'S REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the 10th anniversary of Carson Tahoe Health's, CTH, acclaimed regional medical center.

Over the past decade, this center has grown to be one of northern Nevada's leading health care facilities. Most recently, the Carson Tahoe Sierra Surgery department of the regional medical center received the HealthInsight Hospital Quality Award for its top-tier care and patient satisfaction. The center has been recognized through a variety of accolades for its cutting-edge medical expertise and incredible patient care. I am proud to see this facility in Nevada recognized on a national level for its high-quality medical treatment.

Since the Medical Center's opening, those working within the facility have gone above and beyond to provide northern Nevadans with the best health care. The staff has spent countless hours further expanding health care services for Nevadans. The medical center has developed a premier open heart and endovascular surgery program and a women and children's center with a five-star rating. The facility has also secured an affiliation with the University of Utah Health Care and Huntsman Cancer Institute, which significantly increases care options for Nevadans. The center is acknowledged for its complete cancer treatment, intervention, support, and aftercare and provides 153 beds for Silver State residents. The staff is comprised of 240 board-certified physicians that cover an array of 35 medical specialties. The northern Nevada community is fortunate to have this incredible Medical Center ready to help with its medical needs.

For the past decade, CTH's regional medical center has provided residents across northern Nevada with top-notch and innovative health care options. The hard work of those that have helped grow this facility is greatly appreciated. Today I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the regional medical center on its 10th anniversary and in thanking those that work within the facility helping to save lives.●

RECOGNIZING THE SOUTHERN NEVADA CHAPTER OF THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate the southern Nevada chapter of the Military Officers Association of America on reaching a significant milestone of 50 years of service in our State. It gives me great pleasure to recognize this entity that does so much for Nevada's veterans, active military members, and their families.

For half a century, the southern Nevada chapter has provided southern Nevada's military community with an incredible support system to address a diverse range of veterans and active military members' issues. The organization offers our Nation's brave men and women advice and guidance on compensation and benefits, as well as raises money to benefit Wounded Warriors, ROTC scholarships, and other entities helping our heroes who have defended our freedoms. The southern Nevada chapter spearheaded the Veterans Court Program, which gives veterans a second chance and helps to expunge misdemeanors from their records, so long as they participate in a rehabilitation program, perform community service, and maintain a positive lifestyle.

Southern Nevada's military community is fortunate to have this chapter working as an ally to improve the lives of veterans. The organization also advocates on behalf of America's national defense, an issue I believe is crucial for our country. I am grateful to each and every member of this organization for their service and sacrifice in defending our Nation. There is no way to adequately thank the men and women who sacrifice their lives for our freedoms. Their service is invaluable to our country.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have had no greater honor than the opportunity to engage with the men and women who served in our Nation's military. I recognize Congress has a responsibility not only to honor the brave individuals who serve our Nation, but also to ensure they are cared for when they return home. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation. I am grateful to have organizations like the southern Nevada chapter working towards a common goal: fighting to ensure the needs of our veterans are met.

Today I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in recognizing the southern Nevada chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, an organization with a noble and charitable mission. I am humbled and honored to recognize its 50th anniversary, and I wish to thank all of the hardworking members for everything they do.•

REMEMBERING THAIS F. O'DONNELL BLATNIK

• Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life of a dear friend and a remarkable West Virginian who passed away on December 9th, 2015. Former West Virginia State senator and house of delegates member, Thais F. O'Donnell Blatnik, was a dedicated public servant and an inspiring leader who was respected and admired by all who knew her. She led an extraordinary life that will always be remembered in the hearts of the countless individuals whose lives she touched.

Thais was a proud West Virginian from our State's northern panhandle. She was born and raised in the town of Weirton, where she grew up with her loving parents and her two younger sisters, Eileen and Kay. It was there in the small town of Weirton that Thais would plant her roots and cultivate an inherent love and commitment to her community, the northern panhandle region, and her entire State.

Thais went on to live a long and prosperous life, filled with immense success. But she never strayed too far from her loved ones and friends in Weirton and the northern panhandle. After graduating from high school, she attended and graduated from West Liberty University and launched a tireless career in journalism. After college, Thais returned to her beloved hometown to work for the Weirton Daily Times. She also spent part of her career working for the Wheeling Intelligencer and as an editor for the Dominion Post.

During her journalism career, Thais developed her inquisitive nature along with her passion for asking the hard questions. She was a true force, and she was tough but fair when it came to telling the news. She covered all levels of politics, and she even had the opportunity to interview three U.S. Presidents: President Kennedy, President Ford, and President Roosevelt. As a result of her work in journalism, she was emboldened to run for office herself and to stand up for the northern panhandle communities she loved so dearly.

Just as Thais was a fierce journalist, she became an equally strong and passionate public servant. Genuinely committed to improving the lives of all West Virginians, she represented Ohio County for 8 years in the house of delegates and another 8 years in the State senate. I was proud to work alongside her and call her my colleague during my time in the State senate. Thais spent her time at the statehouse fighting to improve the lives of all West Virginians, but specifically women and children and those struggling with mental health and disabilities. She was honored for her great work and for her service as Mental Health Directors Legislator of the Year and recognized by the West Virginia Association for the Developmentally Disabled for her faithful work helping children with exceptionalities. Thais also served as the executive director of the Wheeling Area Training Center for the Handicapped, WATCH.

Thais was not only reputable and accomplished in her public life, but she was also an unparalleled example of a devoted wife, a proud mother, and a wonderful grandmother. She was married to the late Dr. Albert M. Blatnik for more than 48 years and paid tribute to him in a book she wrote titled ''Here's Al.'' Thais received love and support throughout her life from Al as well as her children—Floyd, Judy, and David—and her grandchildren—Katie, Jack, Joe, Maggie, and Sam—who lovingly called her ''Meme.'' During their lives, Thais and Al led their grandchildren across the country introducing them to exciting new experiences.

Anyone who knew Thais Blatnik can tell you about her incredible passion for her community and her State and her ability to inspire each person she encountered. She made a difference throughout West Virginia and will be forever remembered for her many years of service. She was truly a hero to so many in our State, and though she will be greatly missed, her memory will always live on.•

RECOGNIZING THE HENRY FORD HEALTH SYSTEM

• Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Henry Ford Health System as it celebrates delivering a century of high-quality and innovative health care services to the metropolitan Detroit community.

In 1909, Henry Ford, David Whitney, and a few other leading Detroit-area businessmen recognized the need for a major health care center in Detroit and set out to open Detroit General Hospital. After experiencing several years of delays, Henry Ford took over the entire project and renamed the facility ''Henry Ford Hospital'', which opened its doors to the public on October 1, 1915.

From the outset, Henry Ford was focused upon adapting the insights and innovations he pioneered in the automotive industry for use in the delivery of health care services. Among his innovations were a first-in-the-Nation center for treating chemical dependency and an accountability system for promoting shorter patient waiting times. Over the years, Henry Ford Health System's commitment to innovation saw breakthroughs in the administration of electrocardiograms, improvements in the design of hospital beds, and advancements in medication regiments for treating bacterial infections.

Throughout its history, Henry Ford Health System has been committed to meet the evolving needs of the metro Detroit region. Recognizing the need for access to low-cost health care services, Henry Ford Hospital partnered with the State of Michigan in 1970 to

create the Community Health and Social Services, CHASS, clinic in southwest Detroit. Around the same time, Henry Ford Health System also began partnering with the Detroit public schools to provide in-school health services to students.

With the growing population in Detroit's suburbs, Henry Ford Health System began to expand, opening new medical centers in Troy, Dearborn, and West Bloomfield. Today Henry Ford Health System has grown from a single facility with 48 beds into a regional health care provider which admits around 89,000 patients each year and delivers approximately 3.5 million clinic visits. The staff has also grown to more than 23,000 employees, making Henry Ford Health System the fifth largest employer in the Metro Detroit region.

In recognition of its outstanding commitment to delivering world-class health care services in a novel and effective manner, Henry Ford Health System is the only organization to receive all five major health care quality awards: the Foster G. McGaw Prize in 2004, the Joint Commission's Ernest Amory Codman and John M. Eisenberg Awards in 2006 and 2011, the American Hospital Association's McKesson Quest for Quality Prize in 2010, and the Malcolm Baldrige Award in 2011. As a recipient of the Baldrige Award, Henry Ford Health System joins an elite group of organizations who have been recognized for outstanding innovations in their respective fields.

I am honored to ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing Henry Ford Health System's 100th anniversary. This significant milestone is a great opportunity to reflect upon its century-long record of fostering innovations in the development and delivery of health care services, its commitment to providing the best possible outcomes for its patients, and the transformative effect it continues to make, both in the health care field and metro Detroit. Henry Ford Health System has made a remarkable impact in southeast Michigan over the last century, and I wish its leadership, medical professionals, and staff well in continuing to fulfill its mission in the years and decades ahead.●

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE HAIGANUSH R. BEDROSIAN

● Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, as this year draws to a close, so too does a long and accomplished legal career for Rhode Island Family Court Chief Judge Haiganush R. Bedrosian. She will retire from the bench at the end of December after serving on the family court for over 35 years. Judge Bedrosian is a trailblazer and a skilled leader in the Rhode Island legal community. She will be missed.

Judge Bedrosian, the daughter of Armenian immigrants, is a lifelong Rhode Islander who grew up in Cranston. She attended Cranston East High School and then Brown University's Pembroke College, where she graduated with a degree in political science in 1965.

She says that when she graduated from Pembroke, she was told ''women don't go to law school'' and she had best look for work elsewhere. That didn't sound right to her.

Judge Bedrosian enrolled at Suffolk Law School, where she excelled. She earned a clerkship with Rhode Island Supreme Court Justice Thomas Paolino. After her clerkship, she rose quickly in the legal profession, serving as an assistant general counsel for the Providence & Worcester Railroad, representing children in private practice and serving as a special assistant to the Rhode Island Attorney General in the Criminal Division.

In 1980, Rhode Island Governor J. Joseph Garrahy nominated her to serve on Rhode Island's family court, making her the first woman to sit on the family court bench. Over the course of her tenure, she has built a reputation for fairness, compassion, and thorough command of the law. She has deftly handled some of the most complex and difficult cases to come before the Court.

She rose to the position of chief judge on the family court in 2010—another first for a woman in Rhode Island—where she has proven herself an able leader. She has promoted mediation as a way to resolve challenging family disputes more quickly and with less stress on the parties involved. She has advocated for improvements to the way juveniles are treated in our justice system, both at the State and Federal levels. She has worked to combat human trafficking and sexual violence. And she has expanded the family treatment drug court, a smart and effective program to address drug offenses that involve youth and families.

In addition to her good work in the courtroom, Judge Bedrosian has contributed a great deal to her community. She remains a committed member of the congregation of Saints Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church in Providence where she is a frequent volunteer. She has also founded and served as president of the Rhode Island Trial Judges Association.

We will miss Judge Bedrosian's steady hand and compassionate, reasoned rulings on the bench. But we wish her well in the next chapter of her life. Best of luck, Your Honor.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2130. An act to provide legal certainty to property owners along the Red River in Texas, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 2130. An act to provide legal certainty to property owners along the Red River in Texas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–124. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Alabama applying to the United States Congress, pursuant to Article V of the Constitution of the United States, to call a convention of the states limited to proposing amendments that impose fiscal restraints on the federal government, limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and limit the terms of office of federal government officials; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 112

Whereas, the Founders of our Constitution empowered state legislators to be guardians of liberty against future abuses of power by the federal government; and

Whereas, the federal government has created a crushing national debt through improper and imprudent spending; and

Whereas, the federal government has invaded the legitimate roles of the states through the manipulative process of federal mandates, most of which are unfunded to a great extent; and

Whereas, the federal government has ceased to live under a proper interpretation of the Constitution of the United States; and

Whereas, it is the solemn duty of the states to protect the liberty of our people, particularly for the generations to come, to propose amendments to the Constitution of the United States through a Convention of the States under Article V to place clear restraints on these and related abuses of power: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Legislature of Alabama, both houses thereof concurring, That the Legislature of the State of Alabama hereby applies to Congress, under the provisions of Article V of the Constitution of the United States, for the calling of a convention of the states limited to proposing amendments that impose fiscal restraints on the federal government, limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and limit the terms of office for its officials. This is an application for a Convention of States. By definition, a Convention of States requires the equality of all state parties necessitating a rule of one state, one vote. Congress has no authority to adopt any rule to the contrary; and be it further

Resolved, This application is adopted with the understanding that the Legislature will, by law or rule, create rules for its appointment of delegates to any Convention of States, including rules that govern the duty of commissioners or delegates to strictly adhere to the limited subject matter of the convention contained in the state's application; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of State is hereby directed to transmit copies of this application to the President and Secretary of the United States Senate and to the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and to the members of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States Congress from this state; and to also transmit copies hereof to the presiding officers of each of the legislative

houses in the several states, requesting their cooperation; and be it further

Resolved, That this application constitutes a continuing application in accordance with Article V of the Constitution of the United States until the Legislatures of at least two-thirds of the several states have made applications on the same subject.

POM–125. A communication from a citizen of the State of Illinois memorializing the State of Illinois's petition to the United States Congress calling for a constitutional convention for the purpose of proposing amendments; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations:

Special Report entitled ''Legislative Activities Report of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Thirteenth Congress'' (Rept. No. 114–178).

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, without amendment and with a preamble:

S. Res. 189. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the 25th anniversary of democracy in Mongolia.

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and with a preamble:

S. Res. 320. A resolution congratulating the people of Burma on their commitment to peaceful elections.

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, without amendment and with an amended preamble:

S. Res. 326. A resolution celebrating the 135th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the United States and Romania.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. GRASSLEY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Dana J. Boente, of Virginia, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia for the term of four years.

Robert Lloyd Capers, of New York, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York for the term of four years.

John P. Fishwick, Jr., of Virginia, to be United States Attorney for the Western District of Virginia for the term of four years.

Emily Gray Rice, of New Hampshire, to be United States Attorney for the District of New Hampshire for the term of four years.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. HATCH (for himself and Mr. LEE):

S. 2383. A bill to withdraw certain Bureau of Land Management land in the State of Utah from all forms of public appropriation, to provide for the shared management of the withdrawn land by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of the Air Force to facilitate enhanced weapons testing and pilot training, enhance public safety, and provide for continued public access to the withdrawn land, to provide for the exchange of certain Federal land and State land, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. FLAKE:

S. 2384. A bill to amend the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 to provide for the consideration by State regulatory authorities and nonregulated electric utilities of whether subsidies should be provided for the deployment, construction, maintenance, or operation of a customer-side technology; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources .

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. FLAKE):

S. 2385. A bill to strengthen protections for the remaining populations of wild elephants, rhinoceroses, and other imperiled species through country-specific anti-poaching efforts and anti-trafficking strategies, to promote the value of wildlife and natural resources, to curtail the demand for illegal wildlife products in consumer countries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 2386. A bill to authorize the establishment of the Stonewall National Historic Site in the State of New York as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 2387. A bill to restore protections for Social Security, Railroad retirement, and Black Lung benefits from administrative offset; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. LEE):

S. 2388. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide for reciprocal marketing approval of certain drugs, biological products, and devices that are authorized to be lawfully marketed abroad, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 2389. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend the rural add-on payment in the Medicare home health benefit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 2390. A bill to provide adequate protections for whistleblowers at the Federal Bureau of Investigation; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 2391. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend certain energy tax provisions; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 2392. A bill to enhance beneficiary and provider protections and improve transparency in the Medicare Advantage market, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 2393. A bill to extend temporarily the extended period of protection for members of uniformed services relating to mortgages, mortgage foreclosure, and eviction, and for other purposes; considered and passed.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. SESSIONS):

S. 2394. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to improve the H–1B visa program, to repeal the diversity visa lottery program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FLAKE, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 2395. A bill to reauthorize the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ISAKSON (for himself and Mr. PERDUE):

S. 2396. A bill to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 121 Spring Street SE in Gainesville, Georgia, as the ''Sidney Olsin Smith, Jr. Federal Building and United States Courthouse''; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. REID (for himself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 2397. A bill to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to make grants to States that extend or eliminate unexpired statutes of limitation applicable to laws involving child sexual abuse; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 2398. A bill to provide benefits and services to workers who have lost their jobs or have experienced a reduction in wages or hours due to the transition to clean energy, 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; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 2399. A bill to provide for emissions reductions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself and Ms. AYOTTE):

S.J. Res. 28. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Secretary of Agriculture relating to inspection of fish of the order Siluriformes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself and Mr. REID):

S. Res. 333. A resolution to direct the Senate Legal Counsel to appear as amicus curiae in the name of the Senate in Bank Markazi, The Central Bank of Iran v. Deborah D. Peterson, et al. (S. Ct.); considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 469

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 469, a bill to improve the reproductive assistance provided by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to severely wounded, ill,

or injured members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their spouses or partners, and for other purposes.

S. 571

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 571, a bill to amend the Pilot's Bill of Rights to facilitate appeals and to apply to other certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, to require the revision of the third class medical certification regulations issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes.

S. 578

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 578, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 624

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 624, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to waive coinsurance under Medicare for colorectal cancer screening tests, regardless of whether therapeutic intervention is required during the screening.

S. 706

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 706, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require institutions of higher education to have an independent advocate for campus sexual assault prevention and response.

S. 727

At the request of Mr. KING, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 727, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to include biomass heating appliances for tax credits available for energy-efficient building property and energy property.

S. 901

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 901, a bill to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a national center for research on the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions of the descendants of veterans exposed to toxic substances during service in the Armed Forces that are related to that exposure, to establish an advisory board on such health conditions, and for other purposes.

S. 1455

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1455, a bill to provide access to medication-assisted therapy, and for other purposes.

S. 1562

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1562, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform taxation of alcoholic beverages.

S. 1659

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1659, a bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes.

S. 1697

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1697, a bill to provide an exception from certain group health plan requirements to allow small businesses to use pre-tax dollars to assist employees in the purchase of policies in the individual health insurance market, and for other purposes.

S. 1890

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1890, a bill to amend chapter 90 of title 18, United States Code, to provide Federal jurisdiction for the theft of trade secrets, and for other purposes.

S. 1915

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) 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. 2067

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2067, a bill to establish EUREKA Prize Competitions to accelerate discovery and development of disease-modifying, preventive, or curative treatments for Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, to encourage efforts to enhance detection and diagnosis of such diseases, or to enhance the quality and efficiency of care of individuals with such diseases.

S. 2186

At the request of Mr. COATS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2186, a bill to provide the legal framework necessary for the growth of innovative private financing options for students to fund postsecondary education, and for other purposes.

S. 2193

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2193, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to increase penalties for individuals who illegally reenter the United States after being removed and for other purposes.

S. 2196

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2196, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the non-application of Medicare competitive acquisition rates to complex rehabilitative wheelchairs and accessories.

S. 2336

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2336, a bill to modernize laws, and eliminate discrimination, with respect to people living with HIV/AIDS, and for other purposes.

S. 2337

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2337, a bill to improve homeland security by enhancing the requirements for participation in the Visa Waiver Program, and for other purposes.

S. 2348

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2348, a bill to implement the use of Rapid DNA instruments to inform decisions about pretrial release or detention and their conditions, to solve and prevent violent crimes and other crimes, to exonerate the innocent, to prevent DNA analysis backlogs, and for other purposes.

S. 2351

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2351, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend the annual comment period for payment rates under Medicare Advantage.

S. 2363

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2363, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to permit the Governor of a State to reject the resettlement of a refugee in that State unless there is adequate assurance that the alien does not present a security risk and for other purposes.

S. 2373

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2373, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of certain lymphedema compression treatment items as items of durable medical equipment.

S. 2377

At the request of Mr. REID, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 2377, a bill to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and protect and secure the United States, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 2387. A bill to restore protections for Social Security, Railroad retirement, and Black Lung benefits from administrative offset; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, every day, Social Security provides vital benefits to millions of Americans who worked and paid into the system. To ensure workers would receive full access to these fundamental lifeline benefits, for many years, the law protected these earned benefits from attempts to recover debts. However, 20 years ago, Congress suddenly reversed course, and made a change to the law that allowed the government to cut Social Security and other hard-earned benefit payments in order to collect student loan and other Federal debts, like home loans owed to the Veterans Administration, and food stamp overpayments.

Now more than ever, the loss of these protections is creating a major hardship for American Citizens who rely on Social Security and other earned benefits to make ends meet. Student loan debt is becoming an increasingly serious problem in in Oregon and across the nation, with students and their families burdened by crushing student loan debt. Even in the best circumstances, many families will struggle to pay off crippling loans for years to come. However, for people who rely on benefits like Social Security after retirement, disability, or the death of a family member, making payments on student loans or other federal debts can become an insurmountable hardship.

Because of the lifeline nature of these earned benefits, for more than 40 years the law prevented all creditors from collecting hard-earned Social Security, Railroad Retirement, and Black Lung benefits to recoup debts. The only exceptions included unpaid Federal taxes, child support or alimony payments, and court-ordered victim restitution. These protections helped ensure that our social safety net programs were functioning as intended—something I think we can all agree is essential to preserving Social Security and other earned benefits.

Astonishingly, when the law changed as part of a 1996 omnibus budget bill, these changes were never fully debated in Congress. This means Members of Congress never had the chance to really explore how this policy would affect beneficiaries. The legislation ultimately included some protections for the most vulnerable, but even those protections have not been updated in 20 years.

We now realize what a profound effect the loss of these protections has had on retirees and individuals with disabilities, who often live on fixed incomes. More and more seniors and people with disabilities are having their Social Security and other lifeline benefits taken away to pay federal debts. For example, according to a September 2014 GAO report, the number of individuals whose Social Security benefits were offset to pay student loan debt increased significantly between 2002 and 2013, from about 31,000 to 155,000. For individuals 65 and older with student loan-related Social Security garnishments, the number grew from about 6,000 to about 36,000 over the same period. Congress should restore sanity to the system, and reestablish the protections that these beneficiaries deserve.

That is why I, along with Senators BROWN, WHITEHOUSE, GILLIBRAND, KLOBUCHAR, SANDERS and WARREN are introducing the Protection of Social Security Benefits Restoration Act. The bill would restore the strong protections in the law that prevented the government from taking away earned benefits to pay Federal debts, and guarantee beneficiaries will be able to maintain a basic standard of living by receiving the benefits they have earned. The bill is supported by Social Security Works, The Strengthen Social Security Coalition, AFL–CIO, Justice in Aging, Campaign for America's Future, Global Policy Solutions, Student Debt Crisis, the National Organization for Women, RootsAction.org, Project Springboard, The Alliance for a Just Society, the Economic Opportunity Institute, the Progressive Change Campaign Committee, The Arc of the United States, The Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts, the American Federation of Government Employees, and the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2387

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 ''Protection of Social Security Benefits Restoration Act''.

SEC. 2. PROTECTING SOCIAL SECURITY, RAILROAD RETIREMENT, AND BLACK LUNG BENEFITS FROM ADMINISTRATIVE OFFSET.

(a) PROHIBITION ON ADMINISTRATIVE OFFSET AUTHORITY.—

(1) ASSIGNMENT UNDER SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.—Section 207 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 407) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d) Subparagraphs (A), (C), and (D) of section 3716(c)(3) of title 31, United States Code, as such subparagraphs were in effect on the date before the date of enactment of the Protection of Social Security Benefits Restoration Act, shall be null and void and of no effect.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) Section 14(a) of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974 (45 U.S.C. 231m(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following: ''. The provisions of section 207(d) of the Social Security Act shall apply with respect to this title to the same extent as they apply in the case of title II of such Act.''.

(B) Section 2(e) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (45 U.S.C. 352(e)) is amended by adding at the end the following: ''The provisions of section 207(d) of the Social Security Act shall apply with respect to this title to the same extent as they apply in the case of title II of such Act.''

(b) REPEAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFSET AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (3) of section 3716(c) of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking ''(3)(A)(i) Notwithstanding'' and all that follows through ''any overpayment under such program).'';

(B) by striking subparagraphs (C) and (D); and

(C) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as paragraph (3).

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Paragraph (5) of such section is amended by striking ''the Commissioner of Social Security and''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to any collection by administrative offset occurring on or after the date of enactment of this Act of a claim arising before, on, or after the date of enactment of this Act.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 2389. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend the rural add-on payment in the Medicare home health benefit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleague from Washington, Senator CANTWELL, to introduce the Preserve Access to Medicare Rural Home Health Services Act of 2015. This legislation would extend the modest increase in payments for home health services in rural areas that otherwise will expire on January 1 of 2018.

Home health has become an increasingly important part of our health care system. The kinds of highly skilled—and often technically complex—services that our nation's home health caregivers provide have enabled millions of our most frail and vulnerable older and disabled citizens to avoid hospitals and nursing homes and stay just where they want to be—in the comfort, privacy, and security of their own homes. I have accompanied several of Maine's caring home health nurses on their visits to patients and have seen first hand the difference that they are making for patients and their families.

Surveys have shown that the delivery of home health services in rural areas can be as much as 12 to 15 percent more costly because of the extra travel time

required to cover long distances between patients, higher transportation expenses, and other factors. Because of the longer travel times, rural caregivers are unable to make as many visits in a day as their urban counterparts. For example, home health care agencies in Aroostook County in Northern Maine, where I am from, cover almost 6,700 square miles, with an average population of fewer than 11 persons per square mile. These agencies' costs are understandably much higher than other agencies located in more urban areas due to the long distances the staff must drive to see clients. Moreover, the staff is not able to see as many patients due to time on the road.

Agencies serving rural areas are also frequently smaller than their urban counterparts, which means that their relative costs are higher. Smaller agencies with fewer patients and fewer visits mean that fixed costs, particularly those associated with meeting regulatory requirements, are spread over a much smaller number of patients and visits, increasing overall per-patient and per-visit costs.

Moreover, in many rural areas, home health agencies are the primary caregivers for homebound beneficiaries with limited access to transportation. These rural patients often require more time and care than their urban counterparts and are understandably more expensive for agencies to serve. If the extra three per cent rural payment is not extended, agencies may be forced to decide not to accept rural patients with greater care needs. That could translate into less access to health care for ill, homebound seniors. The result would likely be that these seniors would be hospitalized more frequently and would have to seek care in nursing homes, adding considerable cost to the system.

Failure to extend the rural add-on payment would only put more pressure on rural home health agencies that are already operating on very narrow margins and could force some of the agencies to close their doors altogether. If any of these agencies were forced to close, the Medicare patients in that region could lose all of their access to home care.

The legislation we are introducing today will extend the rural add-on for 5 years and help to ensure that Medicare patients in rural areas continue to have access to the home health services they need. Moreover, we would offset costs of the bill by reducing the home health outlier fund by .25 percent over the same 5 years. I urge our colleagues to join us as cosponsors.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 2390. A bill to provide adequate protections for whistleblowers at the Federal Bureau of Investigation; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, in his 2013 confirmation hearing, FBI Director James Comey called whistleblowers ''a critical element of a functioning democracy.''

That is what I have been saying for years. Whistleblowers expose waste, fraud, and abuse. They help keep Government honest and make sure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely. By pointing out problems, whistleblowers foster transparency and make it possible for an organization to do better.

Agencies should value their contributions. Instead, agencies often ignore whistleblower complaints or worse—retaliate against whistleblowers for bringing wrongdoing to light.

Across the Federal Government, whistleblowers are treated like skunks at a picnic, instead of the dedicated public servants they are. Unfortunately, the Federal Bureau of Investigation is no exception on that point. However, the FBI is the exception when it comes to legal protections for whistleblowers.

Unlike every other federal agency, the FBI is the only agency where employees are not protected for reporting wrongdoing to their direct supervisors or others within their chain-of-command. This makes no sense.

Studies show the great majority of whistleblowers first make disclosures to their supervisors. The FBI's own policy encourages reports to supervisors within the chain-of-command. Nevertheless, an FBI employee who makes a disclosure of waste, fraud, or abuse to their supervisor has no protection under law if the supervisor retaliates.

It is no surprise, then, that a 2015 report by the Government Accountability Office found that, of the 54 closed FBI whistleblower complaints it reviewed where documentation showed the reason for closing the case, at least 17 cases were dismissed in part because an employee made a disclosure to someone in their chain-of-command or management.

Why is there this gaping hole in FBI whistleblower protections? Because, unlike every other federal law enforcement agency, the FBI is statutorily exempt from government-wide whistleblower protection laws. As a result, it lives under its own unique regulatory scheme conceived, created, and controlled entirely within the Department of Justice. There is no independent review.

This unique exemption for the FBI has led to outrageous delays in the adjudication of FBI whistleblower complaints due to endless internal appeals and the low priority that FBI whistleblower cases receive at the Justice Department.

Currently, FBI whistleblower cases are adjudicated by the Department's Office of Attorney Recruitment and Management—an office whose very name clearly shows it was not designed to address reprisal cases. Appeals are considered by the Deputy Attorney General's office. That office has made clear that it has other priorities that render it incapable of even minimal communications with whistleblowers to inform them of their case status. Clearly, we need to do better.

I have worked with many FBI whistleblowers over the years who put everything on the line just to tell the truth. In exchange for their courage, they faced delays of up to a decade in adjudicating their cases, a deaf ear from the highest levels of the Justice Department, and in many cases, no protection at all.

Consider the case of Michael German. Michael testified at our hearing in March this year where we examined the effectiveness—or lack thereof—of the Justice Department's FBI whistleblower regulations.

Before he resigned from the FBI in 2004, Michael German was a decorated undercover special agent who successfully risked his life to infiltrate white supremacist and neo-Nazi hate groups across the United States, some with ties to foreign terrorist groups. He discovered that a portion of a meeting between two such groups had been illegally recorded by mistake.

Rather than following the rules and documenting the error, as he suggested, a supervisor told him to ''pretend it didn't happen.'' But he refused to back down. He reported the wrongdoing to his Assistant Special Agent in Charge. Then the FBI ''froze him out and made him a 'pariah.' ''

Because Special Agent German disclosed wrongdoing to his ASAC instead of one of the nine specifically designated entities in the Justice Department regulations, he was not protected. His case was not even investigated ''in earnest,'' according to him, until he resigned from the FBI and reported the matter to Congress.

This is the tragedy of weak FBI whistleblower protections: If this bill had been law when Michael German first blew the whistle, this country might still have the benefit of this decorated FBI Special Agent in our fight against terrorism. He is by far not the only FBI whistleblower sidelined and ostracized by the failures of current law and policy.

In today's world, we cannot afford to lose public servants like Michael German. That is why today, with my cosponsor Senator LEAHY, I am introducing this hi-partisan legislation, the FBI Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2015.

Among other things, this bill will for the first time provide legal protection to FBI employees who report wrongdoing to their supervisors, provide a more independent process for whistleblowers who have suffered reprisal, and increase oversight and transparency of the FBI whistleblower complaint process.

This bill is a long time coming. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2390

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 ''Federal Bureau of Investigation Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. FBI WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2303 of title 5, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 2303. Prohibited personnel practices in the Federal Bureau of Investigation

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

''(1) the term 'administrative law judge' means an administrative law judge appointed by the Attorney General under section 3105 or used by the Attorney General under section 3344;

''(2) the term 'Inspector General' means the Inspector General of the Department of Justice;

''(3) the term 'personnel action' means any action described in section 2302(a)(2)(A) with respect to an employee in, or applicant for, a position in the Federal Bureau of Investigation (other than a position of a confidential, policy-determining, policymaking, or policy-advocating character);

''(4) the term 'prohibited personnel practice' means a prohibited personnel practice described in subsection (b); and

''(5) the term 'protected disclosure' means any disclosure of information by an employee in, or applicant for, a position in the Federal Bureau of Investigation—

''(A) made—

''(i) for an employee, to a supervisor in the direct chain of command of the employee, up to and including the head of the employing agency;

''(ii) to the Inspector General;

''(iii) to the Office of Professional Responsibility of the Department of Justice;

''(iv) to the Office of Professional Responsibility of the Federal Bureau of Investigation;

''(v) to the Inspection Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation;

''(vi) to a Member of Congress;

''(vii) to the Office of Special Counsel; or

''(viii) to an employee designated by any officer, employee, office, or division described in clauses (i) through (vii) for the purpose of receiving such disclosures; and

''(B) which the employee or applicant reasonably believes evidences—

''(i) any violation of any law, rule, or regulation; or

''(ii) gross mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety.

''(b) PROHIBITED PRACTICES.—Any employee of the Federal Bureau of Investigation or another component of the Department of Justice who has authority to take, direct others to take, recommend, or approve any personnel action, shall not, with respect to such authority—

''(1) take or fail to take, or threaten to take or fail to take, a personnel action with respect to an employee in, or applicant for, a position in the Federal Bureau of Investigation because of a protected disclosure;

''(2) take or fail to take, or threaten to take or fail to take, any personnel action against an employee in, or applicant for, a position in the Federal Bureau of Investigation because of—

''(A) the exercise of any appeal, complaint, or grievance right granted by any law, rule, or regulation—

''(i) with regard to remedying a violation of paragraph (1); or

''(ii) other than with regard to remedying a violation of paragraph (1);

''(B) testifying for or otherwise lawfully assisting any individual in the exercise of any right referred to in clause (i) or (ii) of subparagraph (A);

''(C) cooperating with or disclosing information to the Inspector General of an agency, or the Special Counsel, in accordance with applicable provisions of law; or

''(D) refusing to obey an order that would require the individual to violate a law; or

''(3) implement or enforce any nondisclosure policy, form, or agreement, if such policy, form, or agreement does not contain the statement described in section 2302(b)(13).

''(c) PROCEDURES.—

''(1) FILING OF A COMPLAINT.—An employee in, or applicant for, a position in the Federal Bureau of Investigation may seek review of a personnel action alleged to be in violation of subsection (b) by filing a complaint with the Office of the Inspector General.

''(2) INVESTIGATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Inspector General shall investigate any complaint alleging a personnel action in violation of subsection (b), consistent with the procedures and requirements described in section 1214.

''(B) DETERMINATION.—The Inspector General—

''(i) shall issue a decision containing the findings of the Inspector General supporting the determination of the Inspector General; and

''(ii) if the Inspector General determines that reasonable grounds exist to believe that a personnel action occurred, exists, or is to be taken, in violation of subsection (b), the Inspector General shall request from an administrative law judge, and the administrative law judge, without further proceedings, shall issue, a preliminary order staying the personnel action.

''(3) FILING OF OBJECTIONS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the Inspector General issues a decision under paragraph (2)(B)(i), either party may file objections to the decision and request a hearing on the record.

''(B) NO EFFECT ON STAY.—The filing of objections under subparagraph (A) shall not affect the stay of a personnel action under a preliminary order issued under paragraph (2)(B)(ii).

''(C) NO OBJECTIONS FILED.—If no party has filed objections as of the date that is 61 days after the date the Inspector General issues a decision—

''(i) the decision is final and not subject to further review; and

''(ii) if the Inspector General had determined that reasonable grounds exist to believe that a personnel action occurred, exists, or is to be taken, in violation of subsection (b)—

''(I) an administrative law judge, without further proceedings, shall issue an order permanently staying the personnel action; and

''(II) upon motion by the employee, and after an opportunity for a hearing, an administrative law judge may issue an order that provides for corrective action as described under section 1221(g).

''(4) REVIEW BY ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If objections are filed under paragraph (3)(A), an administrative law judge shall review the decision by the Inspector General on the record after opportunity for agency hearing.

''(B) CORRECTIVE ACTION.—An administrative law judge may issue an order providing for corrective action as described under section 1221(g).

''(C) DETERMINATION.—An administrative law judge shall issue a written decision explaining the grounds for the determination by the administrative law judge under this paragraph.

''(D) EFFECT OF DETERMINATION.—The determination by an administrative law judge under this paragraph shall become the decision of the Department of Justice without further proceedings, unless there is an appeal to, or review on motion of, the Attorney General within such time as the Attorney General shall by rule establish.

''(5) REVIEW BY ATTORNEY GENERAL.—

''(A) TIMEFRAME.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Upon an appeal to, or review on motion of, the Attorney General under paragraph (4)(D), the Attorney General, through reference to such categories of cases, or other means, as the Attorney General determines appropriate, shall establish and announce publicly the date by which the Attorney General intends to complete action on the matter, which shall ensure expeditious consideration of the appeal or review, consistent with the interests of fairness and other priorities of the Attorney General.

''(ii) FAILURE TO MEET DEADLINE.—If the Attorney General fails to complete action on an appeal or review by the announced date, and the expected delay will exceed 30 days, the Attorney General shall publicly announce the new date by which the Attorney General intends to complete action on the appeal or review.

''(B) DETERMINATION.—The Attorney General shall issue a written decision explaining the grounds for the determination by the Attorney General in an appeal or review under paragraph (4)(D).

''(6) PUBLICATION OF DETERMINATIONS.—

''(A) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the Attorney General shall make written decisions issued by administrative law judges under paragraph (4)(C) and written decisions issued by the Attorney General under paragraph (5)(B) publicly available.

''(B) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in subparagraph (A) shall be construed to limit the authority of an administrative law judge or the Attorney General to limit the public disclosure of information under law or regulations.

''(7) JUDICIAL REVIEW.—Any determination by an administrative law judge or the Attorney General under this subsection shall be subject to judicial review under chapter 7. A petition for judicial review of such a determination shall be filed in the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit or any court of appeals of competent jurisdiction.

''(d) REGULATIONS.—The Attorney General shall prescribe regulations to carry out subsection (c) that—

''(1) ensure that prohibited personnel practices shall not be taken against an employee in, or applicant for, a position in the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and

''(2) provide for the administration and enforcement of subsection (c) in a manner consistent with applicable provisions of sections 1214 and 1221 and in accordance with the procedures under subchapter II of chapter 5 and chapter 7.

''(e) REPORTING.—Not later than March 1 of each year, the Attorney General shall make publically available a report containing—

''(1) the number and nature of allegations of a prohibited personnel practice received during the previous year;

''(2) the disposition of each allegation of a prohibited personnel practice resolved during the previous year;

''(3) the number of unresolved allegations of a prohibited personnel practice pending as of the end of the previous year and, for each such unresolved allegation, how long the allegation had been pending as of the end of the previous year;

''(4) the number of disciplinary investigations and actions taken with respect to each allegation of a prohibited personnel practice during the previous year;

''(5) the number of instances during the previous year in which the Inspector General found a reasonable basis that a prohibited personnel practice had occurred that were appealed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and

''(6) the number of allegations of a prohibited personnel practice resolved through settlement, including the number that were resolved as a result of mediation.

''(f) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the jurisdiction of any office under any other provision of law to conduct an investigation to determine whether a prohibited personnel practice has been or will be taken.''.

(b) GAO REPORT.—

(1) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term ''prohibited personnel practice'' means a prohibited personnel practice described in section 2303(b) of title 5, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 4 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on the effects of the amendment made by subsection (a), which shall include—

(A) an evaluation of the timeliness of resolution of allegations of a prohibited personnel practice;

(B) an analysis of the corrective action provided in instances of a prohibited personnel practice;

(C) the number and type of disciplinary actions taken in instances of a prohibited personnel practice;

(D) an evaluation of the communication by the Inspector General of the Department of Justice with an individual alleging a prohibited personnel practice regarding the investigation and resolution of the allegation;

(E) an assessment of the mediation process of the Department of Justice; and

(F) a discussion of how the use of administrative law judges and review under chapters 5 and 7 of title 5, United States Code, affected the process of investigating and resolving allegations of a prohibited personnel practice.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, whistleblowers serve an essential role in providing transparency and accountability in the Federal Government. It is important that all government employees are provided with strong and effective avenues to come forward with evidence of government abuse and misuse. To ensure that whistleblowers feel comfortable speaking up when they discover wrongdoing, it is also imperative that they are afforded protections from retaliation. That is why Senator GRASSLEY and I are joining together to introduce the Federal Bureau of Investigation, ''FBI'', Whistleblower Protection Enhancements Act of 2015.

Current FBI policies do not go far enough to protect whistleblowers. In March, the Judiciary Committee held a hearing that highlighted a number of serious problems facing whistleblowers at the FBI. We received testimony about the lack of protections for employees who report waste, fraud, or abuse to their direct supervisors. We also heard instances of the FBI failing to comply with regulatory requirements when conducting retaliation investigations, and that adjudication of contested cases can take years. One former employee, Michael German, testified in detail about how he was forced to end his distinguished career at the FBI after he disclosed to Congress serious deficiencies in the agency's handling of counterterrorism investigations. He chose to do this after making a protected whistleblower disclosure at the FBI that went nowhere while the retaliation continued.

The concerns expressed at the hearing echo concerns that were identified in two recent reports on the FBI whistleblower framework, one by the Department of Justice and the other by Government Accountability Office. Clearly the status quo is unacceptable. Congress should extend to FBI whistleblowers the same level of protection that is afforded other Federal employees who speak out about waste, fraud, or abuse. That is what Senator GRASSLEY and I seek to do today with this bill.

Our legislation closely tracks the protections contained in the Whistleblower Protection Act. Importantly, we extend whistleblower protections to FBI employees who blow the whistle to supervisors in their chain of command. This common sense fix is crucial to protect those employees who dare to speak up and report concerns to their superiors. The bill also provides clear guidance on the investigation and adjudication of retaliation claims. Investigations will now be handled solely by the Office of Inspector General, rather than sharing this responsibility with the Office of Professional Responsibility. This will provide much needed clarity and consistency in the process. Contested cases will now be adjudicated by Administrative Law Judges instead of by the Office of Attorney Recruitment and Management. Under this new process the Administrative Procedures Act will apply, ensuring a hearing on the record and strong procedural protections for all parties.

This bipartisan bill will help to ensure that FBI employees are able to blow the whistle on waste, fraud, or abuse at the FBI and not face personal repercussions for doing so. I urge the Senate to act quickly to take up and pass this important bipartisan legislation.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 2391. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend certain energy tax provisions; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, one of the great moral issues of our time is the global crisis of climate change. Let me be very clear about climate change. Climate change is not a Democratic issue or a progressive issue. It is not a Republican issue or a conservative issue. What it is, is an issue that has everything to do with physics. It is an issue of physics. What we know beyond a shadow of a doubt is that the debate is over, and that is that the vast majority of the scientists who have studied the issues are quite clear. What they tell us over and over again is that climate change is real, climate change is caused by human activity, and climate change is already causing devastating problems throughout our country and, in fact, throughout the world.

What the scientists also tell us is that we have a relatively short window of opportunity to bring about the fundamental changes we need in our global energy system to transform our energy system from fossil fuel to energy efficiency and sustainable energy. We have a limited window of opportunity. What the scientists are telling us very clearly is if we do not seize that opportunity, if we do not lead the world—working with China, Russia, India and other countries—in transforming the global energy system, the planet we leave to our children and our grandchildren will be significantly less habitable than the planet we enjoy.

My nightmare is that 20, 30, 40 years from now our kids and our grandchildren will look Members of the Senate and the House in the eye, and they will say: The scientists told you what would happen and you did nothing. Why did you not react? How hard was it to stand up to the fossil fuel industry and transform our energy system away from coal and oil into energy efficiency and wind, solar, geothermal, and other sustainable energies?

Pope Francis recently made what I thought to be a very profound statement. He said that our planet is on a suicidal direction—a suicidal direction—in terms of climate change. What a frightening and horrible thought. How irresponsible can we be to ignore what the entire scientific community is saying?

I know there are many of my colleagues who refuse to acknowledge the reality. As perhaps the most progressive Member of the U.S. Senate let me simply say this: I have differences with my Republican colleagues on virtually every issue. That goes without saying, but there is something very different about this issue. I have been in hearings with my Republican colleagues where I heard doctors and scientists talk about cancer, about Alzheimer's, about diabetes, about all kinds of illnesses, and I may disagree with my Republican colleagues about how we go forward, how much we should fund NIH, but I have never heard my Republican colleagues attack doctors or researchers or scientists for their views on cancer research or Alzheimer's research. As I do, they respect that research. But somehow or another, when it comes to the issue of climate change, at best what we are seeing Republicans do—many Republicans, most Republicans—is ignore the issue or claim they are not scientists or, at worst, attack those scientists who are doing the research.

Why is that? Why is it that my Republican colleagues accept the research

on cancer, on Alzheimer's, on all kinds of illnesses, and they respect scientists who are working in all kinds of areas. But somehow or another when it comes to the issue of climate change, my Republican friends are in denial? What I will say is that this has nothing to do with science, and it has sadly and tragically everything to do with our corrupt campaign finance laws, which allow large corporations and billionaires to contribute as much money as they want into the political process. In my view, the reality is that any Republican—and I happen to believe that many Republicans understand the truth about climate change. But I also believe that any Republican who stood up and said ''You know what, I just talked to some scientists'' or ''I just read some of the literature, and this climate change is real, it is dangerous, and we have to do something about it''—I believe that on that day when that Republican stands up, the money will stop flowing from the fossil fuel industry, from the Koch brothers, and there will be a strong likelihood that Republican would be primaried in the next election.

According to the Center for Responsive Politics, at the national level where companies have to report what they spend on lobbying and campaign contributions, the oil companies, coal companies, and electric utilities have spent a staggering $2.2 billion in Federal lobbying since 2009 and another $330 million in Federal campaign contributions. That is just at the Federal level—over $2.5 billion in lobbying and campaign contributions in just 6 years. Even in Washington, DC, that is a lot of money, and that is just the money that we know about.

That is not all of it. That is not the end of it. As a result of the disastrous Citizens United Supreme Court decision, which allowed corporations and billionaires to spend unlimited sums of money, we know that the Koch brothers, who make most of their money in the fossil fuel industry, and a handful of their friends will be spending some $900 million—$900 million—from one family and a few of their friends in the 2016 election cycle. Clearly, one of the reasons they are investing so much in this election cycle is that they intend to continue doing everything they can to make sure Congress does not go forward to protect our kids and our grandchildren against the ravages of climate change.

According to an 8-month investigation by journalists at Inside Climate News, Exxon—now ExxonMobil—may have conducted extensive research on climate change as early as 1977, leading top Exxon scientists to conclude both that climate change is real and that it was caused, in part, by the carbon pollution resulting from the use of Exxon's petroleum-based products. In addition, the purported internal business memoranda accompanying the reporting asserted that Exxon's climate science program was launched in response to a perceived existential threat to its business model. In other words, the scientists at ExxonMobil, who are scientists, discovered the truth, and upon hearing the truth, ExxonMobil poured millions of dollars into organizations whose main function was to deny the reality of climate change.

The efforts to transform our energy system are taking place not only here in Washington, the Nation's Capital, but at the State and local level as well. In States such as Arizona and Florida, roadblocks are being put up to stop people from gaining access to renewable energy sources such as wind and especially rooftop solar. In States such as Arizona and Florida and many of our Southern States with huge solar exposure, there is huge potential for solar. Yet we are now seeing politicians, at the behest of the fossil fuel industry, put up roadblock after roadblock to make it harder for people to move to solar or wind.

I have heard a lot of the arguments from the fossil fuel industry as to why we should not transform our energy system, and many of those arguments are repeated here on the floor by some of my colleagues. But the truth is that it turns out that transforming our energy system away from fossil fuel and into energy efficiency and sustainable energy will create a significant number of new and decent-paying jobs, and it will lower energy bills in communities all across this country.

My own State of Vermont participates in a regional greenhouse gas initiative cap-and-trade program for the power sector. Since 2009, the program has created over 14,000 net jobs, and carbon pollution levels dropped by 15 percent at the same time consumers, businesses, and other energy users saw their electricity and heating bills go down by $459 million. The majority of those savings came from energy efficiency. All the while, jobs were created, not exported, and we relied on clean domestic energy instead of oil from the Middle East.

Energy efficiency clearly makes an enormous amount of sense. It is clearly the low-hanging fruit as we transform our energy system.

I have been in homes in Vermont that have been effectively weatherized, and they are seeing heating bills drop by 50 percent. People in those homes are living in more comfort, and jobs are being created by those people who install the insulation and other energy-efficient tools, not to mention all of the folks who are manufacturing the insulation, windows, and efficient roofing.

According to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, energy efficiency provides a larger return on investment than any individual energy source because for every $1 invested in energy efficiency, we see $4 in total benefits for all consumers. For every $1 billion invested in efficiency upgrades, we see a creation of 19,000 direct and indirect jobs.

These numbers are great and speak for themselves, but acting on climate change is also a moral obligation. While we will all suffer—all over our country and all over the world—the impacts of climate change, the sad truth is that climate impacts fall especially hard upon the most vulnerable people in our society. Minority and low-income communities in the United States are disproportionately impacted by the causes of climate change. According to a 2012 study by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the NAACP, the nearly 6 million people in the United States who live within 3 miles of a coal-burning powerplant have an average per capita annual income of just over $18,000 a year. Among the people who live within 3 miles of a coal powerplant, 39 percent are people of color, while people of color compromise only 36 percent of the total population of the United States.

The bottom line is that when we talk about climate change and its impact upon our planet and all the people, we should bear in mind that this is happening not only in the United States but all over the world. The people who will suffer the most are low-income people and people living in poverty.

I am introducing legislation called the American Clean Energy Investment Act of 2015. This legislation is built upon the fact that the prices for wind and solar power have plummeted over the last decade, cutting carbon pollution and creating tens of thousands of new jobs in the process. Meanwhile, the fossil fuel industry benefits from permanent subsidies worth tens of billions of dollars each year. Incentives for renewable energy and energy efficiency are temporary and are too often allowed to elapse entirely.

My legislation permanently extends and makes refundable some of our most important renewable energy tax credits for energy efficiency and sustainable energy, including sources such as solar, wind, and geothermal. Permanently extending these incentives will drive over $500 billion in clean energy investments between now and 2030 and are an integral part of putting us on a pathway to more than doubling the size of our clean energy workforce to 10 million American workers. The costs for these incentives are completely offset by repealing the special interest corporate welfare in the Tax Code for the fossil fuel industries.

If we are going to be serious about dealing with the threat of climate change, we need to end the polluter welfare that subsidizes increased pollution from fossil fuels and instead invest those resources in clean energy solutions that reduce pollution. Doing this will save lives, protect our economy, and reduce the threats from climate change at the same time we are creating millions of good-paying jobs here in the United States.

Our legislation is supported by the Solar Energy Industries Association,

the American Wind Energy Association, 350.org, and cosponsored by Senators MERKLEY and MARKEY.

We have a national responsibility to protect the livelihoods of the working families and communities who help power and build this country. We must act now to reenergize our manufacturing base, bolster our clean energy economy, and protect the livelihoods of energy workers and the communities they support.

As a result of these concerns, this bill provides up to 3 years of unemployment insurance, health care, and pensions for workers who lose their jobs due to our transition to a clean energy economy. In other words, we understand—as was very much the case with our moving away from tobacco farming in this country—that the people who do the work in coal, oil, and other fossil fuels are not to blame for the fact that the product they produce is causing so many problems in our country. Our job is to protect and transition them to other decent-paying jobs, and the government has a responsibility to help with that transition.

Based on what the scientists are telling us, we need to make very significant cuts in carbon pollution emissions and we need to do it as soon as possible. It is absolutely vital that we do what many economists tell us we must do, and that is to put a price on carbon. It is the simplest and most direct way to make the kinds of cuts in carbon pollution that we have to make if we are going to successfully transition from fossil fuel to energy efficiency and sustainable energy. That is why within the Climate Protection and Justice Act that I am introducing, there will be a tax on carbon. Directly pricing carbon is a key part of the solution of transforming our energy system. Many experts support a fee on carbon pollution emissions, including liberal, moderates, and even prominent conservatives such as George Shultz, Nobel laureate economist Gary Becker, Mitt Romney's former adviser Gregory Mankiw, former Reagan adviser Art Laffer, former Republican Bob Inglis, and many others. The idea of a price on carbon is not just a progressive concept, it is one that is being supported by economists throughout the political spectrum.

The Nation's leading corporations, including the Nation's five biggest oil giants, are already planning their future budgets with the assumptions that there will be a cost applied to carbon emissions. In other words, some of the very companies that have strongly opposed action to address climate change are recognizing the reality in front of them, and that is that the United States is going to—hopefully sooner rather than later—address the crisis of climate change and that there will be a tax on carbon. This tax works by setting enforceable pollution-reduction targets for each decade, including a 40-percent reduction below 1990 levels by 2030 and a more than 80-percent reduction level by 2050.

This legislation sets a price on carbon pollution for fossil fuel producers or importers. Proceeds from the carbon pollution fee are returned to the bottom 80 percent of households making less than $100,000 a year to offset them for any increase they might experience in increased energy costs as a result of this transition. For an average family of four, this will amount to a rebate of roughly $900 in 2017 and will grow to an annual rebate of $1,900 in 2030. It would only apply upstream, meaning at the oil refinery, coal mine, natural gas processing plant, or point of importation. It would apply to fewer than 3,000 of the largest fossil fuel polluters in this country.

EPA's existing authority to regulate carbon pollution, sources from powerplants, vehicles, and other sources is reaffirmed, and if the United States is not on track to meet its emissions reduction targets, the EPA shall issue new regulations to ensure that it does.

Importantly, based on lessons learned from the cap-and-trade law in California, a Federal interagency council will oversee the creation and distribution of a climate justice resiliency fund block grant program to States, territories, tribes, municipalities, counties, localities, and nonprofit community organizations. The council will provide $20 billion annually for these grants in communities that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change for important programs they are running.

This legislation strengthens our manufacturing sector through a border tariff adjustment mechanism which shields energy-intensive, trade-exposed industries such as steel, aluminum, glass, pulp and paper, from unfair international trade policies. The monies raised by the green tariff are used to help improve industrial energy efficiency.

Farmers receive dedicated funding through the USDA's Rural Energy for America Program to improve on farm energy efficiency and to adopt onsite renewable energy. The bill includes incentives for farmers to adopt no-till practices and creates an incentive program to encourage the adoption of sustainable fertilizer application practices.

Finally, the bill includes Federal electricity market reforms that reduce pollution, increase efficiency, and reduce costs by ensuring equitable grid access for demand response programs.

At the end of the day, the Congress of the United States is going to have to make some very important and fundamental decisions, and the most important is whether we believe in science. We can have many disagreements on many issues, but we should not have a disagreement about whether we base public policy on science rather than campaign contributions. That really is the issue we are dealing with right now.

We are in a critical moment in world history. Our planet is becoming warmer, sea levels are rising, and communities all over the world that are on seacoasts are being threatened. The ocean is being acidified to an unprecedented level, which has huge impacts in so many areas, including the ability of people to fish and gain nutrients from the ocean.

We are looking at unprecedented levels of heat waves in India, Pakistan, and Europe that have killed thousands of people. We are looking at forest fires on the west coast of that country that are unprecedented in terms of their duration and their ferocity.

So we have to make a decision about whether we stand with our children and our grandchildren or whether we stand with campaign contributors from the fossil fuel industry.

Climate change is real. Climate change is caused by human activity. Climate change is already causing devastating damage on this planet. Our job is now to stand with our children, to stand with our grandchildren, and to make certain that they have a planet that is healthy and that is habitable. That is what the legislation I am introducing will do.

By Mr. REID (for himself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 2397. A bill to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to make grants to States that extend or eliminate unexpired statutes of limitation applicable to laws involving child sexual abuse; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2397

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

SECTION 1. CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5101 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"TITLE III—GRANTS FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

"SEC. 301. FINDINGS.

''Congress finds that—

''(1) child sexual abuse is a pernicious crime perpetrated through threats of violence, intimidation, manipulation, and abuse of power;

''(2) due to the subversive nature of this crime, the average age of disclosure of incestuous child sexual abuse does not occur until a victim is over 25 years old;

''(3) because many State statutes of limitations applicable to laws involving child sexual abuse fail to give victims adequate time to come forward and report their abuse, numerous victims are unable to seek fair and just remediation against their abusers; and

''(4) due to the especially heinous nature of child sexual abuse, it is imperative that perpetrators of this crime are punished, prevented from reoffending, and victims have

the opportunity to see their abusers brought to justice.

"SEC. 302. DEFINITIONS.

''In this title—

''(1) the term 'eligible State' means a State or Indian tribe that, not later than September 30 of the preceding fiscal year does not have any statute of limitations applicable to laws involving child sexual abuse; and

''(2) the term 'Indian tribe' means a tribe identified in the list published by the Secretary of the Interior in the Federal Register pursuant to section 104 of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C. 479a–1).

"SEC. 303. GRANT PROGRAM.

''The Secretary, in consultation with the Attorney General, is authorized to make grants to eligible States for the purpose of assisting eligible States in developing, establishing, and operating programs designed to improve—

''(1) the assessment and investigation of suspected child sexual abuse cases, in a manner that limits additional trauma to the child and the family of the child;

''(2) the investigation and prosecution of cases of child sexual abuse; and

''(3) the assessment and investigation of cases involving children with disabilities or serious health-related problems who are suspected victims of child sexual abuse.

"SEC. 304. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

''There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this title $40,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply to any violation of a law involving child sexual abuse committed before the date of the enactment of this Act if the statute of limitations applicable to that law had not run as of the date of enactment of this Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 333—TO DIRECT THE SENATE LEGAL COUNSEL TO APPEAR AS AMICUS CURIAE IN THE NAME OF THE SENATE IN BANK MARKAZI, THE CENTRAL BANK OF IRAN V. DEBORAH D. PETERSON, ET AL. (S. CT.)

Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself and Mr. REID of Nevada) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 333

Whereas, in the case of *Bank Markazi, The Central Bank of Iran v. Deborah D. Peterson, et al.*, No. 14–770, pending in the Supreme Court of the United States, the constitutionality of section 502 of the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012, Pub. L. No. 112–158, 126 Stat. 1214, 1258 (2012), codified at 22 U.S.C. § 8772, has been placed in issue;

Whereas, pursuant to sections 703(c), 706(a), and 713(a) of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, 2 U.S.C. 288b(c), 288e(a), and 288*l*(a), the Senate may direct its counsel to appear as amicus curiae in the name of the Senate in any legal action in which the powers and responsibilities of Congress under the Constitution are placed in issue: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate Legal Counsel is directed to appear as amicus curiae on behalf of the Senate in the case of *Bank Markazi, The Central Bank of Iran v. Deborah D. Peterson, et al.*, to defend the constitutionality of section 502 of the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2922. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2250, making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

SA 2923. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2250, supra.

SA 2924. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. NELSON (for himself and Ms. AYOTTE)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 142, to require special packaging for liquid nicotine containers, and for other purposes.

SA 2925. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. NELSON (for himself and Ms. AYOTTE)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 142, supra.

SA 2926. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. FRANKEN (for himself and Mr. CORNYN)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 993, to increase public safety by facilitating collaboration among the criminal justice, juvenile justice, veterans treatment services, mental health treatment, and substance abuse systems.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2922. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2250, making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

That the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016 (Public Law 114-53) is amended by striking the date specified in section 106(3) and inserting ''December 16, 2015''.

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

SA 2923. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2250, making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; as follows:

To amend the title to read:

''Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016''.

SA 2924. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. NELSON (for himself and Ms. AYOTTE)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 142, to require special packaging for liquid nicotine containers, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. SPECIAL PACKAGING FOR LIQUID NICOTINE CONTAINERS.

(a) REQUIREMENT.—Notwithstanding section 2(f)(2) of the Federal Hazardous Substances Act (15 U.S.C. 1261(f)(2)) and section 3(a)(5) of the Consumer Product Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 2052(a)(5)), any nicotine provided in a liquid nicotine container sold, offered for sale, manufactured for sale, distributed in commerce, or imported into the United States shall be packaged in accordance with the standards provided in section 1700.15 of title 16, Code of Federal Regulations, as determined through testing in accordance with the method described in section 1700.20 of title 16, Code of Federal Regulations, and any subsequent changes to such sections adopted by the Commission.

(b) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit or otherwise affect the authority of the Secretary of Health and Human Services to regulate, issue guidance, or take action regarding the manufacture, marketing, sale, distribution, importation, or packaging, including child-resistant packaging, of nicotine, liquid nicotine, liquid nicotine containers, electronic cigarettes, electronic nicotine delivery systems or other similar products that contain or dispense liquid nicotine, or any other nicotine-related products, including—

(A) authority under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et seq.) and the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (Public Law 111–31) and the amendments made by such Act; and

(B) authority for the rulemaking entitled ''Deeming Tobacco Products to Be Subject to the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, as Amended by the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act; regulations on the Sale and Distribution of Tobacco Products and the Required Warning Statements for Tobacco Products'' (April 2014) (FDA–2014–N–0189), the rulemaking entitled ''Nicotine Exposure Warnings and Child-Resistant Packaging for Liquid Nicotine, Nicotine-Containing E-Liquid(s), and Other Tobacco Products'' (June 2015) (FDA–2015–N–1514), and subsequent actions by the Secretary regarding packaging of liquid nicotine containers.

(2) CONSULTATION.—If the Secretary of Health and Human Services adopts, maintains, enforces, or imposes or continues in effect any packaging requirement for liquid nicotine containers, including a child-resistant packaging requirement, the Secretary shall consult with the Commission, taking into consideration the expertise of the Commission in implementing and enforcing this Act and the Poison Prevention Packaging Act of 1970 (15 U.S.C. 1471 et seq.).

(c) APPLICABILITY.—Notwithstanding section 3(a)(5) of the Consumer Product Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 2052(a)(5)) and section 2(f)(2) of the Federal Hazardous Substances Act (15 U.S.C. 1261(f)(2)), the requirement of subsection (a) shall be treated as a standard for the special packaging of a household substance established under section 3(a) of the Poison Prevention Packaging Act of 1970 (15 U.S.C. 1472(a)).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COMMISSION.—The term ''Commission'' means the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

(2) LIQUID NICOTINE CONTAINER.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 2(f)(2) of the Federal Hazardous Substances Act (15 U.S.C. 1261(f)(2)) and section 3(a)(5) of the Consumer Product Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 2052(a)(5)), the term ''liquid nicotine container'' means a package (as defined in section 2 of the Poison Prevention Packaging Act of 1970 (15 U.S.C. 1471))—

(i) from which nicotine in a solution or other form is accessible through normal and foreseeable use by a consumer; and

(ii) that is used to hold soluble nicotine in any concentration.

(B) EXCLUSION.—The term ''liquid nicotine container'' does not include a sealed, prefilled, and disposable container of nicotine in a solution or other form in which such container is inserted directly into an electronic cigarette, electronic nicotine delivery system, or other similar product, if the nicotine in the container is inaccessible through customary or reasonably foreseeable handling or use, including reasonably foreseeable ingestion or other contact by children.

(3) NICOTINE.—The term ''nicotine'' means any form of the chemical nicotine, including any salt or complex, regardless of whether the chemical is naturally or synthetically derived.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 2925. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. NELSON (for himself and Ms. AYOTTE)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 142, to require special packaging for liquid nicotine containers, and for other purposes; as follows:

Amend the title so as to read: ''A bill to require special packaging for liquid nicotine containers, and for other purposes.''.

SA 2926. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. FRANKEN (for himself and Mr. CORNYN)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 993, to increase public safety by facilitating collaboration among the criminal justice, juvenile justice, veterans treatment services, mental health treatment, and substance abuse systems; as follows:

On page 26, line 24, strike ''$30,000,000'' and insert ''$18,000,000''.

On page 27, line 2, strike ''20 percent'' and insert ''28 percent''.

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 December 10, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 10, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 10, 2015, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''Independent South Sudan: A Failure of Leadership.''

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 10, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON REGULATORY AFFAIRS AND FEDERAL MANAGEMENT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 10, 2015, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Implementing Solutions: The Importance of Following Through on GAO and OIG Recommendations.''

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of Calendar Nos. 397 through 414 and all nominations on the Secretary's desk in the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Foreign Service, and Navy; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

IN THE MARINE CORPS

The following named officer for appointment to the grade of lieutenant general in the United States Marine Corps while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Lt. Gen. John E. Wissler

IN THE NAVY

The following named officer for appointment as the Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery and Surgeon General and for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 601 and 5137:

To be vice admiral

Rear Adm. Clinton F. Faison, III

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment as The Surgeon General, United States Army, and for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 601 and 3036:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Nadja Y. West

The following Army National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12211:

To be brigadier general

Col. Edward E. Hildreth, III

The following named officers for appointment to the grade indicated in the United States Army under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Colonel Jennifer G. Buckner
Colonel Sean A. Gainey
Colonel David T. Isaacson
Colonel Patrick B. Roberson

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following Air National Guard of the United States officers for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be brigadier general

Col. Blake A. Gettys
Col. Karen E. Mansfield

The following Air National Guard of the United States officers for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be brigadier general

Col. Todd M. Branden
Col. Mark A. Crosby
Col. Fermin A Rubio

The following Air National Guard of the United States officers for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be brigadier general

Col. David M. Bakos
Col. Vance C. Bateman
Col. Sandra L. Best
Col. Jeffrey C. Bozard
Col. William D. Bunch
Col. Rafael Carrero
Col. Larry K. Clark
Col. Kevin D. Clotfelter
Col. Marshall C. Collins
Col. James N. Cox
Col. Jason R. Cripps
Col. Christopher S. Croxton
Col. Francis N. Detorie
Col. Ruben Fernandez-Vera
Col. John T. Ferry
Col. John E. Flowers
Col. Michael J. Francis
Col. Vincent R. Franklin
Col. Clay L. Garrison
Col. Kevin J. Heer
Col. Dana A. Hessheimer
Col. Gene W. Hughes, Jr.
Col. James T. Johnson
Col. Gregory F. Jones
Col. Marshall L. Kjelvik
Col. James R. Kriesel
Col. Ronald S. Lambe
Col. Andrew J. MacDonald
Col. Stephen J. Maher
Col. Matthew J. Manifold
Col. Maren McAvoy
Col. Gregory S. McCreary
Col. Stephen B. Mehring
Col. Jessica Meyeraan
Col. Billy M. Nabors
Col. Jeffrey L. Newton
Col. Peter Nezamis
Col. Patrick R. Renwick
Col. Stephen M. Ryan
Col. Peter R. Schneider
Col. Gregory N. Schnulo
Col. Greg A. Semmel
Col. Ray M. Shepard
Col. Marc A. Sicard
Col. Paul R. Silvestri
Col. Christopher A. Stratmann
Col. Peter F. Sullivan, Jr.
Col. Tami S. Thompson
Col. Joseph B. Wilson
Col. Gregory S. Woodrow

The following Air National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Edward P. Maxwell

The following Air National Guard of the United States officers for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Robert C. Bolton
Brig. Gen. Charles W. Chappuis, Jr.
Brig. Gen. Dawne L. Deskins
Brig. Gen. Timothy L. Frye
Brig. Gen. Paul D. Jacobs
Brig. Gen. Mark E. Jannitto
Brig. Gen. Ronald W. Solberg
Brig. Gen. James K. Vogel
Brig. Gen. William L. Welsh
Brig. Gen. Wayne A. Zimmet

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. John D. Bansemer

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Russell A. Muncy

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Patricia N. Beyer

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Christopher W. Lentz

The following named officers for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Lee Ann T. Bennett
Col. Richard M. Casto
Col. Jonathan M. Ellis
Col. James J. Fontanella
Col. John P. Healy
Col. Daniel J. Heires
Col. Robert A. Huston
Col. William R Kountz, Jr.
Col. Albert V. Lupenski
Col. Tyler D. Otten
Col. Russell P. Reimer
Col. Harold E. Rogers, Jr.
Col. Tracey A. Siems

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment to the grade indicated in the United States Army under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. John C. Thomson, III

The following Army National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12211:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Sylvia R. Crockett

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Col. Kenneth T. Bibb, Jr.
Col. Angela M. Cadwell
Col. Martin A. Chapin
Col. James R. Cluff
Col. Charles S. Corcoran
Col. Sean M. Farrell
Col. Chad P. Franks
Col. Alexus G. Grynkewich
Col. Timothy D. Haugh
Col. Christopher D. Hill
Col. Eric T. Hill
Col. Samuel C. Hinote
Col. William G. Holt, II
Col. Linda S. Hurry
Col. Matthew C. Isler
Col. Kyle J. Kremer
Col. John C. Kubinec
Col. Douglas K. Lamberth
Col. Lance K. Landrum
Col. Jeannie M. Leavitt
Col. William J. Liguori, Jr.
Col. Michael J. Lutton
Col. Corey J. Martin
Col. Tom D. Miller
Col. Richard G. Moore, Jr.
Col. James D. Peccia, III
Col. Heather L. Pringle
Col. Michael J. Schmidt
Col. James R. Sears, Jr.
Col. Daniel L. Simpson
Col. Mark H. Slocum
Col. Robert S. Spalding, III
Col. William A. Spangenthal
Col. Edward W. Thomas Jr
Col. John T. Wilcox, II
Col. Michael P. Winkler

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

IN THE AIR FORCE

PN970 AIR FORCE nominations (105) beginning BRYAN K. ALLEN, and ending GARRICK H. YOKOE, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

IN THE ARMY

PN971 ARMY nomination of James D. Ferguson, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN972 ARMY nominations (8) beginning KELVIN L. BROWN, and ending PAUL L. WAGNER, II, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN973 ARMY nominations (3) beginning DAESOO LEE, and ending BRIAN D. RAY, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN974 ARMY nomination of Wayne W. Santos, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN975 ARMY nomination of Anthony J. Fadell, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN976 ARMY nomination of Ricardo Alonsojournet, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN977 ARMY nomination of Jeffrey M. Sloan, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN978 ARMY nominations (2) beginning ANDREW C. DILLON, and ending ANDRE R. HOLDER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN979 ARMY nomination of Rebecca R. Tomsyck, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN980 ARMY nomination of Everett S. P. Spain, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN981 ARMY nomination of Shane R. Reeves, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN982 ARMY nominations (5) beginning DAVID E. BENTZEL, and ending BRIAN U. T. KIM, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN983 ARMY nominations (4) beginning TERESA L. BRININGER, and ending RICHARD A. VILLARREAL, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN984 ARMY nominations (39) beginning KEVIN R. BASS, and ending D003940, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN985 ARMY nominations (19) beginning KIMBERLIE A. BIEVER, and ending PAMELA M. WULF, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN986 ARMY nominations (9) beginning DAVID BARRETT, and ending JENNIFER S. ZUCKER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN987 ARMY nominations (2) beginning DAVID W. LAWS, and ending JOHN E. SWANBERG, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN988 ARMY nomination of William A. Altmire, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN989 ARMY nomination of Jesus J. T. Nufable, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN990 ARMY nominations (6) beginning RUBEN BERMUDEZPAGAN, and ending TODD W. SCHAFFER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN991 ARMY nomination of Joshua A. Carlisle, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN992 ARMY nomination of William C. Moorhouse, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN993 ARMY nomination of Gregg T. Olsowy, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN994 ARMY nomination of Roger S. Giraud, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN995 ARMY nomination of Steven M. Wilke, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

IN THE COAST GUARD

PN997 COAST GUARD nominations (3) beginning CORINNA M. FLEISCHMANN, and ending KIMBERLY C. YOUNG-MCLEAR, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN998 COAST GUARD nominations (247) beginning MICHAEL S. ADAMS, JR., and ending JAMES R. ZOLL, JR., which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN999 COAST GUARD nominations (173) beginning JASON C. ALEKSAK, and ending YAMASHEKA Z. YOUNG-MCLEAR, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

IN THE FOREIGN SERVICE

PN72–5 FOREIGN SERVICE nomination of Daniel Sylvester Cronin, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 13, 2015.

PN877–2 FOREIGN SERVICE nomination of Derell Kennedo, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 21, 2015.

PN939 FOREIGN SERVICE nominations (119) beginning Steven Carl Aaberg, and ending Sandra M. Zuniga Guzman, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 10, 2015.

PN951–1 FOREIGN SERVICE nominations (3) beginning James F. Entwistle, and ending Daniel R. Russel, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

PN954 FOREIGN SERVICE nominations (102) beginning Christopher Volciak, and ending Edward L. Robinson, III, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

IN THE NAVY

PN996 NAVY nomination of Kenneth C. Collins, II, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2015.

NOMINATION DISCHARGED AND EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Environment and Public Works Committee be discharged from consideration of PN714 and the Senate proceed to consider the following nominations en bloc: PN714, Calendar Nos. 385, 392, and 426.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Richard Capel Howorth, of Mississippi, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2020; Cherry Ann Murray, of Kansas, to be Director of the Office of Science, Department of Energy; Eric Drake Eberhard, of Washington, to be a Member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation for a term expiring October 6, 2018; and Darryl L. DePriest, of Illinois, to be Chief Counsel for Advocacy, Small Business Administration.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the nominations en bloc?

If not, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Howorth, Murray, Eberhard, and DePriest nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Monday, December 14, at 5 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 393 through 396; that there be 30 minutes for debate on the Starzak nomination equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that following disposition of the nominations, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to any of the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the Record; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

CHILD NICOTINE POISONING PREVENTION ACT OF 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 35, S. 142.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 142) to require the Consumer Product Safety Commission to promulgate a rule to require child safety packaging for liquid nicotine containers, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

S. 142

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. CHILD SAFETY PACKAGING FOR LIQUID NICOTINE CONTAINERS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COMMISSION.—The term ''Commission'' means the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

(2) LIQUID NICOTINE CONTAINER.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ''liquid nicotine container'' means a consumer product, as defined in section 3(a)(5) of the Consumer Product Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 2052(a)(5)) notwithstanding subparagraph (B) of such section, that consists of a container that—

(i) has an opening from which nicotine in a solution or other form is accessible and can flow freely through normal and foreseeable use by a consumer; and

(ii) is used to hold soluble nicotine in any concentration.

(B) EXCLUSIONS.—The term ''liquid nicotine container'' does not include nicotine in a solution or other form in a sealed, pre-filled, disposable container inserted directly into an electronic cigarette or other similar device, so long as the nicotine in the container is inaccessible or cannot flow freely out of such container or electronic cigarette or other similar device through normal and foreseeable use by a consumer.

(3) NICOTINE.—The term ''nicotine'' means any form of the chemical nicotine, including any salt or complex, regardless of whether the chemical is naturally or synthetically derived.

(4) SPECIAL PACKAGING.—The term ''special packaging'' has the meaning given such term in section 2 of the Poison Prevention Packaging Act of 1970 (15 U.S.C. 1471).

(b) REQUIRED USE OF SPECIAL PACKAGING FOR LIQUID NICOTINE CONTAINERS.—

(1) RULEMAKING.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 3(a)(5)(B) of the Consumer Product Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 2052(a)(5)(B)) or section 2(f)(2) of the Federal Hazardous Substances Act (15 U.S.C. 1261(f)(2)), not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall promulgate a rule requiring special packaging for liquid nicotine containers.

(B) AMENDMENTS.—The Commission may promulgate such amendments to the rule promulgated under subparagraph (A) as the Commission considers appropriate.

(2) EXPEDITED PROCESS.—The Commission shall promulgate the rule under paragraph (1) in accordance with section 553 of title 5, United States Code.

(3) INAPPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN RULEMAKING REQUIREMENTS.—The following provisions shall not apply to a rulemaking under paragraph (1):

(A) Sections 7 and 9 of the Consumer Product Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 2056 and 2058).

(B) Section 3 of the Federal Hazardous Substances Act (15 U.S.C. 1262).

(C) Subsections (b) and (c) of section 3 of the Poison Prevention Packaging Act of 1970 (15 U.S.C. 1472).

(4) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit or diminish the authority of the Food and Drug Administration to regulate the manufacture, marketing, sale, or distribution of liquid nicotine, liquid nicotine containers, electronic cigarettes, or similar products that contain or dispense liquid nicotine.

(5) ENFORCEMENT.—A rule promulgated under paragraph (1) shall be treated as a standard applicable to a household substance established under section 3(a) of the Poison Prevention Packaging Act of 1970 (15 U.S.C. 1472(a)).

(c) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report detailing the rule and requirements promulgated under this Act and any enforcement actions taken thereunder.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute be withdrawn; that the Nelson substitute amendment be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be read three times and passed; that the amendment to the title be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The committee-reported substitute amendment was withdrawn.

The amendment (No. 2924) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. SPECIAL PACKAGING FOR LIQUID NICOTINE CONTAINERS.

(a) REQUIREMENT.—Notwithstanding section 2(f)(2) of the Federal Hazardous Substances Act (15 U.S.C. 1261(f)(2)) and section 3(a)(5) of the Consumer Product Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 2052(a)(5)), any nicotine provided in a liquid nicotine container sold, offered for sale, manufactured for sale, distributed in commerce, or imported into the United States shall be packaged in accordance with the standards provided in section 1700.15 of title 16, Code of Federal Regulations, as determined through testing in accordance with the method described in section 1700.20 of title 16, Code of Federal Regulations, and any subsequent changes to such sections adopted by the Commission.

(b) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit or otherwise affect the authority of the Secretary of Health and Human Services to regulate, issue guidance, or take action regarding the manufacture, marketing, sale, distribution, importation, or packaging, including child-resistant packaging, of nicotine, liquid nicotine, liquid nicotine containers, electronic cigarettes, electronic nicotine delivery systems or other similar products that contain or dispense liquid nicotine, or any other nicotine-related products, including—

(A) authority under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et seq.) and the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (Public Law 111–31) and the amendments made by such Act; and

(B) authority for the rulemaking entitled ''Deeming Tobacco Products to Be Subject to the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, as Amended by the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act; regulations on the Sale and Distribution of Tobacco Products and the Required Warning Statements for Tobacco Products'' (April 2014) (FDA–2014–N–0189), the rulemaking entitled ''Nicotine Exposure Warnings and Child-Resistant Packaging for Liquid Nicotine, Nicotine-Containing E-Liquid(s), and Other Tobacco Products'' (June 2015) (FDA–2015–N–1514), and subsequent actions by the Secretary regarding packaging of liquid nicotine containers.

(2) CONSULTATION.—If the Secretary of Health and Human Services adopts, maintains, enforces, or imposes or continues in effect any packaging requirement for liquid nicotine containers, including a child-resistant packaging requirement, the Secretary shall consult with the Commission, taking into consideration the expertise of the Commission in implementing and enforcing this Act and the Poison Prevention Packaging Act of 1970 (15 U.S.C. 1471 et seq.).

(c) APPLICABILITY.—Notwithstanding section 3(a)(5) of the Consumer Product Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 2052(a)(5)) and section 2(f)(2) of the Federal Hazardous Substances Act (15 U.S.C. 1261(f)(2)), the requirement of subsection (a) shall be treated as a standard for the special packaging of a household substance established under section 3(a) of the Poison Prevention Packaging Act of 1970 (15 U.S.C. 1472(a)).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COMMISSION.—The term ''Commission'' means the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

(2) LIQUID NICOTINE CONTAINER.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 2(f)(2) of the Federal Hazardous Substances Act (15 U.S.C. 1261(f)(2)) and section 3(a)(5) of the Consumer Product Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 2052(a)(5)), the term ''liquid nicotine container'' means a package (as defined in section 2 of the Poison Prevention Packaging Act of 1970 (15 U.S.C. 1471))—

(i) from which nicotine in a solution or other form is accessible through normal and foreseeable use by a consumer; and

(ii) that is used to hold soluble nicotine in any concentration.

(B) EXCLUSION.—The term ''liquid nicotine container'' does not include a sealed, prefilled, and disposable container of nicotine in a solution or other form in which such container is inserted directly into an electronic cigarette, electronic nicotine delivery system, or other similar product, if the nicotine in the container is inaccessible through customary or reasonably foreseeable handling or use, including reasonably foreseeable ingestion or other contact by children.

(3) NICOTINE.—The term ''nicotine'' means any form of the chemical nicotine, including any salt or complex, regardless of whether the chemical is naturally or synthetically derived.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The bill (S. 142), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

The amendment (No. 2925) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the title)

Amend the title so as to read: ''A bill to require special packaging for liquid nicotine containers, and for other purposes.''.

COMPREHENSIVE JUSTICE AND MENTAL HEALTH ACT OF 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 62, S. 993.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 993) to increase public safety by facilitating collaboration among the criminal justice, juvenile justice, veterans treatment services, mental health treatment, and substance abuse systems.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the Franken amendment be agreed to.

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

The amendment (No. 2926) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To modify the authorization of appropriations)

On page 26, line 24, strike ''$30,000,000'' and insert ''$18,000,000''.

On page 27, line 2, strike ''20 percent'' and insert ''28 percent''.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the bill, as amended, be read a third time, and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill, as amended.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall it pass?

The bill (S. 993), as amended, was passed, as follows:

S. 993

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 ''Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title.
Sec. 2. Table of contents.
Sec. 3. Findings.
Sec. 4. Sequential intercept model.
Sec. 5. Veterans treatment courts.
Sec. 6. Prison and jails.
Sec. 7. Allowable uses.
Sec. 8. Law enforcement training.
Sec. 9. Federal law enforcement training.
Sec. 10. GAO report.
Sec. 11. Evidence based practices.
Sec. 12. Transparency, program accountability, and enhancement of local authority.
Sec. 13. Grant accountability.
Sec. 14. Reauthorization of appropriations.

SEC. 3. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) An estimated 2,000,000 individuals with serious mental illnesses are booked into jails each year, resulting in prevalence rates of serious mental illness in jails that are 3 to 6 times higher than in the general population. An even greater number of individuals who are detained in jails each year have mental health problems that do not rise to the level of a serious mental illness but may still require a resource-intensive response.

(2) Adults with mental illnesses cycle through jails more often than individuals without mental illnesses, and tend to stay longer (including before trial, during trial, and after sentencing).

(3) According to estimates, almost ¾ of jail detainees with serious mental illnesses have co-occurring substance use disorders, and individuals with mental illnesses are also much more likely to have serious physical health needs.

(4) Among individuals under probation supervision, individuals with mental disorders are nearly twice as likely as other individuals to have their community sentence revoked, furthering their involvement in the criminal justice system. Reasons for revocation may be directly or indirectly related to an individual's mental disorder.

SEC. 4. SEQUENTIAL INTERCEPT MODEL.

(a) REDESIGNATION.—Section 2991 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797aa) is amended by redesignating subsection (i) as subsection (n).

(b) SEQUENTIAL INTERCEPT MODEL.—Section 2991 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797aa) is amended by inserting after subsection (h) the following:

''(i) SEQUENTIAL INTERCEPT GRANTS.—

''(1) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term 'eligible entity' means a State, unit of local government, Indian tribe, or tribal organization.

''(2) AUTHORIZATION.—The Attorney General may make grants under this subsection to an eligible entity for sequential intercept mapping and implementation in accordance with paragraph (3).

''(3) SEQUENTIAL INTERCEPT MAPPING; IMPLEMENTATION.—An eligible entity that receives a grant under this subsection may use funds for—

''(A) sequential intercept mapping, which—

''(i) shall consist of—

''(I) convening mental health and criminal justice stakeholders to—

''(aa) develop a shared understanding of the flow of justice-involved individuals with mental illnesses through the criminal justice system; and

''(bb) identify opportunities for improved collaborative responses to the risks and needs of individuals described in item (aa); and

''(II) developing strategies to address gaps in services and bring innovative and effective programs to scale along multiple intercepts, including—

''(aa) emergency and crisis services;

''(bb) specialized police-based responses;

''(cc) court hearings and disposition alternatives;

''(dd) reentry from jails and prisons; and

''(ee) community supervision, treatment and support services; and

''(ii) may serve as a starting point for the development of strategic plans to achieve positive public health and safety outcomes; and

''(B) implementation, which shall—

''(i) be derived from the strategic plans described in subparagraph (A)(ii); and

''(ii) consist of—

''(I) hiring and training personnel;

''(II) identifying the eligible entity's target population;

''(III) providing services and supports to reduce unnecessary penetration into the criminal justice system;

''(IV) reducing recidivism;

''(V) evaluating the impact of the eligible entity's approach; and

''(VI) planning for the sustainability of effective interventions.''.

SEC. 5. VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS.

Section 2991 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797aa) is amended by inserting after subsection (i), as so added by section 4, the following:

''(j) ASSISTING VETERANS.—

''(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

''(A) PEER TO PEER SERVICES OR PROGRAMS.—The term 'peer to peer services or programs' means services or programs that connect qualified veterans with other veterans for the purpose of providing support and mentorship to assist qualified veterans in obtaining treatment, recovery, stabilization, or rehabilitation.

''(B) QUALIFIED VETERAN.—The term 'qualified veteran' means a preliminarily qualified offender who—

''(i) served on active duty in any branch of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard or Reserves; and

''(ii) was discharged or released from such service under conditions other than dishonorable.

''(C) VETERANS TREATMENT COURT PROGRAM.—The term 'veterans treatment court program' means a court program involving collaboration among criminal justice, veterans, and mental health and substance abuse agencies that provides qualified veterans with—

''(i) intensive judicial supervision and case management, which may include random and frequent drug testing where appropriate;

''(ii) a full continuum of treatment services, including mental health services, substance abuse services, medical services, and services to address trauma;

''(iii) alternatives to incarceration; and

''(iv) other appropriate services, including housing, transportation, mentoring, employment, job training, education, and assistance in applying for and obtaining available benefits.

''(2) VETERANS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, may award grants under this subsection to applicants to establish or expand—

''(i) veterans treatment court programs;

''(ii) peer to peer services or programs for qualified veterans;

''(iii) practices that identify and provide treatment, rehabilitation, legal, transitional, and other appropriate services to qualified veterans who have been incarcerated; and

''(iv) training programs to teach criminal justice, law enforcement, corrections, mental health, and substance abuse personnel how to identify and appropriately respond to incidents involving qualified veterans.

''(B) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this subsection, the Attorney General shall give priority to applications that—

''(i) demonstrate collaboration between and joint investments by criminal justice, mental health, substance abuse, and veterans service agencies;

''(ii) promote effective strategies to identify and reduce the risk of harm to qualified veterans and public safety; and

''(iii) propose interventions with empirical support to improve outcomes for qualified veterans.''.

SEC. 6. PRISON AND JAILS.

Section 2991 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797aa) is amended by inserting after subsection (j), as so added by section 5, the following:

''(k) CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES.—

''(1) DEFINITIONS.—

''(A) CORRECTIONAL FACILITY.—The term 'correctional facility' means a jail, prison, or other detention facility used to house people who have been arrested, detained, held, or convicted by a criminal justice agency or a court.

''(B) ELIGIBLE INMATE.—The term 'eligible inmate' means an individual who—

''(i) is being held, detained, or incarcerated in a correctional facility; and

''(ii) manifests obvious signs of a mental illness or has been diagnosed by a qualified mental health professional as having a mental illness.

''(2) CORRECTIONAL FACILITY GRANTS.—The Attorney General may award grants to applicants to enhance the capabilities of a correctional facility—

''(A) to identify and screen for eligible inmates;

''(B) to plan and provide—

''(i) initial and periodic assessments of the clinical, medical, and social needs of inmates; and

''(ii) appropriate treatment and services that address the mental health and substance abuse needs of inmates;

''(C) to develop, implement, and enhance—

''(i) post-release transition plans for eligible inmates that, in a comprehensive manner, coordinate health, housing, medical, employment, and other appropriate services and public benefits;

''(ii) the availability of mental health care services and substance abuse treatment services; and

''(iii) alternatives to solitary confinement and segregated housing and mental health screening and treatment for inmates placed in solitary confinement or segregated housing; and

''(D) to train each employee of the correctional facility to identify and appropriately respond to incidents involving inmates with mental health or co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders.''.

SEC. 7. ALLOWABLE USES.

Section 2991(b)(5)(I) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797aa(b)(5)(I)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(v) TEAMS ADDRESSING FREQUENT USERS OF CRISIS SERVICES.—Multidisciplinary teams that—

''(I) coordinate, implement, and administer community-based crisis responses and long-term plans for frequent users of crisis services;

''(II) provide training on how to respond appropriately to the unique issues involving frequent users of crisis services for public service personnel, including criminal justice, mental health, substance abuse, emergency room, healthcare, law enforcement, corrections, and housing personnel;

''(III) develop or support alternatives to hospital and jail admissions for frequent users of crisis services that provide treatment, stabilization, and other appropriate supports in the least restrictive, yet appropriate, environment; and

''(IV) develop protocols and systems among law enforcement, mental health, substance abuse, housing, corrections, and emergency medical service operations to provide coordinated assistance to frequent users of crisis services.''.

SEC. 8. LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING.

Section 2991(h) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797aa(h)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by adding at the end the following:

''(F) ACADEMY TRAINING.—To provide support for academy curricula, law enforcement officer orientation programs, continuing education training, and other programs that teach law enforcement personnel how to identify and respond to incidents involving persons with mental health disorders or co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders.''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) PRIORITY CONSIDERATION.—The Attorney General, in awarding grants under this subsection, shall give priority to programs that law enforcement personnel and members of the mental health and substance abuse professions develop and administer cooperatively.''.

SEC. 9. FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall provide direction and guidance for the following:

(1) TRAINING PROGRAMS.—Programs that offer specialized and comprehensive training, in procedures to identify and appropriately respond to incidents in which the unique needs of individuals who have a mental illness are involved, to first responders and tactical units of—

(A) Federal law enforcement agencies; and

(B) other Federal criminal justice agencies such as the Bureau of Prisons, the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, and other agencies that the Attorney General determines appropriate.

(2) IMPROVED TECHNOLOGY.—The establishment of, or improvement of existing, computerized information systems to provide timely information to employees of Federal law enforcement agencies, and Federal criminal justice agencies to improve the response of such employees to situations involving individuals who have a mental illness.

SEC. 10. GAO REPORT.

No later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States, in coordination with the Attorney General, shall submit to Congress a report on—

(1) the practices that Federal first responders, tactical units, and corrections officers are trained to use in responding to individuals with mental illness;

(2) procedures to identify and appropriately respond to incidents in which the unique needs of individuals who have a mental illness are involved, to Federal first responders and tactical units;

(3) the application of evidence-based practices in criminal justice settings to better address individuals with mental illnesses; and

(4) recommendations on how the Department of Justice can expand and improve information sharing and dissemination of best practices.

SEC. 11. EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICES.

Section 2991(c) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797aa(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3), by striking ''or'' at the end;

(2) by redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (6); and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (3), the following:

''(4) propose interventions that have been shown by empirical evidence to reduce recidivism;

''(5) when appropriate, use validated assessment tools to target preliminarily qualified offenders with a moderate or high risk of recidivism and a need for treatment and services; or''.

SEC. 12. TRANSPARENCY, PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY, AND ENHANCEMENT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2991(a) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797aa(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (7)—

(A) in the heading, by striking ''MENTAL ILLNESS'' and inserting ''MENTAL ILLNESS; MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER''; and

(B) by striking ''term 'mental illness' means'' and inserting ''terms 'mental illness' and 'mental health disorder' mean''; and

(2) by striking paragraph (9) and inserting the following:

''(9) PRELIMINARILY QUALIFIED OFFENDER.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'preliminarily qualified offender' means an adult or juvenile accused of an offense who—

''(i)(I) previously or currently has been diagnosed by a qualified mental health professional as having a mental illness or co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorders;

''(II) manifests obvious signs of mental illness or co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorders during arrest or confinement or before any court; or

''(III) in the case of a veterans treatment court provided under subsection (i), has been diagnosed with, or manifests obvious signs of, mental illness or a substance abuse disorder or co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorder;

''(ii) has been unanimously approved for participation in a program funded under this section by, when appropriate—

''(I) the relevant—

''(aa) prosecuting attorney;

''(bb) defense attorney;

''(cc) probation or corrections official; and

''(dd) judge; and

''(II) a representative from the relevant mental health agency described in subsection (b)(5)(B)(i);

''(iii) has been determined, by each person described in clause (ii) who is involved in approving the adult or juvenile for participation in a program funded under this section, to not pose a risk of violence to any person in the program, or the public, if selected to participate in the program; and

''(iv) has not been charged with or convicted of—

''(I) any sex offense (as defined in section 111 of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (42 U.S.C. 16911)) or any offense relating to the sexual exploitation of children; or

''(II) murder or assault with intent to commit murder.

''(B) DETERMINATION.—In determining whether to designate a defendant as a preliminarily qualified offender, the relevant prosecuting attorney, defense attorney, probation or corrections official, judge, and mental health or substance abuse agency representative shall take into account—

''(i) whether the participation of the defendant in the program would pose a substantial risk of violence to the community;

''(ii) the criminal history of the defendant and the nature and severity of the offense for which the defendant is charged;

''(iii) the views of any relevant victims to the offense;

''(iv) the extent to which the defendant would benefit from participation in the program;

''(v) the extent to which the community would realize cost savings because of the defendant's participation in the program; and

''(vi) whether the defendant satisfies the eligibility criteria for program participation unanimously established by the relevant prosecuting attorney, defense attorney, probation or corrections official, judge and mental health or substance abuse agency representative.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 2927(2) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797s–6(2)) is amended by striking ''has the meaning given that term in section 2991(a).'' and inserting ''means an offense that—

''(A) does not have as an element the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another; or

''(B) is not a felony that by its nature involves a substantial risk that physical force against the person or property of another may be used in the course of committing the offense.''.

SEC. 13. GRANT ACCOUNTABILITY.

Section 2991 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797aa) is amended by inserting after subsection (k), as so added by section 6, the following:

''(l) ACCOUNTABILITY.—All grants awarded by the Attorney General under this section shall be subject to the following accountability provisions:

''(1) AUDIT REQUIREMENT.—

''(A) DEFINITION.—In this paragraph, the term 'unresolved audit finding' means a finding in the final audit report of the Inspector General of the Department of Justice that the audited grantee has utilized grant funds for an unauthorized expenditure or otherwise unallowable cost that is not closed or resolved within 12 months from the date when the final audit report is issued.

''(B) AUDITS.—Beginning in the first fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this subsection, and in each fiscal year thereafter, the Inspector General of the Department of Justice shall conduct audits of recipients of grants under this section to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of funds by grantees. The Inspector General shall determine the appropriate number of grantees to be audited each year.

''(C) MANDATORY EXCLUSION.—A recipient of grant funds under this section that is found to have an unresolved audit finding shall not be eligible to receive grant funds under this section during the first 2 fiscal years beginning after the end of the 12-month period described in subparagraph (A).

''(D) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this section, the Attorney General shall give priority to eligible applicants that did not have an unresolved audit finding during the 3 fiscal years before submitting an application for a grant under this section.

''(E) REIMBURSEMENT.—If an entity is awarded grant funds under this section during the 2-fiscal-year period during which the entity is barred from receiving grants under subparagraph (C), the Attorney General shall—

''(i) deposit an amount equal to the amount of the grant funds that were improperly awarded to the grantee into the General Fund of the Treasury; and

''(ii) seek to recoup the costs of the repayment to the fund from the grant recipient that was erroneously awarded grant funds.

''(2) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION REQUIREMENTS.—

''(A) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this paragraph and the grant programs under this part, the term 'nonprofit organization' means an organization that is described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of such Code.

''(B) PROHIBITION.—The Attorney General may not award a grant under this part to a nonprofit organization that holds money in offshore accounts for the purpose of avoiding paying the tax described in section 511(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

''(C) DISCLOSURE.—Each nonprofit organization that is awarded a grant under this section and uses the procedures prescribed in regulations to create a rebuttable presumption of reasonableness for the compensation of its officers, directors, trustees, and key employees, shall disclose to the Attorney General, in the application for the grant, the process for determining such compensation, including the independent persons involved in reviewing and approving such compensation, the comparability data used, and contemporaneous substantiation of the deliberation and decision. Upon request, the Attorney General shall make the information disclosed under this subparagraph available for public inspection.

''(3) CONFERENCE EXPENDITURES.—

''(A) LIMITATION.—No amounts made available to the Department of Justice under this section may be used by the Attorney General, or by any individual or entity awarded discretionary funds through a cooperative agreement under this section, to host or support any expenditure for conferences that uses more than $20,000 in funds made available by the Department of Justice, unless the head of the relevant agency or department, provides prior written authorization that the funds may be expended to host the conference.

''(B) WRITTEN APPROVAL.—Written approval under subparagraph (A) shall include a written estimate of all costs associated with the conference, including the cost of all food, beverages, audio-visual equipment, honoraria for speakers, and entertainment.

''(C) REPORT.—The Deputy Attorney General shall submit an annual report to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives on all conference expenditures approved under this paragraph.

''(4) ANNUAL CERTIFICATION.—Beginning in the first fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Attorney General shall submit, to the Committee

on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, an annual certification—

''(A) indicating whether—

''(i) all audits issued by the Office of the Inspector General under paragraph (1) have been completed and reviewed by the appropriate Assistant Attorney General or Director;

''(ii) all mandatory exclusions required under paragraph (1)(C) have been issued; and

''(iii) all reimbursements required under paragraph (1)(E) have been made; and

''(B) that includes a list of any grant recipients excluded under paragraph (1) from the previous year.

''(m) PREVENTING DUPLICATIVE GRANTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Before the Attorney General awards a grant to an applicant under this section, the Attorney General shall compare potential grant awards with other grants awarded under this Act to determine if duplicate grant awards are awarded for the same purpose.

''(2) REPORT.—If the Attorney General awards duplicate grants to the same applicant for the same purpose the Attorney General shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report that includes—

''(A) a list of all duplicate grants awarded, including the total dollar amount of any duplicate grants awarded; and

''(B) the reason the Attorney General awarded the duplicate grants.''.

SEC. 14. REAUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Subsection (n) of section 2991 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797aa), as redesignated by section 4(a), is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) $18,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020.''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) LIMITATION.—Not more than 28 percent of the funds authorized to be appropriated under this section may be used for purposes described in subsection (j) (relating to veterans).''.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I finally ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

INDIAN TRIBAL ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-DETERMINATION ACT AMENDMENTS OF 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 242, S. 209.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 209) to amend the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act of 2005, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Barrasso amendment No. 2714 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 amendment (No. 2714) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in the RECORD of October 20, 2015, under ''Text of Amendments.'')

The bill (S. 209), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

CHURCH PLAN CLARIFICATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be discharged from further consideration of S. 2308 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2308) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify the treatment of church pension plans, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 2308) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2308

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 ''Church Plan Clarification Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. CHURCH PLAN CLARIFICATION.

(a) APPLICATION OF CONTROLLED GROUP RULES TO CHURCH PLANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 414(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(A) by striking ''For purposes'' and inserting the following:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), for purposes'', and

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

''(2) SPECIAL RULES RELATING TO CHURCH PLANS.—

''(A) GENERAL RULE.—Except as provided in subparagraphs (B) and (C), for purposes of this subsection and subsection (m), an organization that is otherwise eligible to participate in a church plan shall not be aggregated with another such organization and treated as a single employer with such other organization for a plan year beginning in a taxable year unless—

''(i) one such organization provides (directly or indirectly) at least 80 percent of the operating funds for the other organization during the preceding tax year of the recipient organization, and

''(ii) there is a degree of common management or supervision between the organizations such that the organization providing the operating funds is directly involved in the day-to-day operations of the other organization.

''(B) NONQUALIFIED CHURCH-CONTROLLED ORGANIZATIONS.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), for purposes of this subsection and subsection (m), an organization that is a nonqualified church-controlled organization shall be aggregated with 1 or more other nonqualified church-controlled organizations, or with an organization that is not exempt from tax under section 501, and treated as a single employer with such other organization, if at least 80 percent of the directors or trustees of such other organization are either representatives of, or directly or indirectly controlled by, such nonqualified church-controlled organization. For purposes of this subparagraph, the term 'nonqualified church-controlled organization' means a church-controlled tax-exempt organization described in section 501(c)(3) that is not a qualified church-controlled organization (as defined in section 3121(w)(3)(B)).

''(C) PERMISSIVE AGGREGATION AMONG CHURCH-RELATED ORGANIZATIONS.—The church or convention or association of churches with which an organization described in subparagraph (A) is associated (within the meaning of subsection (e)(3)(D)), or an organization designated by such church or convention or association of churches, may elect to treat such organizations as a single employer for a plan year. Such election, once made, shall apply to all succeeding plan years unless revoked with notice provided to the Secretary in such manner as the Secretary shall prescribe.

''(D) PERMISSIVE DISAGGREGATION OF CHURCH-RELATED ORGANIZATIONS.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), in the case of a church plan, an employer may elect to treat churches (as defined in section 403(b)(12)(B)) separately from entities that are not churches (as so defined), without regard to whether such entities maintain separate church plans. Such election, once made, shall apply to all succeeding plan years unless revoked with notice provided to the Secretary in such manner as the Secretary shall prescribe.''.

(2) CLARIFICATION RELATING TO APPLICATION OF ANTI-ABUSE RULE.—The rule of 26 CFR 1.414(c)–5(f) shall continue to apply to each paragraph of section 414(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended by paragraph (1).

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by paragraph (1) shall apply to years beginning before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) APPLICATION OF CONTRIBUTION AND FUNDING LIMITATIONS TO 403(b) GRANDFATHERED DEFINED BENEFIT PLANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 251(e)(5) of the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982 (Public Law 97–248), is amended—

(A) by striking ''403(b)(2)'' and inserting ''403(b)'', and

(B) by inserting before the period at the end the following: '', and shall be subject to the applicable limitations of section 415(b) of such Code as if it were a defined benefit plan under section 401(a) of such Code (and not to the limitations of section 415(c) of such Code).''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to years beginning before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) AUTOMATIC ENROLLMENT BY CHURCH PLANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—This subsection shall supersede any law of a State that relates to wage, salary, or payroll payment, collection, deduction, garnishment, assignment, or

withholding which would directly or indirectly prohibit or restrict the inclusion in any church plan (as defined in section 414(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) of an automatic contribution arrangement.

(2) DEFINITION OF AUTOMATIC CONTRIBUTION ARRANGEMENT.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ''automatic contribution arrangement'' means an arrangement—

(A) under which a participant may elect to have the plan sponsor or the employer make payments as contributions under the plan on behalf of the participant, or to the participant directly in cash,

(B) under which a participant is treated as having elected to have the plan sponsor or the employer make such contributions in an amount equal to a uniform percentage of compensation provided under the plan until the participant specifically elects not to have such contributions made (or specifically elects to have such contributions made at a different percentage), and

(C) under which the notice and election requirements of paragraph (3), and the investment requirements of paragraph (4), are satisfied.

(3) NOTICE REQUIREMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The plan sponsor of, or plan administrator or employer maintaining, an automatic contribution arrangement shall, within a reasonable period before the first day of each plan year, provide to each participant to whom the arrangement applies for such plan year notice of the participant's rights and obligations under the arrangement which—

(i) is sufficiently accurate and comprehensive to apprise the participant of such rights and obligations, and

(ii) is written in a manner calculated to be understood by the average participant to whom the arrangement applies.

(B) ELECTION REQUIREMENTS.—A notice shall not be treated as meeting the requirements of subparagraph (A) with respect to a participant unless—

(i) the notice includes an explanation of the participant's right under the arrangement not to have elective contributions made on the participant's behalf (or to elect to have such contributions made at a different percentage),

(ii) the participant has a reasonable period of time, after receipt of the explanation described in clause (i) and before the first elective contribution is made, to make such election, and

(iii) the notice explains how contributions made under the arrangement will be invested in the absence of any investment election by the participant.

(4) DEFAULT INVESTMENT.—If no affirmative investment election has been made with respect to any automatic contribution arrangement, contributions to such arrangement shall be invested in a default investment selected with the care, skill, prudence, and diligence that a prudent person selecting an investment option would use.

(5) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This subsection shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) ALLOW CERTAIN PLAN TRANSFERS AND MERGERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 414 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(z) CERTAIN PLAN TRANSFERS AND MERGERS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Under rules prescribed by the Secretary, except as provided in paragraph (2), no amount shall be includible in gross income by reason of—

''(A) a transfer of all or a portion of the accrued benefit of a participant or beneficiary, whether or not vested, from a church plan that is a plan described in section 401(a) or an annuity contract described in section 403(b) to an annuity contract described in section 403(b), if such plan and annuity contract are both maintained by the same church or convention or association of churches,

''(B) a transfer of all or a portion of the accrued benefit of a participant or beneficiary from an annuity contract described in section 403(b) to a church plan that is a plan described in section 401(a) or an annuity contract described in section 403(b), if such plan and annuity contract are both maintained by the same church or convention or association of churches, or

''(C) a merger of a church plan that is a plan described in section 401(a), or an annuity contract described in section 403(b) with an annuity contract described in section 403(b), if such plan and annuity contract are both maintained by the same church or convention or association of churches.

''(2) LIMITATION.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to a transfer or merger unless the participant's or beneficiary's total accrued benefit immediately after the transfer or merger is equal to or greater than the participant's or beneficiary's total accrued benefit immediately before the transfer or merger, and such total accrued benefit is nonforfeitable after the transfer or merger.

''(3) QUALIFICATION.—A plan or annuity contract shall not fail to be considered to be described in sections 401(a) or 403(b) merely because such plan or annuity contract engages in a transfer or merger described in this subsection.

''(4) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subsection:

''(A) CHURCH OR CONVENTION OR ASSOCIATION OF CHURCHES.—The term 'church or convention or association of churches' includes an organization described in subparagraph (A) or (B)(ii) of subsection (e)(3).

''(B) ANNUITY CONTRACT.—The term 'annuity contract' includes a custodial account described in section 403(b)(7) and a retirement income account described in section 403(b)(9).

''(C) ACCRUED BENEFIT.—The term 'accrued benefit' means—

''(i) in the case of a defined benefit plan, the employee's accrued benefit determined under the plan, and

''(ii) in the case of a plan other than a defined benefit plan, the balance of the employee's account under the plan.''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this subsection shall apply to transfers or mergers occurring after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(e) INVESTMENTS BY CHURCH PLANS IN COLLECTIVE TRUSTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of—

(A) a church plan (as defined in section 414(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986), including a plan described in section 401(a) of such Code and a retirement income account described in section 403(b)(9) of such Code, and

(B) an organization described in section 414(e)(3)(A) of such Code the principal purpose or function of which is the administration of such a plan or account,

the assets of such plan, account, or organization (including any assets otherwise permitted to be commingled for investment purposes with the assets of such a plan, account, or organization) may be invested in a group trust otherwise described in Internal Revenue Service Revenue Ruling 81–100 (as modified by Internal Revenue Service Revenue Rulings 2004–67, 2011–1, and 2014–24), or any subsequent revenue ruling that supersedes or modifies such revenue ruling, without adversely affecting the tax status of the group trust, such plan, account, or organization, or any other plan or trust that invests in the group trust.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This subsection shall apply to investments made after the date of the enactment of this Act.

PHYLLIS E. GALANTI ARBORETUM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2693 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2693) to designate the arboretum at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond, Virginia, as the ''Phyllis E. Galanti Arboretum.''

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 (H.R. 2693) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

FORECLOSURE RELIEF AND EXTENSION FOR SERVICEMEMBERS ACT OF 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 2393, submitted earlier today by Senator WHITEHOUSE.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2393) to extend temporarily the extended period of protection for members of uniformed services relating to mortgages, mortgage foreclosure, and eviction, 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 with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (S. 2393) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2393

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 ''Foreclosure Relief and Extension for Servicemembers Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF EXTENDED PERIOD OF PROTECTIONS FOR MEMBERS OF UNIFORMED SERVICES RELATING TO MORTGAGES, MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE, AND EVICTION.

Section 710(d) of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–154; 50 U.S.C. 3953 note) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''December 31, 2015'' and inserting ''December 31, 2017''; and

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking ''January 1, 2016'' and inserting ''January 1, 2018''.

DIRECTING SENATE LEGAL COUNSEL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 333, submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 333) to direct the Senate Legal Counsel to appear as amicus curiae in the name of the Senate in Bank Markazi, The Central Bank of Iran v. Deborah D. Peterson, et al. (S. Ct.)

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the Supreme Court has taken up a case presenting the question whether a provision of the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012, which provides terrorism victims in the case of Peterson v. Islamic Republic of Iran, Case No. 10 Civ. 4518, filed in the Southern District of New York, with the right, notwithstanding any other law, to obtain money damages for existing judgments against Iran from certain Iranian bonds held in the United States, violates the separation of powers.

The plaintiffs here are victims and families of victims of Iran-sponsored terrorist attacks, including the 1983 Beirut Marine barracks bombing and the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing, who hold billions of dollars in unpaid compensatory damages judgments against Iran. In 2010, they initiated an action in Federal court seeking turnover of $1.75 billion in bond assets held by Citibank in New York, which through two foreign intermediary banks were ultimately owned by Bank Markazi, the Central Bank of Iran, which is wholly owned by the Iranian Government.

Plaintiffs argued they were entitled to the assets under the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002, TRIA, which permits the satisfaction of terrorism judgments from ''the blocked assets of any agency or instrumentality of th[e] terrorist party.'' Pub. L. No. 107–297, § 201(a), 116 Stat. 2322, 2337. Bank Markazi argued the assets were not subject to execution under TRIA because they were held on behalf of intermediaries and therefore, under controlling state law, those assets could not be considered Iran's property.

Against that backdrop and with plaintiffs' motion for seeking execution pending, Congress enacted section 502 of the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012. 22 U.S.C. § 8772. That statute identified plaintiffs' case by name and docket number and directed that, ''notwithstanding any other provision of law'' the assets ''shall be subject to execution or attachment in aid of execution in order to satisfy any judgment to the extent of any compensatory damages awarded against Iran.'' 22 U.S.C. § 8772(a)(1), (b). It also expressly disclaimed any effect on ''any [other] proceedings.'' 22 U.S.C. § 8772(c)(1). Before permitting execution against the assets, the statute required the court to determine both whether Iran holds title or interest in the assets and whether any ''other person possesses a constitutionally protected interest in the assets.'' 22 U.S.C. § 8772(a)(2).

Bank Markazi challenged section 502 as unconstitutional for violating the separation of powers between the legislative and judicial branches explicated in United States v. Klein, 80 U.S. (13 Wall.) 128 (1871), by effectively dictating the outcome of a single case. After making the statutory determinations that Iran and only Iran held a beneficial interest in the assets, the district court rejected Bank Markazi's constitutional challenge. Peterson v. Islamic Republic of Iran, slip op (S.D.N.Y. March 13, 2013), 2013 WL 1155576. The court, noting it was required to determine whether Iran holds title or interest in the assets, as well as whether any other party holds a protected interest in the assets, held that ''[t]he statute does not itself 'find' turnover required; such determination is specifically left to the Court.'' Id. at 31.

On appeal, a unanimous Second Circuit panel affirmed. Peterson v. Islamic Republic of Iran, 758 F.3d 185 (2d Cir. 2014). The appellate court noted that ''while Klein illustrates that Congress may not 'usurp[] the adjudicative function assigned to the federal courts,' later cases have explained that Congress may 'chang[e] the law applicable to pending cases,' even when the result under the revised law is clear.'' Id. at 191 (citations omitted).

Bank Markazi filed a petition for certiorari with the Supreme Court. After calling for and receiving the views of the United States Solicitor General, who filed an opposition to certiorari defending the constitutionality of section 502, the Supreme Court granted certiorari.

Title VII of the Ethics in Government Act authorizes the Senate to appear as an amicus curiae in any legal action in which the powers and responsibilities of the Congress under the Constitution are placed in issue. Appearance as an amicus curiae in this case would enable the Senate to respond to Bank Markazi's contention that this law infringes on the judiciary's constitutional power to decide cases and controversies and to present to the Court the basis for the Senate's conviction that the law is consistent with the Constitution.

This resolution would authorize the Senate legal counsel to appear in this case in the Senate's name as amicus curiae to support the constitutionality of the statute.

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. 333) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

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

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 3 p.m. on Monday, December 14; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; finally, that at 5 p.m., the Senate then proceed to executive session as under the previous order.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2015, AT 3 P.M.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:32 p.m., adjourned until Monday, December 14, 2015, at 3 p.m.

DISCHARGED NOMINATION

The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works was discharged from further consideration of the following nomination unanimous consent and the nomination was confirmed:

RICHARD CAPEL HOWORTH, OF MISSISSIPPI, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2020.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 10, 2015:

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

CHERRY ANN MURRAY, OF KANSAS, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF SCIENCE, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY.

MORRIS K. UDALL AND STEWART L. UDALL FOUNDATION

ERIC DRAKE EBERHARD, OF WASHINGTON, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MORRIS K. UDALL AND STEWART L. UDALL FOUNDATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 6, 2018.

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS WHILE ASSIGNED TO A

POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

LT. GEN. JOHN E. WISSLER

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS THE CHIEF OF THE BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY AND SURGEON GENERAL AND FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 601 AND 5137:

To be vice admiral

REAR ADM. CLINTON F. FAISON III

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS THE SURGEON GENERAL, UNITED STATES ARMY, AND FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 601 AND 3036:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. NADJA Y. WEST

THE FOLLOWING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be brigadier general

COL. EDWARD E. HILDRETH III

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COLONEL JENNIFER G. BUCKNER
COLONEL SEAN A. GAINEY
COLONEL DAVID T. ISAACSON
COLONEL PATRICK B. ROBERSON

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be brigadier general

COL. BLAKE A. GETTYS
COL. KAREN E. MANSFIELD

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be brigadier general

COL. TODD M. BRANDEN
COL. MARK A. CROSBY
COL. FERMIN A. RUBIO

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be brigadier general

COL. DAVID M. BAKOS
COL. VANCE C. BATEMAN
COL. SANDRA L. BEST
COL. JEFFREY C. BOZARD
COL. WILLIAM D. BUNCH
COL. RAFAEL CARRERO
COL. LARRY K. CLARK
COL. KEVIN D. CLOTFELTER
COL. MARSHALL C. COLLINS
COL. JAMES N. COX
COL. JASON R. CRIPPS
COL. CHRISTOPHER S. CROXTON
COL. FRANCIS N. DETORIE
COL. RUBEN FERNANDEZ–VERA
COL. JOHN T. FERRY
COL. JOHN E. FLOWERS
COL. MICHAEL J. FRANCIS
COL. VINCENT R. FRANKLIN
COL. CLAY L. GARRISON
COL. KEVIN J. HEER
COL. DANA A. HESSHEIMER
COL. GENE W. HUGHES, JR.
COL. JAMES T. JOHNSON
COL. GREGORY F. JONES
COL. MARSHALL L. KJELVIK
COL. JAMES R. KRIESEL
COL. RONALD S. LAMBE
COL. ANDREW J. MACDONALD
COL. STEPHEN J. MAHER
COL. MATTHEW J. MANIFOLD
COL. MAREN MCAVOY
COL. GREGORY S. MCCREARY
COL. STEPHEN B. MEHRING
COL. JESSICA MEYERAAN
COL. BILLY M. NABORS
COL. JEFFREY L. NEWTON
COL. PETER NEZAMIS
COL. PATRICK R. RENWICK
COL. STEPHEN M. RYAN
COL. PETER R. SCHNEIDER
COL. GREGORY N. SCHNULO
COL. GREG A. SEMMEL
COL. RAY M. SHEPARD
COL. MARC A. SICARD
COL. PAUL R. SILVESTRI
COL. CHRISTOPHER A. STRATMANN
COL. PETER F. SULLIVAN, JR.
COL. TAMI S. THOMPSON
COL. JOSEPH B. WILSON
COL. GREGORY S. WOODROW

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. EDWARD P. MAXWELL

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. ROBERT C. BOLTON
BRIG. GEN. CHARLES W. CHAPPUIS, JR.
BRIG. GEN. DAWNE L. DESKINS
BRIG. GEN. TIMOTHY L. FRYE
BRIG. GEN. PAUL D. JACOBS
BRIG. GEN. MARK E. JANNITTO
BRIG. GEN. RONALD W. SOLBERG
BRIG. GEN. JAMES K. VOGEL
BRIG. GEN. WILLIAM L. WELSH
BRIG. GEN. WAYNE A. ZIMMET

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. JOHN D. BANSEMER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. RUSSELL A. MUNCY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. PATRICIA N. BEYER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. CHRISTOPHER W. LENTZ

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. LEE ANN T. BENNETT
COL. RICHARD M. CASTO
COL. JONATHAN M. ELLIS
COL. JAMES J. FONTANELLA
COL. JOHN P. HEALY
COL. DANIEL J. HEIRES
COL. ROBERT A. HUSTON
COL. WILLIAM R. KOUNTZ, JR.
COL. ALBERT V. LUPENSKI
COL. TYLER D. OTTEN
COL. RUSSELL P. REIMER
COL. HAROLD E. ROGERS, JR.
COL. TRACEY A. SIEMS

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. JOHN C. THOMSON III

THE FOLLOWING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. SYLVIA R. CROCKETT

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. KENNETH T. BIBB, JR.
COL. ANGELA M. CADWELL
COL. MARTIN A. CHAPIN
COL. JAMES R. CLUFF
COL. CHARLES S. CORCORAN
COL. SEAN M. FARRELL
COL. CHAD P. FRANKS
COL. ALEXUS G. GRYNKEWICH
COL. TIMOTHY D. HAUGH
COL. CHRISTOPHER D. HILL
COL. ERIC T. HILL
COL. SAMUEL C. HINOTE
COL. WILLIAM G. HOLT II
COL. LINDA S. HURRY
COL. MATTHEW C. ISLER
COL. KYLE J. KREMER
COL. JOHN C. KUBINEC
COL. DOUGLAS K. LAMBERTH
COL. LANCE K. LANDRUM
COL. JEANNIE M. LEAVITT
COL. WILLIAM J. LIQUORI, JR.
COL. MICHAEL J. LUTTON
COL. COREY J. MARTIN
COL. TOM D. MILLER
COL. RICHARD G. MOORE, JR.
COL. JAMES D. PECCIA III
COL. HEATHER L. PRINGLE
COL. MICHAEL J. SCHMIDT
COL. JAMES R. SEARS, JR.
COL. DANIEL L. SIMPSON
COL. MARK H. SLOCUM
COL. ROBERT S. SPALDING III
COL. WILLIAM A. SPANGENTHAL
COL. EDWARD W. THOMAS, JR.
COL. JOHN T. WILCOX II
COL. MICHAEL P. WINKLER

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

DARRYL L. DEPRIEST, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE CHIEF COUNSEL FOR ADVOCACY, SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION.

IN THE AIR FORCE

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH BRYAN K. ALLEN AND ENDING WITH GARRICK H. YOKOE, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2015.

IN THE ARMY

ARMY NOMINATION OF JAMES D. FERGUSON, TO BE MAJOR.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH KELVIN L. BROWN AND ENDING WITH PAUL L. WAGNER II, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2015.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH DAESOO LEE AND ENDING WITH BRIAN D. RAY, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2015.

ARMY NOMINATION OF WAYNE W. SANTOS, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF ANTHONY J. FADELL, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF RICARDO ALONSOJOURNET, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF JEFFREY M. SLOAN, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ANDREW C. DILLON AND ENDING WITH ANDRE R. HOLDER, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2015.

ARMY NOMINATION OF REBECCA R. TOMSYCK, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF EVERETT S. P. SPAIN, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF SHANE R. REEVES, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH DAVID E. BENTZEL AND ENDING WITH BRIAN U. T. KIM, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2015.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH TERESA L. BRININGER AND ENDING WITH RICHARD A. VILLARREAL, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2015.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH KEVIN R. BASS AND ENDING WITH D003940, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2015.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH KIMBERLIE A. BIEVER AND ENDING WITH PAMELA M. WULF, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2015.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH DAVID BARRETT AND ENDING WITH JENNIFER S. ZUCKER, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2015.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH DAVID W. LAWS AND ENDING WITH JOHN E. SWANBERG, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2015.

ARMY NOMINATION OF WILLIAM A. ALTMIRE, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF JESUS J. T. NUFABLE, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH RUBEN BERMUDEZPAGAN AND ENDING WITH TODD W. SCHAFFER, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2015.

ARMY NOMINATION OF JOSHUA A. CARLISLE, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF WILLIAM C. MOORHOUSE, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF GREGG T. OLSOWY, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF ROGER S. GIRAUD, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF STEVEN M. WILKE, TO BE COLONEL.

IN THE NAVY

NAVY NOMINATION OF KENNETH C. COLLINS II, TO BE CAPTAIN.

IN THE COAST GUARD

COAST GUARD NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH CORINNA M. FLEISCHMANN AND ENDING WITH KIMBERLY C. YOUNG–MCLEAR, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2015.

COAST GUARD NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH MICHAEL S. ADAMS, JR. AND ENDING WITH JAMES R. ZOLL, JR., WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2015.

COAST GUARD NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JASON C. ALEKSAK AND ENDING WITH YAMASHEKA Z. YOUNG–MCLEAR, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2015.

FOREIGN SERVICE

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATION OF DANIEL SYLVESTER CRONIN.

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATION OF DERELL KENNEDO.

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH STEVEN CARL AABERG AND ENDING WITH SANDRA M. ZUNIGA GUZMAN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 10, 2015.

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JAMES F. ENTWISTLE AND ENDING WITH DANIEL R. RUSSEL, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2015.

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH CHRISTOPHER VOLCIAK AND ENDING WITH EDWARD L. ROBINSON III, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2015.

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

RICHARD CAPEL HOWORTH, OF MISSISSIPPI, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2020.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

MICROBEAD-FREE WATERS ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2015

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Microbead-Free Waters Act.

Microbeads, the small plastic particles contained in many face washes and other cleansing products, too often end up in America's lakes, rivers, and other water sources. In fact, a report last year from New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman found that up to 19 tons of microbeads could find their way into my home state's wastewater stream each year. These particles accumulate pollutants, increasing toxicity of our waters, and pose a threat to fish and other wildlife that ingest plastic.

I commend the many leading companies that voluntarily responded to these concerns by phasing out the use of plastic microbeads in their product lines, including L'Oreal, Unilever, and Avon.

I am pleased Congress acted this week to act on this important issue, with bipartisan legislation that will ban microbeads in personal care products beginning in 2017.

This legislation builds on the momentum from ten states that have passed legislation to ban microbeads—including nine just in 2015. Unlike some proposals that would put in place an unrealistic timeline for implementation, or phase in the restriction years later than H.R. 1321, this federal legislation will grant all parties sufficient time to eliminate microbeads, while ensuring quick action on this growing concern. The Microbead-Free Waters Act will ensure consumers know that the products they use each day will not pollute our precious lakes and rivers.

I urge the Senate to act quickly to pass this legislation, and congratulate Chairman UPTON and Ranking Member PALLONE for their hard work on this important bill.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I missed a series of recorded votes on November 30, 2015. Had I been present, I would have voted "YEA" on roll call vote Number 644 and roll call vote Number 645.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ESTHER ORTIZ CARDENAS

HON. WILL HURD

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 100th birthday of Esther Ortiz Cardenas of Del Rio, Texas.

A beloved mother of 12 children, grandmother of 29 grandchildren, 48 great-grandchildren and 8 great, great grandchildren, Mrs. Cardenas is a woman known for her devout faith, her hard work and her generous hospitality.

Whether it was cooking from scratch, making clothes for the family, tending chickens, creating home-made soap or tending her garden to put food on the table, she always worked hard to ensure her family never wanted for anything.

Knowing that God would always provide, Mrs. Cardenas never hesitated to feed the hungry or help others who were in need. When faced with troubled times, she turned to God, believing in answered prayers.

Surrounded by her family and friends, Mrs. Cardenas celebrated 100 years on November 28th of this year. Mrs. Cardenas is without question, a Proverbs 31 woman—a blessing to her family and her community.

On behalf of the Twenty-Third Congressional District of Texas, congratulations to Esther Ortiz Cardenas on turning 100 years young and may you celebrate many more.

CONGRATULATING THE CRYSTAL CITY HIGH SCHOOL HORNETS FOR THEIR 2015 MISSOURI CLASS 1 GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Crystal City High School Hornets for their first place win in the 2015 Class 1 Girls Cross Country State Championship.

This team and their coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the Crystal City Hornets for a job well done.

HONORING D. PATRICK CURLEY

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of D. Patrick Curley, who has dedicated fifty years to the service of our Western New York community.

Mr. Curley was born and raised in Buffalo, New York. After graduating from Canisius High School in 1959, where he was first team all Catholic in tennis, he moved to Boston, where he graduated with an A.B. degree in mathematics from Boston College in 1963. He then returned to Buffalo to pursue an M.S. degree from Canisius College.

He was an instructor at D'Youville and Canisius Colleges, where he lectured in statistics, accounting, and business valuation techniques. Mr. Curley went on to work in banking at Marine Midland, before starting his own business consulting company, St. Lawrence Business Consultants, in 1977.

He remains president of St. Lawrence Business Consultants today, specializing in training seminars, economic development projects, mergers and acquisitions, succession planning, corporate valuations and ESOPs. At St. Lawrence Business Consultants, he became the Washington liaison to Moog, Inc. He has also played a role in statewide economic development, including consulting with New York State's Ownership Transition Services Program and helping to retain more than ten-thousand jobs in the state.

As a thirty year management seminar leader, Mr. Curley has conducted more than one hundred seminars throughout the United States with more than 3,000 participants.

He has served on the boards of several New York and international corporations, and is a member of the Industry Trade Advisory Committee (ITAC) under the auspices of the Department of Commerce.

Mr. Curley was a distinguished member of the board of the New York Power Authority from 2007 to 2012. And he was elected to three terms on the Orchard Park Town Board, where he served for 12 years and was regarded as an expert in public finance. He also served as chairman of sewer district #3 and was vice chair of the Southtown Recycling Consortium.

Mr. Curley has served in leadership positions for more than two dozen charitable, civic and philanthropic organizations. He founded the Orchard Park Council of the Arts and was a member of the National Board of Directors of the American Heart Association, Mercy Hospital of Buffalo, and the President's Council of D'Youville College. He served as chairman of the Board of Trustees of Erie County Central Police Services, and director and chairman of the audit committee of a Western New York foundation. The Orchard Park Chamber of Commerce voted him Man of the Year, and he received multiple awards for his service to the American Heart Association.

For forty-six years, Mr. Curley has been a member of the Orchard Park Volunteer Fire Company becoming a life member in 1987. During this time he attended 5,147 emergency and fire calls.

An avid hockey enthusiast, he served as vice chair for the Southtowns YMCA board of managers, where he designed, financed, and

built an indoor ice rink. He also founded the Southtowns Hockey Officials Association, and was a referee for 35 years.

Mr. Curley is married to Carolyn G. Curley, the father of Jennifer Curley Reichert, Brendan Curley, and Shannon Curley Tower, and the proud grandfather of eight grandchildren. He is known for his colorful attire and positive attitude. He is a loyal, a proven consensus builder, cohesive team player, and a fair and effective leader. He never missed a St. Patrick's Day parade in Buffalo or New York City, or a chance to sing "God Bless America."

Mr. Speaker, Pat Curley is a proud American and Western New Yorker. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Mr. D. Patrick Curley and thanking him for 50 years of commitment to his community, family, and country.

HONORING TONY YOUNG

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and remember an extraordinary advocate for individuals with disabilities, Mr. Tony Young.

Tony dedicated his life to advocating on behalf of individuals with disabilities and more importantly—helping individuals with disabilities advocate on behalf of themselves. He was the founder and first executive director of the ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia, a community resource and advocacy center run by and for persons with disabilities whose mission is to END dependence by empowering people with disabilities to live independently.

Tony also served as a senior public policy analyst with United Cerebral Palsy, Inc. He worked as the director of Residential Services and Community Supports for the American Rehabilitation Association in Washington, D.C. and served as president of Open Access, a consulting firm focusing on the design, development, evaluation and analysis of policies, programs and services for persons with disabilities.

For the past 16 years, Tony has held various positions at SourceAmerica where he led strategic and policy initiatives all with the singular goal of helping more individuals with disabilities to join the workforce.

Tony was a positive force in the lives of thousands, if not millions, of people with disabilities across the nation through his advocacy and the positive changes he supported. Tony passed away earlier this week at his home in the 11th District of Virginia. Although he will be greatly missed, his legacy will endure through those he touched, those he helped, and the societal changes he championed.

CONSTRUCT THE NATIONAL EISENHOWER MEMORIAL

HON. MAC THORNBERRY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with Representative MIKE THOMPSON and Representative SANFORD BISHOP to urge our colleagues in Congress to move towards the construction and completion of the National Eisenhower Memorial as a fitting tribute to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe during World War II and the 34th President of the United States.

As admirers of Dwight D. Eisenhower and his impact on history, it has been an honor to serve on the Eisenhower Memorial Commission. It is our hope that Dwight D. Eisenhower and our country receive a memorial that properly commemorates his roles as General and President that helped shape our nation for the better. We believe the current proposed design achieves this goal.

For over ten years, the Commission has worked to develop a memorial that pays tribute to Eisenhower's achievements as both General and President. During this process, there have been some differences of opinion on how to best honor Eisenhower's accomplishments. Unfortunately, there has also been a fair amount of misinformation in many news stories and reports.

The Memorial was first authorized by Congress in 1999. Within the past few months, all final design and site approvals have been obtained under the process required by Congress from the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, and the National Capital Planning Commission.

Since its inception, the Commission has consulted with members of the Eisenhower family. David Eisenhower was an original member of the Commission from 2001 through 2011, during which time the architectural firm and Memorial design were approved by unanimous votes.

Time is of the essence for our remaining World War II veterans. Funding of construction in Fiscal Year 2016 will allow the Memorial to be completed by the summer of 2019, the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

Further delays would mean that those who fought under Eisenhower's command would not see its completion and call in to question whether the Memorial will ever be built. Now is the time to move ahead.

HONORING MAJOR KRYSTYL WATSON'S CONGRESSIONAL FELLOWSHIP

HON. THOMAS J. ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a member of my staff, Major Krystyl R. Watson, for her outstanding year as an Army Fellow in my Washington, DC office.

Krystyl, a Florida native, joined my staff last January as part of the Army Congressional Fellowship Program. Her extremely hard work and dedication has made her a vital part of my team that ensured that not a single day of her year in my office was wasted.

Before coming to Washington as a Fellow, Krystyl built quite the resume as a law enforcement officer in Florida. From her time as a Special Agent with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement in Tampa to her year spent deployed as a company commander with the 912th Human Resources Company in Afghanistan, Krystyl brought a wide range of valuable experiences to Capitol Hill.

From day one, Krystyl dove right into the role of a legislative aide and was as meticulous as a seasoned staffer. There was never an issue she didn't care to learn, and her fresh perspective was invaluable. Her experiences in the U.S. Army Reserve and Florida Department of Law Enforcement were instrumental in helping me introduce important legislation to stop fraud against veterans and in securing critical funding for service members and veterans through the appropriations process.

With energy, optimism, and the unmatched work ethic of a soldier, Krystyl has helped make her year with my office one of my most productive yet. More than just helping with legislation, Krystyl has been an invaluable resource for the veterans in Florida's 17th Congressional District. Whether assisting with congressional inquiries or helping a veteran with a VA issue, Krystyl was always happy to take a veteran's phone call and find a way to help.

Over the last year, Krystyl was an outstanding legislative aide, earned her master's degree in Legislative Affairs from George Washington University, ran the Marine Corps marathon, and became an irreplaceable member of my team. Krystyl will be greatly missed, but I have no doubt that she will continue to set a standard of excellence in everything that she does.

RECOGNIZING GEORGE T. SAKATO

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and achievements of George T. Sakato.

George Sakato was born in Colton, California in 1921 and grew up in Southern California. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, his family moved from California to avoid the mass internment of Japanese Americans, and his family resettled in Arizona.

In 1944, at the age of 23, Mr. Sakato volunteered for the U.S. Army and joined the all-Japanese-American 442nd Regimental Combat Team. At 5 feet 4 inches, he was not your storybook soldier. What he lacked in stature, however, he made up for in bravery and devotion to his brothers in arms.

In October of 1944, Private Sakato's unit was sent on a mission to rescue 281 captured American soldiers in the Vosges Mountains of northeast France. In the firefight, Private Sakato's squad leader was killed after his unit pushed enemy German combatants from their defensive positions.

With no commanding officer, Private Sakato stepped up to lead his squad. He charged the enemy position. Singlehandedly, he killed 12 enemy soldiers and then, with the help of his unit, took 34 more as prisoners.

For his bravery, Private Sakato received the Distinguished Service Cross and was recommended for the Medal of Honor. Yet, like so many other Japanese-American soldiers during WWII, he was denied that honor due to deeply ingrained anti-Japanese racism.

More than a half century later, on June 21, 2000, Mr. Sakato and 21 other Asian-American veterans were finally given the recognition they had earned for their actions in combat and were awarded the Medal of Honor by President Clinton.

On Dec. 2nd, 2015, at the age of 94, George Sakato died in Denver, Colorado. George Sakato was one of the trailblazing men and women whose hands have shaped the United States into the great nation it is today. His example of bravery, humility, and love for his country is one to admire and emulate.

My condolences go to his daughter Leslie, and the rest of the Sakato family.

RECOGNITION OF KENTUCKY VOLUNTEERS

HON. BRETT GUTHRIE

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize two constituents from my district, Thomas Sullivan and Daniel Disselkamp, who spent three weeks in northern Haiti building and upgrading powerlines to help communities receive affordable, safe, and reliable electricity. The power linemen from Nolin Electric Cooperative were the second group to volunteer their services on this project.

The project is one to commercialize power from the Caracol Industrial Park generation station that is currently serving 8,000 consumers in Caracol and surrounding communities with electricity 24 hours a day. When the project is complete, a total of 10,000 consumers will have access to electricity. One of the major factors contributing to ending poverty and improving the quality of life for people around the world is access to affordable and reliable electricity.

Only about 13 percent of Haitians currently have access to electricity, so the services provided by these linemen will have a positive impact on thousands of lives. Obtaining electricity access is an important step toward achieving improvements in healthcare, education, and economic opportunity.

That is why today I would like to thank and recognize Thomas Sullivan and Daniel Disselkamp for their service.

RECOGNIZING COMMANDER CHAD C. SCHUMACHER

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize those men and women who have served this great Nation with honor, men such as Commander Chad C. Schumacher, United States Navy.

For the past year, Commander Schumacher, a proud naval aviator and graduate of the United States Naval Academy, served on my staff as a Congressional Defense Fellow. During his assignment, he served as a senior member of my staff responsible for defense, veterans, foreign affairs and intelligence matters. Commander Schumacher executed his work as a liaison to the constituents of the First District and the numerous defense installations in the First District with distinction. Furthermore, he provided exceptional support to me as my staff liaison to the House Armed Services Committee in my role as a Subcommittee Chairman and as the Co-Chair of the Congressional Shipbuilding Caucus.

Commander Schumacher directly contributed to my goal of providing excellent constituent service to the people of the First District. He was responsible for bringing numerous constituent inquiries to a successful conclusion and he was able to leverage his personal and operational experience to respond to the most challenging inquiries.

In addition to his efforts on behalf of the First District, Commander Schumacher took on projects with regional, state and national implications, demonstrating his ability to view a challenge from many angles and develop innovative solutions often requiring collaboration across many levels of government.

Commander Schumacher's work ethic, duty to mission, and commitment to servant leadership is without equal. I believe that his personal drive to achieve excellence in his work has and will set a very high standard for his peers.

I would also like to thank Commander Schumacher for the service and sacrifice he has made, and continues to make, for our Nation and our great Navy. His keen sense of honor, impeccable integrity, boundless work ethic, humor and loyal devotion to duty earned him the respect and admiration of my staff and the First District of Virginia. As an F–18 Hornet pilot with 2000 flight hours and 400 arrested landings, Commander Schumacher completed multiple deployments in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, and served as an instructor at the United States Navy Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN). Commander Schumacher is headed to the Pentagon where he will work in Legislative Affairs for U.S. Northern Command. I have no doubt that Commander Schumacher will continue to serve the Navy honorably and with distinction.

I wish him the best of luck as he continues his Naval career. It was an honor and a pleasure having him serve on my staff. We all can sleep soundly at night knowing that men and women like Commander Chad Schumacher are members of our all-volunteer force and they stand ready to defend our country and take the fight to our enemies; far away from their families and the comforts of the United States of America.

Commander Schumacher, thank you. Best wishes to you and God bless you, your family, and all the men and women in uniform. Fair winds and following seas.—and GO NAVY BEAT ARMY.

TRIBUTE TO LANDMARK INN STATE HISTORIC SITE OF CASTROVILLE, TEXAS

HON. WILL HURD

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Landmark Inn State Historic Site of Castroville, Texas, on the completion of its extensive restoration efforts. The Landmark Inn State Historic Site, which is a Texas Historical Commission property, preserves an important part of Texas' history. The Landmark Inn not only protects the cultural and natural value of this area, but also ensures that future generations of Texans will be able to enjoy its rich history.

The Landmark Inn gives unique insight into the lives of Texas' earliest settlers. The city of Castroville was established on September 3, 1844, by entrepreneur Henri Castro and a group of settlers from the Alsace region of France. One of its earliest inhabitants was a man named César Monod, who was elected Mayor of Castroville in 1852 and built a combined home and store to serve travelers along the San Antonio-El Paso road. In 1853, a merchant named John Vance bought the property and built living quarters for his visitors onto the existing store, including galleries, a family residence, and even a multistory bathhouse. This became the Vance Hotel. Several other entrepreneurs, including George L. Haass and Laurent Quintle, built a dam on the property that diverted water from the Medina River to power a gristmill. Finally, in 1925, Jordan T. Lawler converted the gristmill into Castroville's very first electric power plant. It is over a hundred years later in 1981 that the Landmark Inn was dedicated as a historically designated site.

The 23rd Congressional District of Texas stretches from San Antonio to El Paso, along over 820 miles of the border, and includes Castroville, a gem that is home to over 2,600 residents. The Landmark Inn provides an opportunity for today's Texans to deepen their understanding of Castroville's early pioneers. Those dedicated to the Landmark Inn's restoration emulate the hard work and values evident in this great city's founders. The level of excellence shown in preserving the rich history of this site is a reflection of the residents of Castroville and their values, and their devotion to tradition serves as a source of pride for the entire city and the 23rd Congressional District of Texas. It is my honor to represent Castroville, and I wish continued success to the Landmark Inn in its future endeavors.

CONGRATULATING THE FATIMA HIGH SCHOOL COMETS FOR THEIR 2015 MISSOURI CLASS 2 GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Fatima High School Comets for their first place win in the 2015 Class 2 State Girls Cross Country Championship.

This team and their coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the Fatima Comets for a job well done.

RECOGNIZING THE DEDICATION OF THE BETTY DEVANE COVINGTON LIBRARY AT DUMFRIES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the dedication of the ''Betty DeVane Covington Library'' at Dumfries Elementary School in Dumfries, Virginia. This year marks Mrs. Covington's 54th year in education and her 53rd year with the Prince William County Schools, having served as a classroom teacher, assistant principal, principal, and now School Board member. Mrs. Covington's tireless work has helped shape the minds and hearts of thousands of students, both young and old.

Mrs. Covington's longevity in the community is noted by many firsts. She served as the principal of the Saunders Kindergarten Center, the first public kindergarten in Prince William County; in 1995, she became the first elected School Board member in Dumfries, now Potomac Magisterial District; and she received the inaugural Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Washington/Prince William-Manassas, Educator of the Year Award, which was later renamed in her honor.

With a career dating back to 1961, Mrs. Covington has worked in numerous elementary schools within the county. Nine of her 11 years as a classroom teacher were spent at Dumfries Elementary School. Three years were spent as an assistant principal of Dale City Elementary School. During her tenure, the school participated in a pilot program for year-round education. From 1974 to 1976, Mrs. Covington served as principal of the Saunders Kindergarten Center. She ended her career after 19 years as principal of Kilby Elementary School. That same year, she was elected to the Prince William County School Board. Mrs. Covington served as the Dumfries School Board member for one year before returning to Dumfries Elementary School as the appointed principal for six years. Upon her final retirement from education administration in 2005, Mrs. Covington was again elected to the Prince William School Board to serve three consecutive terms.

Over the course of her career, Mrs. Covington has been recognized for her commitment to educating the students of Prince William County. She has been nominated for The Washington Post Distinguished Educational Leadership Award and Prince William County Principal of the Year. Her accolades also include receiving the Service Award from the School Board, Women of the Year from the Soroptimist Club, the Zontas Club, and Commission for Women, Minerva Award for Public Service by the Prince William County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and the Human Rights Award from the Prince William County Human Rights Commission, to name just a few.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Betty Covington for her unwavering dedication to serving the children of Prince William County, first in the classroom and more recently as a member of the School Board representing the Potomac Magisterial District. Mrs. Covington has been an integral and essential part of Prince William Public Schools through her commitment to public service for the betterment of our community.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SERGEANT MICHAEL JOE NAYLOR

HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Sgt. Michael Joe Naylor of the Midland County Sheriff's Department. Sadly, Sgt. Naylor was taken from us in the line of duty on October 9, 2014.

Sgt. Naylor's life was dedicated to the service of his community and our county. After graduating from high school, Mike enlisted in the United States Air Force, where he served 26 honorable years and earning the rank of Senior Master Sergeant before retiring.

After retiring from the military in 1999, Mike joined the Midland County Sheriff's Department. Through the years, Mike rose through the ranks and served as a leader on the police force. He was actively involved in many initiatives within the department, most notably serving as Commander of the Midland County Sheriff's Department Honor Guard. In addition to serving as a Deputy Sheriff, Mike was also an emergency medical technician. Mike's noble duty to always protect others is one of the many reasons that made him special to Midland County.

Anybody who knew Mike would say that he was a compassionate and selfless professional that went above and beyond to serve his fellow man. His lifetime of service was recently recognized by the state of Texas with the renaming of State Highway 191 as the ''Sergeant Michael Naylor Memorial Highway''. I had the privilege to be a part of this dedication ceremony and am grateful for that opportunity.

On December 27th, we will be celebrating Mike's 48th birthday. Although the wounds of his loss are still fresh in the hearts of many back home, we must all come together and remember all of the good that Mike offered to the world. We are blessed to have individuals like Mike that serve our communities. His service exemplifies every aspect of the American spirit and makes our communities stronger and safer. His life is an example of how one's service can make their home a better place. His legacy will forever be carried on by his wife Denise, the rest of his immediate family, and his family of first responders.

HONORING THE FIRST BROADCAST AND GRAND OPENING OF KEXP'S NEW HOME AT SEATTLE CENTER

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the first broadcast from KEXP's New Home in Seattle, and to salute the station as it prepares for the Grand Opening of its new home for music discovery in April of 2016.

Since its founding in 1972, KEXP has always been a champion for music discovery. With a radio broadcast and online stream that reaches over 200,000 people per week as well as a video channel that reaches 750,000 more, KEXP has provided music lovers with decades of trusted, curated music discovery experiences, and introduced a global audience to new artists from the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

As a public radio station with vibrant community support, KEXP empowers its DJs to make bold choices and push themselves creatively, introducing audiences to new artists, and putting music in context by sharing stories, connecting musical threads, and juxtaposing today's emerging artists with the seminal artists that inspire them.

KEXP provides bands from the Pacific Northwest a stage from which they launch their music careers. KEXP connects thousands of artists to millions of music lovers. KEXP connects talent to record labels, promoters, and the music industry. The result is powerful; a thriving population of artists and bands who have the opportunity to successfully perform and present their art. KEXP is invigorating the community by helping arts and culture thrive in the Pacific Northwest.

With the opening of its new home at Seattle Center, KEXP will be able to serve the community in exciting new ways. It will host free live performances, create new educational partnerships, create public engagement spaces, and house cutting-edge broadcast and production technology.

As we tune in and celebrate the first broadcast from this state-of-the-art facility, I would like to convey my congratulations to KEXP on the opening of its new home as well as the growing number of opportunities it will create to bring great music into the lives of those in the 7th Congressional District and around the world.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 22, SURFACE TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION AND REFORM ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. GARRET GRAVES

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 3, 2015

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, while I support the policy merits of this bill, I have strong concern about some of the funding mechanisms used to help pay for it. The concerns include provisions for drawdown and sale of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), selling 66 million barrels of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in order to provide $6.2 billion in offsets over 10 years.

As is often the case, what we have accomplished here is nothing more than an unsustainable budget gimmick. As adjusted for inflation, the average price per barrel of oil currently stored in the SPR is $74. At a time when the global price of oil hovers at less than $40 a barrel, and as OPEC continues to produce and flood the global market at historic rates, with no end in sight, I simply do not see how we can budget the sale of SPR oil at $94 per barrel on average over the next 10 years to total $6.2 billion in revenue. Our SPR was never intended as a budget gimmick, it is

about our energy and national security. Despite our record domestic production of crude oil, I believe it is irresponsible to use a vital national energy security asset as a budget gimmick.

Besides the fact that the math simply doesn't add up, I philosophically oppose the increasing tendency of the federal government to reallocate money intended for one purpose to then fund unrelated policy initiatives. It is disingenuous and irresponsible. And in the case of the surface transportation bill funding mechanisms, this approach is symptomatic of a larger problem.

The Highway Trust Fund was designed to be funded primarily through a user pays, user benefits model in the form of the federal gas tax. The increased fuel efficiency of vehicles, in conjunction with several policy and regulatory factors, has gradually eroded the gas tax's ability to keep pace with investment demands over time.

Mr. Speaker, it is critical that we begin work now to modernize the funding formula for the Highway Trust Fund and return to a user pays model. The longer we turn a blind eye towards addressing the user fee model, which has not been adjusted since 1993, and continue to ignore the need to build a 21st century funding mechanism reflective of the technological advancements at our disposal, the more fearful I am of passing a sustainable, long term investment to address our nation's ailing infrastructure in the future.

I applaud the chamber on its work to pass this 5-year bill, and I look forward to continuing work to ensure the next bill is more fiscally responsible, adhering to a paid for measure more closely aligned to a user pay, user benefit system.

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING CENTERS REFORM AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 8, 2015

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers Reform and Improvement Act (H.R. 3842). This bipartisan bill will codify and reauthorize the duties and responsibilities of Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETCs). FLETCs improve domestic preparedness, prevention, and response to terrorism by providing basic and advanced training to federal employees involved in federal law enforcement activities or homeland security operations. I am proud that this important national security work occurs in several locations across the country, including in my home state of New Mexico.

However, I have concerns about one particular provision within H.R. 3842: The ability for FLETCs to offer state and local law enforcement agencies training, which is meant for federal security personnel. Although I strongly believe that federal security personnel need to coordinate and work closely with state and local law enforcement agencies to prepare, prevent, and respond to terrorism, I have grave concerns with the ability of community police departments to have complete and unrestricted access to military-style training at FLETCs.

For example, the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) has access to every Department of Energy National Training Center (NTC) class, which are intended for federal law enforcement personnel to protect our nation's nuclear materials. APD has completed dozens of DOE-instructed classes, including lessons on "vehicle ambush," "tactical leadership assault executions," and "how to lead a small element in a combat situation." The U.S. Department of Justice is currently reviewing APD's use of NTC classes, resources, and facilities.

I encourage FLETCs to enact sensible oversight mechanisms and restrictions on state and local law enforcement access to FLETC resources and facilities. FLETCs should have criteria to determine what training topics or classes, if any, are appropriate for state and local law enforcement. FLETCs should also consider the duty assignments and responsibilities of individual officers when determining allowing access. In addition, police departments under a Department of Justice consent decree for violating the constitutional rights of Americans or departments with a history of excessive or unnecessary force, should not receive military-style training provided by FLETCs.

I will continue to work with the Administration on strengthening the mission of FLETCs and on ensuring that state and local law enforcement have appropriate access.

VISA WAIVER PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND TERRORIST TRAVEL PREVENTION ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 8, 2015

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 158, the Visa Waiver Program Improvement Act. I agree that Congress has a responsibility to carefully examine the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) and to take appropriate steps to improve the program and ensure our national security.

Yet I am concerned that this bill would allow for the arbitrary discrimination of individuals based on their nationality. According to the American Civil Liberties Union, the language contained in H.R. 158 is written so broadly that all nationals of Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan would have their VWP revoked, even if they have never resided or traveled to Iraq or Syria and only have nationality for those countries as a result of their parents.

This bill would also terminate VWP travel privileges for anyone who has been in Iraq and Syria at any time on or after March 1, 2011, including those traveling to Iraq and Syria for professional purposes. This includes anyone from a journalist to a humanitarian aid worker. Congress can take steps to improve the program and ensure our national security without putting in place blanket provisions that allow for the discrimination of individuals based on their nationality. I look forward to working with my colleagues to address these issues as this legislation moves forward.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2130, RED RIVER PRIVATE PROPERTY PROTECTION ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule for H.R. 2130, the "Red River Private Property Protection Act."

The President has announced that this bill will be vetoed in the event it reaches his desk.

With just one legislative day before the current continuing resolution expires on December 11, we should be focusing all of our time and attention on matters that address the real problems and major concerns of the American people.

And right now the American people are very concerned about the harm and threat posed by "lone wolf" and "franchise terrorists" that we saw in Paris last month and just last week in San Bernardino, California.

These tragedies follow on the heels of mass shootings in Tucson, Aurora, Sandy Hook, Charleston, Chattanooga, Roseburg, Colorado Springs, and now, most recently, in San Bernardino, California.

These senseless mass shootings remind us of the imperative of ending gun violence in our country.

It is past time that we come together united by our common humanity and with this simple message: the violence must stop.

And there are actions that can be taken to reduce gun violence beginning with the enactment of the bipartisan "Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Public Act of 2015" (H.R. 1076).

This bipartisan legislation, which I am proud to co-sponsor, would close the dangerous loophole that allows terrorist suspects to legally buy deadly weapons.

H.R. 1076 would bar the sale or distribution of firearms to any individual whom the Attorney General has determined to be engaged in terrorist activities.

Mr. Speaker, if a person is considered by the federal government too dangerous to board an airplane or to enter the United States, he or she surely is too dangerous to be permitted to purchase or obtain a firearm.

It is unconscionable that we have not acted to close the loophole in federal law that permits a terrorist lawfully to obtain and carry firearms.

Mr. Speaker, according to a report by the Government Accountability Office, since 2004 more than 2,000 suspects on the FBI's Terrorist Watchlist have successfully purchased weapons in the United States.

It is simply intolerable that more than 90 percent of all suspected terrorists who attempted to purchase guns in the last 11 years walked away with the weapon they wanted, with just 190 rejected despite their ominous histories.

To close this loophole, I call upon Speaker RYAN to bring H.R. 1076 to the floor immediately.

H.R. 1076 grants the Attorney General the authority to deny a firearms license to individuals for whom there is a reasonable belief that

the individual may use a firearm or explosive in connection with terrorist activity.

This legislation was originally crafted in 2007 and endorsed by President Bush's Justice Department, has bipartisan support in the House, and is supported by prominent Republicans and counter-terrorism & law enforcement experts.

H.R. 1076 greatly reduces the likelihood that a terrorists can obtain some of the most lethal weapons in America.

Right now a terrorist can buy a firearm in the parking lot of a gun show, over the internet, or through a newspaper ad without needing a background check.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot be against criminals, terrorists and the dangerously mentally ill getting guns and be against H.R. 1076.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1076 will save lives and strengthen the rights of law-abiding gun owners.

It deserves a vote in the House.

CONGRATULATING THE FESTUS HIGH SCHOOL TIGERS FOR THEIR 2015 MISSOURI CLASS 3 BOYS CROSS COUNTRY STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Festus High School Tigers for their first place win in the 2015 Class 3 Boys Cross Country State Championship.

This team and their coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the Festus Tigers for a job well done.

HONORING SERGEANT THEODORE TRAVIS, SR.

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to pay tribute to Sergeant Theodore Travis, Sr., a man committed to duty and family, who lost his life in service to this nation.

A Niagara Falls, New York native, Theodore Travis chose active-duty to support his young family after serving in the U.S. Army Reserves. He was a member of an elite team, the 101st Airborne—a Screaming Eagle and initially traveled to Fort Campbell, leaving behind his wife, high school sweetheart Cynthia, and two young sons, Theodore Jr. and Stefan. Sergeant Travis left the United States with his unit on an assignment to aid peace negotiations between Egypt and Israel.

Following their mission, Sergeant Travis and his comrades boarded a plane in high spirits and with great anticipation of returning to their families for Christmas. Tragically they never made it home. On December 12th, 1985, Arrow Air Flight 1285, carrying homeward bound members of the 3rd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, crashed in Gander, Newfoundland. On that day 248 members of the 101st Airborne Division, including Sergeant Travis, were killed in the worst air disaster in U.S. military history.

This year, as we recognize the 30th anniversary of this disaster, family, friends and the community will gather at New Hope Baptist Church in Niagara Falls to remember Sergeant Travis, known to all as a "giver." He gave help to his community, gave his faith to the church, gave his love to his wife and children, and gave himself in service to the military in defense of this country, in the name of peace abroad, and in hopes of giving his family a better life.

So today, on behalf of a grateful nation, with a heavy heart we remember Sergeant Theodore Travis, Sr., who in selfless service to the United States of America, gave until he could give no more. Sergeant Travis, his family, and the others who lost their lives on Flight 1285 will be forever remembered for the great sacrifices they have made.

CONGRATULATING THE BRAHMA KUMARIS AND SISTER JENNA ON THE GRAND OPENING OF THE MEDITATION MUSEUM II

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Brahma Kumaris and Sister Jenna on the grand opening of the Meditation Museum II in Tysons Corner, Virginia.

The Brahma Kumaris is a non-profit organization with over 9000 branches in 120 countries. Founded in Hyderabad, Sindh in 1936, the Brahma Kumaris seeks to help individuals re-discover and strengthen their spirituality through self-reflection, meditation, and participation in activities of social and humanitarian concerns.

Sister Jenna began her spiritual journey with the Brahma Kumaris and is the founder and director of both the original Meditation Museum in Silver Spring, Maryland as well as this new location in Tysons Corner. Sister Jenna and several of her colleagues created the "Pause for Peace" campaign which has expanded into new programs including the Pause for Peace in the Classroom and Pause for Peace Spaces. Sister Jenna's commitment and influence have been recognized with numerous awards and proclamations including the President's Lifetime National Community Service Award, the Every Day Hero Award, and the Friendship Archway Award.

The benefits of meditation are scientifically proven. According to Psychology Today, meditation has been shown to increase immune function, decrease depression and anxiety and even positively affect higher-order cognitive functions in the brain. Perhaps the most profound aspects of mediation are those that cannot be measured scientifically. Self-awareness, inner-peace and tranquility, becoming one with your surroundings and your faith, and true acceptance of and respect for all others regardless of age, race, gender, religion, or economic status are but a few immeasurable and invaluable benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Sister Jenna and all who have worked to make the grand opening of the new Meditation Museum II a reality and in wishing them continued success.

TRIBUTE TO LARRY AND CAROL ANDRESS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Larry and Carol Andress of Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary. They were married on September 25, 1965 at St. Patrick's Church in Council Bluffs.

Larry and Carol's lifelong commitment to each other and their children, Dave, Teresa and Deb, along with their grandchildren, truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Andress family that make me proud to call myself an Iowan and represent the people of this great state. I commend this great couple on their 50th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

HONORING MAUREEN NICHOLSON FOR HER SERVICE TO THE TOWN OF POMFRET, CT

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to salute Maureen Nicholson's more than thirty years of service to the Town of Pomfret, Connecticut. Maureen has served in all corners of local leadership since she moved to Pomfret in 1988, most recently as the town's First Selectman.

From her start in Pomfret, Maureen was involved in the Parent Teacher Organization, Recreation Commission, Democratic Town Committee, Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Finance, and Tree Warden, among many more town and regional organizations. In 2009, she was elected to the Board of Selectmen, and in 2012 was elected First Selectman.

During her years as First Selectman, Maureen secured almost half a million dollars in grants for the Town of Pomfret. She secured the town's emergency shelter and began work to bring large-scale solar power to the town. Maureen saw the potential cost-savings in collaborating with neighboring towns to share accounting and auditing services, and launched an innovative initiative with the Town of Brooklyn. It is this enterprising spirit that delivered forward thinking policies to Pomfret, and the town and region have benefitted.

Maureen also worked to increase awareness for residents of Pomfret by founding and editing the Pomfret Times, and redesigning the town's website to promote and inform residents of the town's resources and news. Her other non-governmental achievements include service on the Day Kimball Hospital Women's

Board, founding of the Pomfret Gardeners, membership on the Community Regional YMCA Board, and serving as Director of the Performing Arts of Northeastern Connecticut.

I ask my colleagues to please rise to thank Maureen for her years of steadfast dedication. Although her leadership as First Selectman will surely be missed, I am confident that her commitment to Pomfret will continue in the years to come.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2015

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, the "Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2015," authorizes 6 additional permanent bankruptcy judgeships and converts 16 temporary bankruptcy judgeships to permanent status, based on recommendation of the Judicial Conference of the United States. With respect to the 6 additional permanent bankruptcy judgeships, they are authorized pursuant to section 3 of the bill as follows: 2 for the District of Delaware; 2 for the Eastern District of Michigan; and 2 for the Middle District of Florida. With respect to the 16 conversions, they are authorized pursuant to section 2 of the bill for the following districts:

5 for the District of Delaware;

2 for the Southern District of Florida;

3 for the District of Maryland;

1 for the Eastern District of Michigan;

1 for the District of Nevada;

1 for the Eastern District of North Carolina;

2 for the District of Puerto Rico;

1 for the Western District of Tennessee; and

1 for the Eastern District of Virginia.

This legislation responds to a serious need. Since the last time additional bankruptcy judgeships were authorized, which was 10 years ago, the 6 districts that would be authorized additional judicial resources by this bill have experienced a 55 percent increase in weighted filings, according to the Judicial Conference.

All 16 of the temporary bankruptcy judgeships that the bill converts to permanent status are set to lapse as of May 25, 2017. As the Conference observes, "These bankruptcy courts would face a serious and, in many cases, debilitating workload crisis if their temporary judgeships were to expire."

The need for these additional judicial resources is based on a comprehensive analysis performed by the Judicial Conference based on a formal survey of all judicial circuits conducted pursuant to section 152(b)(2) of title 28 of the United States Code. Criteria considered include the workload of each court, case filing statistics, and geographic factors, among other matters.

CONGRATULATING THE HERCULANEUM HIGH SCHOOL BLACK CATS FOR THEIR SECOND PLACE FINISH IN THE 2015 MISSOURI CLASS 2 BOYS CROSS COUNTRY STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Herculaneum Black Cats for their second place finish in the 2015 Class 2 State Boys Cross Country Championship.

This team and their coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home 2nd place to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the Herculaneum Black Cats for a job well done.

TRIBUTE TO MARGARET FLETCHALL

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Margaret Fletchall on the celebration of her 102nd birthday. Margaret celebrated her 102nd birthday on October 31, 2015 in Mount Ayr, Iowa.

Our world has changed a great deal during the course of Margaret's life. Since her birth, we have revolutionized air travel and walked on the moon. We have invented the television, cellular phones, and the internet. We have fought in wars overseas, seen the rise and fall of Soviet communism, and witnessed the birth of new democracies. Margaret has lived through seventeen United States Presidents and twenty-four Governors of Iowa. In her lifetime, the population of the United States has more than tripled.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to represent Margaret in the United States Congress and it is my pleasure to wish her a very happy 102nd birthday. I invite my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in congratulating Margaret for reaching this incredible milestone, and wishing her even more health and happiness in the years to come.

CONGRATULATING THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES ON THE OPENING OF THE FAIRFAX VETERANS BENEFITS OFFICE

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Virginia Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs John C. Harvey, Jr. and Department of Veterans Services Benefits Director Tom Herthel on the opening of the new Veterans Benefits office in Fairfax City.

The 11th District of Virginia is home to almost 54,000 veterans. More than 70% are veterans of the wars in the Persian Gulf. The opening of this new center will ensure that they receive timely access to the benefits they have earned.

The opening of this office is yet another step in addressing the needs of our veterans. While the statistics indicate that overall, veterans in the 11th District may be more economically or professionally secure, the dedicated men and women who have served our country in uniform are still plagued by the same issues that veterans around the country face including prolonged disability or appeal processing times, difficulty scheduling appointments with the VA medical centers, and delays in receiving Post 9–11 GI Bill educational benefits. We must do more to ensure that these issues and others are addressed and resolved. For our community, the statistics are encouraging. The percentage of unemployed veterans is 3.3%, two percentage points better than the national average. The percentage of veterans living below the poverty line is 2.2%, well below the national average of 12.5%. More than 60% of veterans in this district have a bachelor's degree or higher, almost twice the national average.

These numbers speak to the character of these individuals and also to the network of support services that have emerged in the 11th District. We, as a community, are united in our efforts to provide any and all assistance and guidance needed.

Mr. Speaker, providing care for our men and women in uniform after they return home from the battlefield is a sacred obligation. I ask my colleagues to join me in commending the Virginia Department of Veterans Services and its dedicated staff on the opening of this new Veterans Benefits Office, and I offer my continued support and assistance to these ongoing efforts.

OYSTER CREEK'S STAR TEACHER

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Brittany Mayland for being named a Star in the Classroom by the Houston Texans.

Ms. Mayland is a kindergarten teacher at Oyster Creek Elementary School in my hometown of Sugar Land, Texas. Her positive impact and commitment to her students led one of her students, Izabelle Paul, to nominate her for this award presented by the Houston Texans and First Community Credit Union. Her dedication to creating a fun and engaging learning environment shows her star quality in the classroom. The students at Oyster Creek are lucky to have her.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Ms. Mayland for being named a Star in the Classroom.

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON, THE AMERICAN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, the University of Houston Cougars capped off their thrilling season with a 24–13 win against the Temple University Owls in the American Athletic Conference Championship Game. Houston won by 11 points and led from the very start of the game. With this win, the Cougars finished the regular season 12–1. They now face a matchup against the #9 Florida State University Seminoles in the Chick-Fil-A Peach Bowl.

What is most amazing about the Cougars successful season is the fact that it was engineered by a rookie head coach: Tom Herman. Herman is a former national championship winning offensive coordinator at Ohio State University and a previous recipient of the Broyles Award for the nation's top assistant coach. He came to the University of Houston as a first-time head coach this season. This type of success in a coach's first season is rare. Herman's Houston team was led by its do-it-all quarterback, Greg Ward, Jr., who finished the season with 2,590 passing yards, 16 touchdowns, and only 5 interceptions. The All-Conference quarterback also tacked on 1,041 rushing yards and 19 touchdown runs for good measure. The excitement of watching this team play brought me back to 1989, when Coach Jack Pardee's run-and-shoot offense led the Cougars to a 9-win season and quarterback Andre Ware took home the Heisman Trophy.

Mr. Speaker, Tom Herman and the Houston Cougars aren't finished just yet. After the Cougars New Year's Eve duel with perennial powerhouse Florida State, the team will refocus its sights on coming back strong again next year. With the Cougars locking in Coach Herman to a contract extension and returning many of its key contributors, this team will be a force next year and hopefully for years to come. I look forward to spending December 31st ringing in the New Year with friends, family, and another Cougars victory. Go Cougars!

And that's just the way it is.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF MOUNT OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 100th Anniversary of Mount Olive Baptist Church in Woodbridge, Virginia.

On July 3, 1902, the late William Chin donated a parcel of land for what would later become the site of Mount Olive Baptist Church. Initially, the site was used for the Agnewville Mission Sunday School. Under the leadership of Sister Florence Chin and Reverend Bras Clark, with the support of Neabsco and Ebenezer Baptist Churches, members of the community established a Sunday school class for the residents of Agnewville. It was not until years later when the members of the Agnewville Mission Sunday School founded Mount Olive Baptist Church. The cornerstone for the church was laid on October 15, 1915. Together, Brother George W. Ray, Brother William Chin, Brother George Thomas, and other men from the congregation built the original church edifice on Telegraph Road.

Since the founding of Mount Olive Baptist Church, six pastors have graced the pulpit leading the congregation in worship, praise, and discipleship. It is my honor to enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the following names of each of the governing pastors of Mount Olive Baptist Church since the church's founding in 1915:

Reverend William Davis, Reverend William Tyler, Reverend George W. Pratt, Reverend Edward W. Burrell, Reverend Frederick L. Ray. Most recently, Reverend Clyde W. Ellis, Jr. was called to the pulpit on March 3, 2011, to lead the congregation.

Reverend Ellis, the spiritual son of Reverend Ray, became the sixth pastor of Mount Olive Baptist Church. Under Reverend Ellis' leadership, Mount Olive has both literally and figuratively flourished beyond the walls of the sanctuary on Telegraph Road. With more than 400 members, Mount Olive's weekly worship is temporarily being held at Freedom High School on Neabsco Mills Road until the construction of the new edifice is complete.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Mount Olive Baptist Church. Pastor Ellis has nurtured a thriving congregation that will no doubt continue to grow and fulfill Mount Olive's mission of worship and praise. I would like to wish Pastor Ellis and his congregation the very best as they celebrate their heritage and plan for a successful future.

HONORING CORPORAL TIBOR RUBIN

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, December 5, 2015, the city of Garden Grove lost a genuine American hero when, Tibor "Teddy" Rubin, a Holocaust survivor and recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, passed away due to natural causes. He was 86 years old.

Corporal Rubin began his extraordinary life on June 18, 1929, in Pastzo. Hungary. His father served in the Hungarian Army and was a veteran of the First World War. When Corporal Rubin was only 14 years old he was sent to the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria. He survived the 14 months of captivity until his prison camp was liberated by American forces in May 1945. Tragically, his father, stepmother, and younger sister would perish.

Corporal Rubin, immensely thankful for his liberation by American forces, wished to join the U.S. Army in order to repay the country that he felt he was so indebted to. After failing twice to enlist due to poor English, he was finally able to join in 1948 as a rifleman with I Company, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division.

Corporal Rubin's courage is made evident by his Medal of Honor citation. Corporal Rubin fought bravely and did everything to protect his brothers in arms. He distinguished himself on October 30, 1950, during a nighttime assault on his unit's position by an overwhelming Chinese force. Corporal Rubin manned a .30 caliber machine gun and fended off the assault until his ammunition was exhausted. Because of his valiant and selfless actions the Chinese assault was slowed and his unit was able to successfully escape the overwhelming enemy force. Corporal Rubin would be severely wounded and taken as a prisoner of war. He chose to remain a prisoner rather than taking a Chinese offer to be sent back to his native Hungary. Corporal Rubin risked torture and execution on multiple occasions in order to retrieve food and aid for his fellow imprisoned Soldiers. His horrific experience as a Holocaust survivor gave him the skills necessary to remain hopeful and keep himself and his comrades alive in a terrible situation.

Unfortunately, because of an anti-Semitic superior, Corporal Rubin's courageous military service would go unrecognized for another 55 years. He would finally be awarded the Medal of Honor on September 23, 2005, for his heroic actions in the Korean peninsula.

Corporal Rubin is survived by his wife, Yvonne, and his two children Frank and Rosalyn Rubin. He was a proud American and the kind of model citizen we should all strive to be. Corporal Rubin, despite everything he went through in life, preserved his optimism and his terrific sense of humor. His extraordinary immigrant story is an inspiration to us all. His passing is a great loss for our country, but his memory will forever live on.

THE INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO REQUIRE THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS TO INSTALL THE D.C. SEAL IN THE MAIN READING ROOM OF THE THOMAS JEFFERSON BUILDING

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce a bill to require the Library of Congress to install the District of Columbia seal in the Main Reading Room of the Thomas Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress. The Library is one of the few buildings in the District that remains open to the public on most holidays. It provides not only D.C. residents but visitors and researchers from across the nation with access to incomparable resources. The bill requires the Library to depict the District's seal on the stained-glass windows in the Main Reading Room, where the seals of all the states and territories that existed when the building was constructed, except for the District, are depicted. D.C.'s seal was readily available at that time and should have been included. The seals of Hawaii and Alaska are not included in the display because they were not states or territories when the building was constructed. The fact that these two states were not part of the Union at the time of the creation of the stained-glass windows argues for the inclusion of the District, which, after all, was in fact the nation's capital at the time. We are asking that omission of D.C. be corrected immediately. This omission was brought to my

attention by a District resident, Luis Landau, a former docent at the Library.

The residents of the District have always had all the obligations of American citizenship, including paying federal taxes and serving in all the nation's wars, including the War of 1812, during which the Capitol building, which then housed the Library of Congress, was burned, prompting construction of the current Library of Congress building with the state and territory seals. It is, therefore, without question that the District and its residents should receive equal treatment among the stained-glass windows that portray the history of the United States. D.C. residents deserve to have their history and American citizenship recognized.

There is existing evidence that the seal of the District should have been depicted. The Members of Congress room in the Jefferson Building, which is not open to the public, has a painted depiction of the D.C. seal, along with state seals, on its ceiling. This precedent reinforces our request to be represented among the stained-glass windows in the Main Reading Room, which is open to the public. There is no reason why the D.C. seal cannot be added with the planned restoration of the stained-glass. The right time to add the seal of the District would be during the planned restoration.

Congress already includes the District of Columbia, or has corrected the omission of the District, when honoring the states. For example, the District of Columbia War Memorial honors District residents who served in World War I, the World War II Memorial includes a column representing the District, the flag of the District is displayed among the flags of the fifty states in the tunnel connecting the House office buildings to the Capitol, and D.C.'s Frederick Douglass statue now sits in the Capitol alongside statues from the 50 states. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 requires the armed services to display the District flag whenever the flags of the states are displayed. Legislation was also enacted to give D.C. a coin after it was omitted from legislation creating coins for the 50 states. We also successfully worked with the U.S. Postal Service to create a D.C. stamp, like the stamps for the 50 states, and worked with the National Park Service to add the D.C. flag alongside the state flags across from Union Station. It is long overdue to display the D.C. seal, along with the seals of the states, in the Main Reading Room of the Library of Congress.

I urge support of this legislation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL R. TURNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, on December 9, 2015, I was unable to vote on roll call votes 681, 682, and 683. Had I been present I would have voted "yea" on consideration of the resolution, "yea" on ordering the previous questions, and "yea" on agreeing to the resolution.

TRIBUTE TO EDWIN AND BARBARA BLANK

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Edwin and Barbara Blank of Shenandoah, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary. They were married in 1965.

Edwin and Barbara's lifelong commitment to each other and their family truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Blanks that make me proud to call myself an Iowan and represent the people of our great state.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 50th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives will join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

HONORING VALARIE MCCALL ON THE OCCASION OF HER APPOINTMENT TO THE CHAIR OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSIT ASSOCIATION (APTA)

HON. JAMES B. RENACCI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. RENACCI. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Ms. Valarie McCall on her appointment to the Chair of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). APTA strengthens and improves our public transportation to ensure that all Americans have access to that option in their communities across our nation. Valarie is a great model for all aspiring public servants across the country, and is deserving of our recognition and gratitude for this achievement.

Valarie began her distinguished public service career as the Director of Cleveland's Empowerment Zone, where she managed a $200 million budget and worked to advance job planning and placement initiatives, as well as providing financing to businesses. She was also the youngest city clerk for Cleveland's City Council and served on a countless number of boards benefitting her community. Today, Valarie serves as the Chief of Government and International Affairs for the City of Cleveland. As the first person to hold this position, she acts as a liaison between the Mayor's Office and State and Local Governments, Federal Agencies, and international organizations.

With her in-depth public service experience, I have no doubt that APTA will benefit tremendously from Valarie's Chairmanship. Her national appointment makes Ohio proud.

I ask my colleagues in the House to join me in recognizing her distinguished record of public service.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR H.R. 1076 "DENYING FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES TO DANGEROUS TERRORISTS ACT OF 2015"

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, the past few months have been marked by senseless violence across the globe and in our own country from Tuscon, Aurora, Sandy Hook, Charleston, Chattanooga, Roseburg, and now most recently in San Bernardino, California.

It is past time that we come together united by our common humanity and with this simple message: the violence must stop! The senseless mass shootings in Paris and San Bernardino remind us of the imperative of ending gun violence in our country. And there are actions that can be taken to reduce gun violence beginning with the enactment of the bipartisan "Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Public Act of 2015" (H.R. 1076).

This bipartisan legislation, which I am proud to co-sponsor, would close the dangerous loophole that allows terrorist suspects to legally buy deadly weapons. H.R. 1076 would bar the sale or distribution of firearms to any individual whom the Attorney General has determined to be engaged in terrorist activities. It also would grant the Attorney General the authority to deny a firearms license to individuals for whom there is a reasonable belief that the individual may use a firearm or explosive in connection with terrorist activity.

Mr. Speaker, according to a report by the Government Accountability Office, since 2004 more than 2,000 suspects on the FBI's Terrorist Watchlist have successfully purchased weapons in the United States. It is simply intolerable that more than 90 percent of all suspected terrorists who attempted to purchase guns in the last 11 years walked away with the weapon they wanted, with just 190 rejected despite their ominous histories.

This legislation was originally crafted in 2007 and endorsed by President Bush's Justice Department, has bipartisan support in the House, and is supported by prominent Republicans and counter-terrorism & law enforcement experts.

H.R. 1076 greatly reduces the likelihood that terrorists can obtain some of the most lethal weapons in America. Right now a terrorist can buy a firearm in the parking lot of a gun show, over the internet, or through a newspaper ad without needing a background check.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot be against criminals, terrorists and the dangerously mentally ill getting guns and be against H.R. 1076. I thank Congressmen PETER KING (R–NY) and MIKE THOMPSON (D–CA) for introducing this bipartisan legislation (H.R. 1076).

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1076 will save lives and strengthen the rights of law-abiding gun owners. It deserves a vote in the House.

RECOGNIZING THE 2015 HONOREES OF THE FAIRFAX COUNTY BRANCH OF THE NAACP

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the 2015 Honorees of the Fairfax County Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The Fairfax Branch is recognized as the NAACP's first rural chapter. In 1915, a few brave African American citizens in Falls Church, Virginia, fought a proposed ordinance that would have segregated housing. They called themselves the Colored Citizens Protective League (CCPL) and the group evolved to become the Fairfax County Branch of the NAACP. Since its inception, the NAACP has promoted equal rights and justice for all and has shown a spotlight on issues of great importance including civil rights, education, voting rights, desegregation, and prison reform. I have been honored to work with this organization and pledge my continued support of our shared goals.

Each year, the Fairfax County NAACP honors several deserving individuals and organizations that have shown extraordinary support of the Branch or the community. I am honored to submit the names of the following award winners:

President's Awardees:

Cassie Marcotty, Abby Conde, Anna Rowan, Lidia Amanuel, and Marley Finley. These high school student leaders formed ''Students of Change,'' now known as CAALM (an acronym of their initials), to spearhead the initiative to rename JEB Stuart High School as Thurgood Marshall High and to remove all symbols and mascots that honor the Confederate Legacy.

The President's Award will also be presented to Virginia House of Delegates member Scott A. Surovell of the 44th District, for his exceptional leadership and support to the communities of Hybla Valley and Gum Springs in southern Fairfax County.

Community Service Awardees:

Debbie Kilpatrick for her exceptional leadership, advocacy, and dedication as President of the Fairfax County Council of PTAs.

Celeste Peterson for establishing the Erin Peterson Scholarship Fund and her devotion to the Young Men's Leadership Group at Westfield High School.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the 2015 honorees of the Fairfax County NAACP and in thanking them for their tremendous contributions to our youth and our community.

SISTER CITY AGREEMENT BETWEEN COLUMBUS AND ACCRA, GHANA

HON. JOYCE BEATTY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the signing of a sister city agreement between the City of Columbus and Accra, Ghana on November 30, 2015.

This is Columbus' tenth sister city agreement, but it is momentous because it is the city's first such agreement with a city on the African continent. I was privileged to attend and participate in the signing ceremony between Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman and Accra Mayor Alfred Vanderpuije.

Columbus, a diverse city, is home to nearly 10,000 people of Ghanaian descent and this partnership reinforces already firmly established ties between Columbus and Accra building economic, educational and cultural diversity between the two municipalities.

I am also proud to inform my colleagues that Franklin University and The Ohio State University are working with educational institutions in Ghana to create even greater academic and cultural exchanges.

As a City known for the Arts, Columbus' King Arts Complex is also working on a formal agreement to foster a relationship with the Ghana National Theatre.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the cities of Columbus, Ohio and Accra, Ghana for this historic agreement and look forward to a long and prosperous partnership.

S. 1177, THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Conference Report for S. 1177, the Every Student Succeeds Act, a bill which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) through 2020 and replaces the misguided No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy.

This bill makes important changes to ESEA by including student and school supports in state accountability plans, supporting responsible efforts to reduce over-testing, and requiring states to provide the public with information on school discipline and expulsion rates, which we know disproportionately impacts students of color. S. 1177 also maintains critical provisions about overall student performance by setting clear goals for achievement and graduation rates, targeting funds to at-risk children such as English Language Learners, and helping states to increase teacher quality by providing on-going professional development.

Yet I am concerned that this bill shifts the majority of power and oversight from the federal government to the states and does not do enough to protect disadvantaged, minority, LGBT, low-income, and migrant students. A strong Federal role is critical to ensuring that minority and underserved students get the support they need to succeed. And as a member of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, I am concerned that this bill fails to include a requirement to disaggregate data within groups of Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) students. This is critical to ensuring that AAPI students receive the support they need. Moreover, S. 1177 fails to include strong accountability measures to ensure that schools address resource equity gaps.

As Members of Congress, we have a shared obligation to ensure that our education system provides equity and excellence for all students, closes the achievement gap, and prepares our students for a 21st century workforce.

TRIBUTE TO HAROLD AND LYLA McCURDY

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Harold and Lyla McCurdy for their service to the Congregate Meals Program of Panora, Iowa.

Lyla got her start at Congregate Meals as a part-time kitchen worker and bookkeeper. She is now responsible for all of the bookkeeping, organization, and set up each day. Her husband Harold now volunteers his time by organizing the carryout meals and doing what he can to help in the kitchen. The Congregate Meal program was created around 40 years ago in Panora. They now prepare hot and healthy meals each day for the community.

Mr. Speaker, Harold and Lyla's willingness to donate their time and talents to this program is a great testament to the Iowa spirit. I am honored to represent them and Iowans like them in the United States Congress. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Harold and Lyla for their service and wishing them nothing but continued success.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF GUY LEWIS

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Thanksgiving is meant to remind us of all the things in our lives we're grateful for. For many, this year's Thanksgiving came and went in its usual form: spent in the presence of loved ones and those who are closest to our hearts. But for others, this Thanksgiving was spent under a bittersweet shadow. Early that morning, Houstonians, Cougar alumni, basketball fans, and many others bid farewell to a legend: Guy Lewis.

Guy Lewis was more than just a basketball coach. His innovations, both on and off the court, left ripples in our society that we still feel today. He was born in a tiny town in East Texas, where he lived until enlisting in the Army during World War II. Following the war, Lewis enrolled at the University of Houston, my alma mater, and joined the basketball team. He was instantly one of the best players on the team, averaging over 21 points per game as he led the Cougars to a conference championship. After college he worked as an assistant coach at UH under then-coach Alden Pasche. After Pasche's retirement in 1956, Lewis was appointed the new head coach of the Cougars; and the rest, as they say, is history.

Under Lewis' 30-year watch, the Cougars enjoyed one of the best spells in collegiate basketball history. He led his teams to 27 straight winning seasons, 14 NCAA tournament appearances, 5 Final Fours, and two

NCAA title games. Though he never won a national title, he is still universally recognized as one of the greatest coaches in the history of the game. Despite all of his successes on the court, it was his actions off the court that many use to define Coach Lewis' lasting legacy.

Prior to Guy Lewis, the University of Houston had never had an African-American player in its basketball program. According to former All-American, NBA All-Star, and member of Houston's first desegregated basketball team, Elvin Hayes, Lewis "put everything on the line to step out and integrate his program." It was trailblazing like this and his fearless attitude that set Coach Lewis apart from the rest. Guy Lewis didn't care about what people thought, but he cared about doing what was right for his players and his school. He dedicated 40 years to the university as a student and as a coach, from his first day of college in 1946 through his last day as a coach in 1986. Even after his retirement Lewis was heavily involved with the school and its athletic department. His dedication to the institution he called home, the institution he helped evolve for the better, never once wavered.

I remember sitting in the stands of the Astrodome in 1968 watching the "Game of the Century" that Coach Lewis helped organize. The undefeated UCLA Bruins, led by legendary coach John Wooden, came into the game riding a 47-game winning streak. This was the first nationally televised regular season collegiate basketball game in the history of the sport. Over 52,000 fans—myself included—went to the game, which set the record for the largest basketball crowd in history. I remember that game fondly. I can still see Coach Lewis on the sideline waving his red, polka-dotted towel that he seemed to always have with him. Led by the previously mentioned Elvin Hayes, the Houston Cougars went on to win 71–69.

After coaching the Cougars to back-to-back Final Fours in 1967 and '68, he then guided his team to a trio of Final Fours in 1982, '83, and '84. Those teams, known simply as "Phi Slama Jama," featured superstars Clyde Drexler and Hakeem Olajuwon, two members of both the NCAA and NBA Halls of Fame. Those teams emphasized a fast-paced, exciting style of play that helped revolutionize the game forever.

When remembering Coach Lewis, we needn't just remember the legendary wins or the legendary players that he coached, but also his integrity and dedication. Whether it was his innovative work on the court or off, all of us familiar with the life of Coach Lewis have nothing but fond memories of the man. His legacy will live on.

And that's just the way it is.

CONGRATULATING THE HERCULANEUM HIGH SCHOOL BLACK CATS FOR THEIR SECOND PLACE FINISH IN THE 2015 MISSOURI CLASS 2 GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Herculaneum Black Cats for their second place finish in the 2015 Class 2 State Girls Cross Country Championship.

This team and their coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the second place win to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the Herculaneum Black Cats for a job well done.

GLENN HALL ON HIS 90TH BIRTHDAY

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, heartiest congratulations to Glenn Hall on the occasion of his 90th birthday and a lifetime of teaching and learning. His career in education began in a one-room schoolhouse in 1954, but he has taught every grade level, including graduate school, since then. While teaching at a Florida community college, in 1961, he received a Fulbright grant to teach English and American history in the Netherlands. Upon his return, he heard of the opening of a new community college in Bucks County, Pennsylvania and in 1965 was among the first instructors hired. During a 35-year teaching career at Bucks County Community College in Newtown Township, he also was Dean of Academic Affairs for 14 years. And in 1976 he was among the first group of educators to visit China after the communist takeover in 1949. As we congratulate Glenn Hall on this milestone birthday, we express our gratitude for his honorable service in the U.S. Navy and his contributions to the academic community and especially the students he inspired. May his future be filled with good health, happiness and new adventures.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 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 $18,789,064,366,804.18. We've added $8,162,187,317,891.10 to our debt in 6 years. This is over $8 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

HONORING THE EL PASO VETERANS' TREATMENT COURT

HON. BETO O'ROURKE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today in recognition of the El Paso Veterans' Treatment Court Program, presided over by the Honorable Angie Juarez Barill and operating out of the 346th District Court of El Paso, Texas. I am pleased to recognize the El Paso Veterans' Treatment Court Program as an initiative that works hard to "leave no veteran behind and honor their service."

As the second program of its kind in the state of Texas, the El Paso Veterans' Treatment Court Program has provided resources to numerous Veterans in the criminal justice system. Since 2009, the initiative has aided eligible Veterans and active duty Service Members who are charged with misdemeanor criminal offenses; in 2012 the program was expanded to include felony criminal offenses. The participants are diverted from the traditional criminal justice system and are assessed for substance abuse and mental health issues. Upon meeting program entrance requirements, participants receive an individualized treatment plan and attend frequent review hearings before the program judge.

In addition to providing comprehensive substance abuse and mental health treatment, the five phase program also includes officials from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to determine the Veteran participants' eligibility for further aid. The Veterans Benefits Administration assesses the Veteran for disability compensation, education benefits, and vocational rehabilitation qualifications. The Veterans Health Administration also assesses the Veteran to determine eligibility for housing and medical services. The program operates on a personal level as well, in order to address employment opportunities and individual needs.

The El Paso Veterans' Treatment Court Program provides an alternative route for Veterans and active duty Service Members in the criminal justice system. The initiative practices a holistic approach, providing resources, addressing treatment concerns and engaging in judicial monitoring. These necessary tools help participants engage in society as law-abiding citizens. The initiative has been widely successful in El Paso and recently received the prestigious Texas Veterans Commission Patriot Award in recognition of their diligence. I am proud that programs such as the El Paso Veterans' Treatment Court exist in my district and are available to help those who served our country.

BRINGING FFA GOLD TO PEARLAND

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Evann Wehman of Turner High School for winning her second state championship at the Texas Future Farmers of America (FFA) Leadership Development Events Competition.

Evann, who is also her school's FFA President, won the state competition last weekend at Sam Houston State University. Her victory at the state competition earned her a spot at the National FFA Convention next October in Indianapolis. Evann has a history of success as part of the horse judging team that won the first ever state championship by Pearland FFA students. That team went on to national success and placed eighth in the nation. Her impressive accomplishments reflect her hard

work and will carry her far in her future endeavors.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Evann on her second state FFA championship. Best of luck in all of your future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING THE ARTS COUNCIL OF FAIRFAX COUNTY AND THE RECIPIENTS OF THE 2015 ARTS AWARDS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Arts Council of Fairfax County and the recipients of its 2015 Arts Awards. These awards recognize the extraordinary contributions of artists and arts organizations, as well as individuals and businesses in Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, and the City of Falls Church, that support the arts in our community.

Founded in 1964, the Arts Council of Fairfax County is a non-profit organization designated as Fairfax County's local arts agency. The Arts Council operates programs and initiatives that include grants, arts advocacy, education, and professional development opportunities for artists and arts organizations. In fiscal year 14, the Arts Council awarded more than $500,000 in County, public, and private funds through competitive grants and awards to arts organizations and individual artists. These grants helped to fund approximately 13,000 performances, which were attended by more than 1 million people. I also would like to express my appreciation to the Arts Council for its steadfast support of the 11th District Congressional Arts Competition, which has helped make it one of the largest and most successful in the country.

The annual Arts Awards honor supporters of the arts in four categories: the Jinx Hazel Arts Award, the Arts Achievement Award, the Emerging Arts Award, and the Arts Philanthropy Award. It is my honor to submit the following names of the 2015 Arts Awards Recipients:

The 2015 Jinx Hazel Arts Award will be presented to Earle C. Williams, the former president and chief executive officer of BDM International, for his outstanding leadership and advocacy in the arts and in the Campaign for Wolf Trap.

The 2015 Arts Achievement Award will be presented to Rebecca Kamen, a contemporary visual artist, sculptor, and a pioneer of the STEAM effort to integrate Arts in the traditional Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, or STEM fields, for her outstanding achievements bridging the arts and education with chemistry, neuroscience, and astrophysics.

The 2015 Emerging Arts Award will be presented to the Vienna Jammers for providing exemplary outreach to area youth and participating in community building activities in the Town of Vienna and the Washington, D.C. area.

The 2015 Arts Philanthropy Award will be presented to Richard Hausler, co-founder and CEO of Insight Property Group, for his vision, commitment, and leadership in establishing a new arts facility, the Workhouse Arts Center, in southern Fairfax County.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the recipients of the 2015 Arts Awards and in recognizing and thanking the visionaries, leaders, and supporters who help to make our Northern Virginia communities rich with cultural opportunities.

TRIBUTE TO ED AND LOIS FIGGINS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Ed and Lois Figgins of Atlantic, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 50th wedding armiversary. They were married in 1965.

Ed and Lois' lifelong commitment to each other and their family truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Figgins family that make me proud to call myself an Iowan and represent the people of this great state.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 50th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

REMEMBERING FRANK HERHOLD

HON. LOIS FRANKEL

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of a Fort Lauderdale resident who dedicated his life to serving his family and community: Frank Herhold, who passed away at the age of 76 on Saturday, December 5th.

Frank was a devoted family man and prominent member of the South Florida boating community. He started his career in the marine industry as the owner of the Anchorage Yacht Basin in Melbourne, Florida and later became the executive director of Marine Industries Association of South Florida (MIASF), where he worked until he retired.

In his retirement, Frank's passion for boating continued. Prior to his passing, Frank attended the 2015 Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show and served on the city of Fort Lauderdale's marine advisory board. In 2010, Frank was the commodore of the Winterfest Boat Parade and recognized as ''Citizen of the Year'' by the city of Fort Lauderdale in 2007.

Frank is survived by many loved ones. I offer my condolences to Frank's wife Mary Jo, his daughter Pam, and all his friends and family. I know that his legacy will continue to live on and inspire future generations.

SERBIA STEPS UP AT A CRITICAL TIME

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Serbia's recent donation of $5.4 million to the Bosnian town of Srebrenica, where thousands of Muslims were killed in the Yugoslav Wars, is a clear sign that the Serbian Government wants to do what they can to improve relationships with countries in the region. Mending these relationships is especially important as the Balkans are on the front lines of the refugee crisis. As of the beginning of November, the same month that President Vucic announced this large donation, over 300,000 refugees had flowed through the country since the beginning of the year. Most refugees are fleeing Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan and travelling to Europe to seek asylum. Serbia is doing their part to process and protect these people. In October alone, 180,307 refugees were processed compared to 51,048 in September because of Serbia's commitment to improving capacity.

It is critical for countries in the region to work together to process the influx of refugees while ensuring the safety of their own countries and the world. The Balkans are a transit region making it important for all the countries to have an open line of communication in order to ensure the ordered, safe, and peaceful flow of people and is especially important for bordering countries.

Serbia's gesture to Bosnia is hopefully a signal of relationships on the mend at this very tense time in the world. While the importance of Balkan countries working together cannot be underemphasized, it is also of utmost importance for all freedom-loving countries throughout the world to work together to fight ISIS, a big factor in the flow of migrants and a threat to our way of life, in which all lives are cherished. Every country must do their part. We must all come together and obliterate this scourge on our world.

As co-chair of the Congressional Serbian Caucus, I commend the Serbian Government for all that they have done to mend their relationships in the region and for their leadership during this incredibly trying time.

And that's just the way it is.

CELEBRATING BIRTH OF BLAKELY ELIZABETH HERBERT

HON. DAN NEWHOUSE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my Legislative Director, Jason Herbert, and his wife, Erin Kathleen Herbert, on the birth of their daughter, Blakely Elizabeth Herbert.

Blakely was born at 2:17 p.m. on Sunday, December 6, 2015. Miss Blakely weighed in at a perfect 7 pounds and 10 ounces.

As my Legislative Director, Blakely's father, Jason, has been key to my legislative operation. Jason's stalwart attention to details, and his remarkable ability to stay alert during long and late night Rules Committee hearings and floor debates will serve him well as a father.

My entire staff has awaited this good news with eager anticipation of Jason and Erin becoming parents. Blakely is fortunate to have such a loving father and mother.

Congratulations and best wishes to Jason and Erin and their entire family on this wonderful addition.

CONGRATULATING THE LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL COUGARS FOR THEIR 2015 MISSOURI CLASS 2 VOLLEYBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Lutheran High School Cougars for their first place win in the 2015 Class 2 Volleyball State Championship.

This team and their coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the Lutheran High School Cougars for a job well done.

TRIBUTE TO CHET ROED

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Chet Roed of Mount Ayr, Iowa, for being selected as a member of the Mount Ayr Community Hall of Fame.

Chet taught industrial arts at the Mount Ayr school system for over 30 years. He is credited by many in the community for teaching them how to take care of their homes, and to this day, years after his retirement, Chet remains highly respected by his former students for the knowledge he imparted onto them. He not only contributed to the Mount Ayr community in the classroom, but also in athletics. For years he led the track and football teams to postseason success.

Mr. Speaker, Chad's efforts embody the Iowa spirit and I am honored to represent him, and Iowans like him, in the United States Congress. I ask that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives will join me in congratulating Chet for his achievements and wishing him nothing but continued success.

DEMANDING A MEANINGFUL STRATEGY TO DEFEAT ISIS

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, the President has repeatedly underestimated ISIS, and under-responded to the threat they pose. The American people have lost confidence.

For months we have heard the same refrain from the White House. They say, "We will degrade and ultimately destroy ISIS."

There has been little progress, if any. Top U.S. military officials have confirmed that ISIS is far from contained.

When the President addressed the nation from the Oval Office on Sunday, Americans needed to hear a real strategy to eradicate ISIS. The speech came just days after an act of terror here at home. Instead of a plan, our Commander in Chief delivered the same empty rhetoric.

The United States must show our international partners that we are committed to defeating ISIS. The first step is for the President to outline a plan to destroy them . . . not degrade them.

Until that point, the vacuum of American leadership will continue to grow, and so will the influence of ISIS.

IN HONOR OF TOM AND CHARLOTTE OLEINIK'S GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, if there was a first couple of servant leadership and a model for a successful marriage, it would be Tom and Charlotte Oleinik of Huntsville, Texas. Today, I have the pleasure of honoring them on their Golden Wedding Anniversary and sharing just a bit of their half a century long love story.

Tom was born the fifth of 12 children in Rosholt, Wisconsin, worked on his family's dairy farm and attended a one-room schoolhouse. He served his country in Korea, at Fort Devins, and Fort Drum, before returning to the farm and then applying to protect and serve as a member of the Wisconsin Highway Patrol.

Native Texan Charlotte Fisher was a Christmastime gift to her parents, who ran a Goose Creek rice farm where she grew up with her two younger siblings. She went to work and then college in Florida after graduating from high school. That decision to attend Florida College and to spend a summer in Wisconsin with her roommate would change the course of her life forever.

That summer Charlotte worked days at American Motors and nights and weekends, she waitressed at the Timber Ridge Café where little did she know then a 50 year love story was about to begin when a handsome young state patrolman walked through the door.

Tom, being a very smart man, asked the beautiful waitress on a date, but after a few dates, Charlotte took ill and needed surgery. While she was hospitalized, a certain man in uniform was a frequent visitor, often arriving with flowers.

According to Tom it took a lot of proposing—and a lot of no's—to get a yes from his beloved Charlotte. Charlotte remembers it a little differently, but after Tom was baptized in 1965, this happy young couple got engaged and wed in Kenosha, Wisconsin on December 17, 1965.

They went back to Florida College together and then moved to Texas where Tom worked with Charlotte's father while waiting to attend and graduate from the Academy. After receiving his badge as a Texas trooper, Tom and Charlotte settled in Corrigan, Texas, where they raised three boys of their own and took in many troubled teenagers in a home full of love and operated a family business in addition to their full time jobs.

After a transfer to Brazoria County, Charlotte worked in the Angleton School District while their boys finished school. Then Tom retired and Huntsville won the lottery when this wonderful couple chose to call the town home.

Charlotte and Tom's impact on Walker County has been lasting, after moving to Huntsville they created the HEARTS Veterans Museum, a gem for the Texas 8th and continue to this day to be pillars in the community. Their servant leadership in our Lord's name and the love they radiate has set an amazing example for us all.

And I believe their 3 children, 17 grandchildren, a great grandson and the many troubled teens they have cared for would agree. The U.S. House congratulates you on celebrating your 50th wedding anniversary.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR H.R. 1217 "PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHTS PROTECTION ACT OF 2015"

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, the past few months have been marked by senseless violence and tragedy across the globe and in our own country from Tuscon, Aurora, Sandy Hook, Charleston, Chattanooga, Roseburg, and now most recently in San Bernardino, California.

It is past time that we come together united by our common humanity and with this simple message: the violence must stop.

The senseless mass shooting in San Bernardino reminds us of the imperative of ending gun violence in our country.

And there are actions that can be taken to reduce gun violence beginning with the enactment of the bipartisan "Public Safety and Second Amendment Rights Protection Act of 2015" (H.R. 1217).

This bipartisan legislation, which I am proud to be an original co-sponsor, will help prevent guns from falling into the hands of criminals and reinforce the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding gun owners.

Expanding the existing background check system to cover all commercial firearm sales, the Public Safety and Second Amendment Rights Protection Act of 2015 ensures that criminals and the dangerously mentally ill cannot slip through background check loopholes that endanger the safety and rights of every American.

H.R. 1217 greatly reduces the number of places where a criminal can buy a gun.

Right now a criminal can buy a firearm in the parking lot of a gun show, over the internet, or through a newspaper ad without needing a background check.

The bill closes these loopholes while ensuring that background checks are conducted in the same way federally licensed dealers have for more than 40 years.

The legislation also strengthens the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding gun owners by banning the government from creating a federal registry and makes the misuse of records a felony, punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

It provides reasonable exceptions for family and friend transfers and allows active military personnel to buy guns in the state they are stationed.

It lets gun owners use a state concealed carry permit issued within the last five years in lieu of a background check and permits interstate handgun sales from licensed dealers.

The bill also improves the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) by incentivizing states to improve reporting of criminals and the dangerously mentally ill and by directing future grant funds toward better record-sharing systems.

H.R. 1217 will also reduce federal funds to states that do not comply.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot be against criminals, terrorists and the dangerously mentally ill getting guns and be against background checks.

I thank Congressmen PETER KING (R–NY) and MIKE THOMPSON (D–CA) for introducing this bipartisan legislation (H.R. 1217), which is the House companion to an identical bipartisan bill introduced previously by Senators JOE MANCHIN (D–WV) and PAT TOOMEY (R–PA).

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1217 is anti-crime, pro-lawful gun owner and pro-Second Amendment.

It will save lives and strengthen the rights of law-abiding gun owners.

It deserves a vote in the House.

RECOGNIZING THE 2015 MVLE AWARD RECIPIENTS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 2015 MVLE Annual Award Recipients.

For 44 years, MVLE has provided employment opportunities and support services to individuals with disabilities and thereby created an environment which has allowed its clients to live in dignity and as independently as possible. MVLE has achieved this success by partnering with local businesses as well as with government agencies and other not-for-profit organizations to maximize the benefits of its various programs and services. MVLE, its staff, and dedicated volunteers and supporters can be proud that they are making a positive difference in someone's life every day.

Each year, MVLE honors individual participants, as well as business and community partners, who exemplify MVLE's ideals. I am pleased to submit the names of the following 2015 award recipients:

The President's Award is presented to individuals who have shown outstanding progress toward gaining independence and self-sufficiency through participation in employment and community services. The 2015 President's Award recipients are Anis Iqbal, Steven Pennington, and Josh Renggli.

The Chairman's Award is presented to an outstanding business partner who has shown excellence in hiring practices, creating supportive work environments, and supporting the mission of MVLE. The 2015 Chairman's Award recipients are Ah Love Oil and Embassy Suites Springfield.

MVLE also presents four Community Awards in honor of the four components of our community: Government, Employment, Social Responsibility, and Integration.

The Government Champion Award is presented to Parsons in recognition of its commitment to the creation of meaningful employment opportunities across government and business sectors.

The Employment Partner Award is presented to the Arlington County Equipment Bureau in recognition of its efforts in creating meaningful community employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and military veterans.

The Advocacy Champion Award is being presented to state Senator Barbara Favola, who represents Virginia's 31st district. MVLE presents this award to an outstanding partner who advocates for community integration by fostering partnerships across sectors to create new opportunities one person at a time.

There are two recipients of the Social Responsibility Award: Digital Office Products and Supply World. MVLE presents this award to an outstanding partner who supports MVLE and our community through contributions and volunteer work.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in commending MVLE for its success in helping individuals with disabilities achieve independence and in congratulating the 2015 MVLE Annual Award recipients. The efforts of MVLE, its supporters, community partners, and clients are an inspiration to all and are truly worthy of our highest praise.

CONGRATULATING THE NEW HAVEN HIGH SCHOOL SHAMROCKS FOR THEIR SECOND PLACE FINISH IN THE 2015 MISSOURI CLASS 2 VOLLEYBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the New Haven High School Shamrocks for their second place finish in the 2015 Class 2 Volleyball State Championship.

This team and their coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the second place win to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the New Haven Shamrocks for a job well done.

TRIBUTE TO KENNON BALSTER

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and congratulate Kennon Balster of Blanchard, Iowa, for his induction into the Iowa High School Speech Association Hall of Fame. Kennon has been the coach of the Large Group and Director of Theatre at Clarinda High School for over 30 years.

The Iowa High School Speech Association Hall of Fame was established in 1976 to recognize distinguished individuals of statewide reputation for their outstanding accomplishments. Inductees are selected for going above and beyond expectations with their contributions, service, dedication, and commitment to the Association. It is the highest honor the Association can confer on an individual.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud and congratulate Kennon for earning this award. He is a shining example of how hard work and dedication can positively affect the future of our youth. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Kennon for his contributions to the speech and education community in the state of Iowa. I wish him nothing but continued success.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY: THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT HARVESTS THE ORGANS OF THE FALUN GONG

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today is the 65th International Human Rights Day.

It is fitting that we remember how the Chinese Government has denied the human rights of so many of Falun Gong, their family members and their friends.

The most basic human right is the right to live free.

Today, there are more Falun Gong practitioners in prison in China than any other persecuted group.

The Chinese Government's top priority is not to take care of its people; it is to stay in power. It sees Falun Gong rise in popularity in the 1990s as a threat. In reality, Falun Gong just wanted to be left alone.

To silence this threat, the Chinese Government murders Falun Gong members, harvesting their organs to give to others deemed more worthy.

We know this because brave men and women have come forward and reported these crimes, refusing to be silent. Those who have spoken out include the wife of a doctor who was forced to perform surgeries to remove the organs. A security guard who was ordered to stand watch while the surgeries take place has also spoken out about these practices. The evidence is undeniable of this detestable, inhumane practice by the Chinese Government.

The practice is a billion dollar business for the Chinese Government. Organ harvesting is the number one source of revenue for Chinese medical centers. A medical center is supposed to save lives, not take lives. Apparently, in China, the lives of the Falun Gong do not matter. Reports indicate that more than 10,000 have been killed by these barbaric medical procedures; they have been murdered for their organs.

The Chinese Government makes a profit and silences any group it sees as threatening. But they can't silence the Falun Gong nor

human rights advocates. We know what they are up to. We cannot let this continue.

The Chinese Government is an enemy of human rights. It is the enemy of its own people.

As a former judge in Texas, I know a thing or two about justice. And, justice has not been served to the Falun Gong community.

Over the years, Falun Gong followers have been imprisoned, tortured, and killed. But, despite Beijing's abuse, they continue to fight back.

Today, China must end its persecution of the Falun Gong.

The world leaders have been talking about climate change in Paris.

There needs to be a ''climate'' change in China. The air is polluted with the cries of the innocents murdered by the government.

The land is defiled by the acts of torture and organ harvesting.

The blood of the Falun Gong is on the hands of the Chinese officials.

I hope that one day soon all Chinese people will have the basic human right that the Creator endows to all creation: life.

The Falun Gong deserves to live free of oppression and murder.

They are courageous men and women.

The Chinese Government, in its zeal to keep power, kills its own people.

Power, not people, is the quest of the Chinese Government.

If the Chinese Government was put on trial before the world of free peoples and tried for its violations of human rights, it would be found guilty of terrorism. Its government officials would be in prison. They would be locked up. They would not see the light of the morning sun. They would be in the cold damp darkness of the jailhouse—the place reserved for the evil ones who harvest the organs of the Falun Gong.

And that's just the way it is.

IN MEMORY OF MR. TONY HADDAD OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS

HON. DARIN LaHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I commemorate the life of Mr. Tony Haddad, a restauranteur and local icon of Peoria, Illinois, who passed away this past Saturday at the age of 78.

Immigrating to Peoria from Lebanon in 1977, Mr. Haddad and his family arrived in the United States with only thirty dollars in his pocket. Although far from home, Haddad brought his culture to life through the food he sold from a pushcart in downtown Peoria for almost 35 years, which he later expanded into his own local restaurant. Mr. Haddad was the personification of the American dream.

His empathy and generosity made those who visited his food cart and restaurant not only his patrons, but his friends. Tony was always charitable, giving a meal to someone even if he knew they would not be able to repay him and, and he made time to listen to his customers' problems.

Alongside his work, the cornerstone to Haddad's life was the love and friendship of his wife of 60 years, Loreece. Together, they came to America and created their own legacy, raising six children, 18 grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Although he will be greatly missed, he will be remembered fondly and remain an icon of the 18th District.

TRIBUTE TO DULA AND BETTY THOMPSON

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Dula and Betty Thompson of Lewis, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 70th wedding anniversary. They married on October 11, 1945 in Troy, Kansas.

Dula and Betty's lifelong commitment to each other and their children, Marvin, Bill, Lanette, and Ken, along with their grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchild, truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Thompsons that make me proud to call myself an Iowan and represent the people of our great state.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 70th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for roll call vote 682. Had I been present. I would have voted no.

HONORING BETTE STOLTZ

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a friend, neighbor and activist who dedicated her life to improving South Brooklyn. On November 19, longtime neighborhood activist Bette Stoltz passed away. This Saturday, Brooklynites will come together to celebrate the life of this dedicated advocate and leader.

Bette made countless contributions to South Brooklyn, helping bring vitality, energy and entrepreneurship to the area. She worked to sure-up small businesses at a time of disinvestment. She was instrumental to revitalizing Smith Street and helping organize the Merchants Association in the 1980s, which fostered so much cultural life and vibrancy in the area. She organized the Smith Street Festivals in the fall and the Bastille Day Pétanque Tournament. She worked tirelessly to ensure Smith Street thrived, and most recently she was organizing to create a Business Improvement District on Smith and nearby Court Streets.

Her efforts extended well beyond the commercial corridors. By starting the South Brooklyn Local Development Corporation and the Red Hook Chamber of Commerce, she worked steadfastly to defend industrial businesses in Red Hook and Gowanus and expand opportunity and commerce throughout Brooklyn. Bette helped organize Friends of Greater Gowanus and served on the EPA Gowanus Canal Community Advisory Group, working on multiple fronts to push to remediate and restore the Gowanus Canal in a green, sustainable manner.

Bette created partnerships to connect low-income and public housing residents to businesses and jobs. She created internships for youth and a Culinary Arts Curriculum at the High School for International Studies on Baltic Street. Bette also helped develop adult training programs to better connect people to good-paying jobs in the trades, industry and with local merchants. For years, Bette served as a member of Community Board 6, ensuring her neighbors' voices were heard in development decisions shaping our area's physical, cultural and economic future.

Ultimately, South Brooklyn would not be as vibrant, diverse and culturally rich without Bette's hard work and many endeavors. My thoughts and prayers are with her husband, Michael, her children and her beloved grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, New York City's communities and, indeed, our local neighborhoods throughout the country are only as strong as the local residents who are willing to put in personal time and effort to organize and improve the areas in which we live. Every community would be lucky to have a community leader as vocal, engaged, dedicated and personally warm as Bette. She leaves behind a proud legacy, one that we will honor by continuing to improve our community. I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring her memory.

CHALLENGER ELEMENTARY ARTISTS TAKE TOP HONOR

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate three talented students from Challenger Elementary School in Pearland for winning top honors in the Texas Renaissance Festival's art contest.

In the drawing category, Brendon Thai took home first place and Amanda Yee took home third place. Katherine Tran took home second place in the painting category. Challenger Elementary is lucky to have such talented young artists and an incredible teacher, Lori Ellis, who does a great job of helping her students find their creativity.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Brendon, Amanda, and Katherine for their award-winning art.

TRIBUTE TO LARRY AND GLORIA SOUTH

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Larry and Gloria South of Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 55th wedding anniversary. They were married in 1960.

Larry and Gloria's lifelong commitment to each other, their children, Dee, Tammie, Judy, Margaret and Alice, their grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Souths that make me proud to call myself an Iowan and represent the people of our great state.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 55th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

THE OCCASION OF MR. PAT CORELLA'S RETIREMENT

HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize and congratulate Mr. Pat Corella on the occasion of his retirement from his post as Deputy Director of the Pima County Library.

Mr. Corella has dedicated over fifty years to serving his community with distinction. Born from humble beginnings, Mr. Corella has become a symbol of hard work, perseverance, and selflessness. A Tucson native, Mr. Corella is one of six siblings with strong family ties. Since a young age, Mr. Corella has borne much responsibility whether helping his family harvest crops in California during the summers to becoming an independent young man. He graduated from Pueblo High School in 1965 and soon began his involvement with the Pima County Public Library system. As a library page, he assisted in shelving, book circulation, operating equipment and researching.

In 1970 after marrying and beginning a family, he enrolled in the University of Arizona as a full-time student. In less than four years, Mr. Corella earned his bachelor's degree in Government and Public Administration. During that time, it was his job to drive the ''bookmobile'' to areas in Tucson and Pima County where he provided imperative library services to low-income and underrepresented communities.

Mr. Corella was instrumental in the opening of library branches in Tucson's barrios and surrounding rural communities. Due in part to his leadership, nineteen library branches were opened and sixteen others were either expanded or remodeled. Mr. Corella has always understood that libraries were educational institutions full of opportunity for underserved communities. He helped transition these library branches to modern technology and expanded the role of providing more services and resources beyond books. Today, Pima County branch libraries provide literacy programs for adults and children, after-school tutoring and access to computers and community services.

Mr. Corella's final day was November 26, 2015, exactly fifty years to the day he began as a library page.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure and honor to recognize the commitment and dedication to our Southern Arizona community and the library system that Mr. Corella has demonstrated for well over fifty years.

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Northern Virginia Community College. Over the past two decades, the National Capital Region, especially Northern Virginia, has experienced explosive growth, becoming one of the most economically vibrant and diverse regions in the country. Northern Virginia Community College has been a major contributing factor to this success.

Established in 1964 under the name Northern Virginia Technical College, the school opened with 761 students in a single building in Bailey's Crossroads. Renamed in 1966, Northern Virginia Community College, known locally as NOVA, now serves more than 100,000 full and part-time students at six campuses and three satellite educational centers, and through online learning.

NOVA graduates who receive passing grades in designated courses are guaranteed admission to more than 40 area four-year colleges and universities. An in-state student can save approximately $15,000, or 30% of tuition and fees, for a baccalaureate degree by attending NOVA for two years and then transferring to a public four-year institution. High school students can take advantage of this opportunity beginning at age 16.

It is the largest public educational institution in Virginia and the second-largest community college in the United States. It is also one of the most internationally diverse colleges in the nation, with 20% of the student population consisting of individuals from more than 180 countries. Nearly 4,000 faculty and staff members serve the students and the broader community. Nearly 300,000 individuals attend community activities on NOVA campuses each year.

NOVA offers a wide variety of programs that support academic achievement and personal growth, and that promote civic engagement, leadership development, community involvement, health & wellness, and culture. Dozens of student-led organizations enrich campus life and specialized populations such as the disabled or current and former members of the military receive services tailored to their unique circumstances.

Our local economy and our nation's security have benefitted from NOVA's innovative workforce development programs and cybersecurity curricula. Employers can rely on new-hires with credentials from NOVA and can partner with NOVA to develop customized training solutions so that recent graduates or current employees possess cutting edge skills required to succeed in a dynamic economy. The National Security Agency and the Department of Homeland Security have designated NOVA as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance, and representatives from the intelligence community routinely recruit graduates with an Associate of Applied Science degree in Cybersecurity from NOVA.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating NOVA on 50 years of delivering world-class post-secondary education and workforce development to ensure our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia continue to have such a highly-educated population and a globally competitive workforce. NOVA truly exemplifies the crucial role that publicly-supported higher education plays in our society. I look forward to seeing what NOVA will accomplish in the next 50 years.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT'S PLAN TO DEFEAT ISIS

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, this past Sunday evening, President Obama addressed the nation and detailed his four-part plan, as Commander-in-Chief, to keep the American people safe from terrorist acts committed by terrorist groups like ISIL and al Qaeda or by persons abroad or lone wolf ''franchise terrorists'' at home who are inspired by groups that profane the peaceful religion of Islam.

First, the plan calls for our military to continue hunting down terrorist plotters in any country where it is necessary.

In Iraq and Syria, American airpower has been used to great effect, taking out ISIL leaders, heavy weapons, oil tankers, and infrastructure.

Second, the plan calls for the United States to take away safe havens for terrorists by continuing to provide training and equipment to the tens of thousands of Iraqi and Syrian forces fighting ISIL.

The third part of the plan involves working with friends and allies to disrupt ISIL's operations by cutting off access to financing and disrupting recruitment efforts.

Finally, the plan calls for continued American leadership, working in conjunction with the international community, to establish a process—and timeline—to pursue ceasefires and a political resolution to the Syrian civil war.

Ending the civil war in Syria will allow the Syrian people, our allies, and also Russia, to focus on the common goal of destroying ISIL.

Critics have every right to disagree with the President's approach but they also have an obligation to propose realistic and practical alternatives to the President's plan, which, by the way, has been designed by American military commanders and counterterrorism experts and supported by the 65 countries that are part of the American-led coalition.

Our quarrel is not with Islam so I also commend the President's appeal for calm, unity, and cooperation among all persons of goodwill both in the United States and around the world.

The terrorist attacks in San Bernardino were horrific acts on innocent civilians perpetrated

by depraved individuals who pledge allegiance to organizations that misuse the peaceful religion of Islam for their own misguided purposes.

Such horrible and heinous acts are the responsibility of the perpetrators, and theirs alone, and for which they can be assured that they alone will be held accountable.

This was one of the central messages conveyed during the Prayer Vigil and Unity Press Conference I led last Sunday afternoon in Houston, the 4th largest and most diverse city in the United States.

In addition to the steps laid out by the President, I also believe there are additional steps the Congress should take, including bringing to the floor for debate and vote to pass H.R. 48, the ''No Fly for Foreign Fighters Act,'' that I introduced earlier this year.

This legislation would require TSA to check the Terrorist Screening Database and the terrorist watch list used in determining whether to permit a passenger to board a U.S.-bound or domestic flight and to take appropriate steps to ensure that those who pose a threat to aviation safety or national security are included in the Terrorism Database.

I ask a moment of silence for the victims killed and injured in the attacks by franchise terrorists last Wednesday in San Bernardino, California.

IN HONOR OF THE 80TH BIRTHDAY OF RAYMOND COCHRAN

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I ask for the House's attention today to recognize Pastor Raymond Cochran on his 80th birthday on December 13th.

Raymond was born in Lee County, Alabama in 1935 to John and Lucille Cochran.

Mr. Cochran found a passion for religion at an early age, having joined the Ebenezer Baptist Church at age seven. He holds Bachelors and Masters of Bible Theology degrees from the International Institute and Seminary in Plymouth, Florida, in addition to a Bachelor of Arts degree from Selma University in Selma, Alabama.

He also holds two honorary doctorates, in divinity and law, from the Union Theological Seminary in Birmingham, Alabama. Mr. Cochran has received numerous awards in recognition of his long service, and is involved in numerous community groups.

He served as the Pastor of seven different churches throughout Alabama and Georgia, before joining the Franchise Missionary Baptist in Phenix City, Alabama, where he has been the pastor for the past 47 years. Mr. Cochran and his wife Mary have six daughters, two sons, nineteen grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing the life and achievements of Mr. Raymond Cochran and wishing him a happy 80th birthday!

TRIBUTE TO MARK LARSEN

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Mark Larsen, of Mount Ayr, Iowa for being selected as a member of the Mount Ayr Community Hall of Fame.

Mark was hired as a math teacher and girls' basketball and track coach at Mount Ayr Schools in 1970. He coached six-on-six, and later five-on-five basketball, winning 286 games in total. His girls basketball teams won six conference titles and qualified for the state tournament in 1998. His girls track teams claimed 15 conference titles and four district championships. He also started the girls softball program in 1972, and on the softball diamond his teams amassed over 700 wins. Mark was inducted in to the Iowa Coaches Hall of Fame in 1998 and was elected to the Iowa High School Athletic Directors Association Hall of Fame in 2002.

Mr. Speaker, Mark's efforts embody the Iowa spirit and I am honored to represent him and Iowans like him in the United States Congress. As a coach, teacher, and athletic director, he has had a profound impact on the lives of thousands of Iowa's young people. I ask that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Mark for his achievements and wish him nothing but continued success.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate passed H.R. 2250, Further Continuing Appropriations Act, as amended.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S8563–S8621

Measures Introduced: Seventeen bills and two resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2383–2399, S.J. Res. 28, and S. Res. 333. **Page S8602**

Measures Reported:

Special Report entitled "Legislative Activities Report of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Thirteenth Congress". (S. Rept. No. 114–178)

S. Res. 189, expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the 25th anniversary of democracy in Mongolia.

S. Res. 320, congratulating the people of Burma on their commitment to peaceful elections, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

S. Res. 326, celebrating the 135th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the United States and Romania, and with an amended preamble. **Page S8602**

Measures Passed:

Further Continuing Appropriations Act: Senate passed H.R. 2250, further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016, after withdrawing the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute, and agreeing to the following amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S8581–88**

McConnell Amendment No. 2922, making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2016. **Page S8586**

McConnell Amendment No. 2923, to amend the title. **Page S8586**

Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act: Senate passed S. 142, to require special packaging for liquid nicotine containers, after withdrawing the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute, and agreeing to the following amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S8613–14**

McConnell (for Nelson/Ayotte) Amendment No. 2924, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S8614**

McConnell (for Nelson/Ayotte) Amendment No. 2925, to amend the title. **Page S8614**

Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act: Senate passed S. 993, to increase public safety by facilitating collaboration among the criminal justice, juvenile justice, veterans treatment services, mental health treatment, and substance abuse systems, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S8614–17**

McConnell (for Franken/Cornyn) Amendment No. 2926, to modify the authorization of appropriations. **Page S8614**

Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act Amendments: Senate passed S. 209, to amend the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act of 2005, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Page S8617**

McConnell (for Barrasso) Amendment No. 2714, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S8617**

Church Plan Clarification Act: Committee on Finance was discharged from further consideration of S. 2308, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify the treatment of church pension plans, and the bill was then passed. **Pages S8617–18**

Phyllis E. Galanti Arboretum: Committee on Veterans' Affairs was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2693, to designate the arboretum at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond, Virginia, as the "Phyllis E. Galanti Arboretum", and the bill was then passed. **Page S8618**

Foreclosure Relief and Extension for Servicemembers Act: Senate passed S. 2393, to extend temporarily the extended period of protection for members of uniformed services relating to mortgages, mortgage foreclosure, and eviction. **Pages S8618–19**

Direct Senate Legal Counsel: Senate agreed to S. Res. 333, to direct the Senate Legal Counsel to appear as amicus curiae in the name of the Senate in *Bank Markazi, The Central Bank of Iran v. Deborah D. Peterson, et al.* (S. Ct.). **Page S8619**

NOMINATIONS—Agreement: A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that at 5 p.m., on Monday, December 14, 2015, Senate begin consideration of the nominations of Alissa M. Starzak, of New York, to be General Counsel of the Department of the Army, John Conger, of Maryland, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, Stephen P. Welby, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense, and Franklin R. Parker, of Illinois, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Navy; that there be 30 minutes for debate on the nomination of Alissa M. Starzak, of New York, to be General Counsel of the Department of the Army, equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, Senate vote, without intervening action or debate, on confirmation of the nominations, in order listed; and that no further motions be in order to any of the nominations. **Page S8613**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

Richard Capel Howorth, of Mississippi, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2020.

(Prior to this action, Committee on Environment and Public Works was discharged from further consideration.)

Eric Drake Eberhard, of Washington, to be a Member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation for a term expiring October 6, 2018.

Darryl L. DePriest, of Illinois, to be Chief Counsel for Advocacy, Small Business Administration.

Cherry Ann Murray, of Kansas, to be Director of the Office of Science, Department of Energy.

Page S8613

119 Air Force nominations in the rank of general.

8 Army nominations in the rank of general.

1 Marine Corps nomination in the rank of general.

1 Navy nomination in the rank of admiral.

Routine lists in the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Foreign Service, and Navy. **Pages S8619–21**

Messages from the House: **Page S8601**

Measures Referred: **Page S8601**

Petitions and Memorials: **Pages S8601–02**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S8602**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S8602–04**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S8604–10**

Additional Statements: **Pages S8598–S8601**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S8610–11**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S8611**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 6:32 p.m., until 3 p.m. on Monday, December 14, 2015. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S8619.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS OF MILITARY OPERATIONS

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine increasing effectiveness of military operations, after receiving testimony from General Norton A. Schwartz, USAF (Ret.), former Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Business Executives for National Security, McLean, Virginia; Admiral James G. Stavridis, USN (Ret.), former Commander of European Command and Southern Command, Tufts University Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Medford, Massachusetts; and Christopher J. Lamb, National Defense University Institute for National Strategic Studies.

TERRORISM AND GLOBAL OIL MARKETS OVERSIGHT

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine terrorism and global oil markets, after receiving testimony from Keith Crane, RAND Corporation, Arlington, Virginia; and Peter E. Harrell, Center for a New American Security, Sara Vakhshouri, Atlantic Council, and Jamie Webster, IHS, all of Washington, D.C.

INDEPENDENT SOUTH SUDAN

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine independent South Sudan, focusing on a failure of leadership, after receiving testimony from Donald Booth, Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, Department of State; Bob Leavitt, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, Agency for International Development; and Princeton N. Lyman, United States Institute of Peace, Adotei Akwei, Amnesty International USA, and John Prendergast, Enough Project, all of Washington, D.C.

GAO AND OIG RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management concluded a hearing to examine the importance of following through on GAO and OIG recommendations, including how implementing recommendations can achieve financial benefits and strengthen government performance, after receiving testimony from Gene L. Dodaro, Comptroller General of the United States, Government Accountability Office; Michael E. Horowitz, Chair, Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and Inspector General, Department of Justice; and Jim H. Crumpacker, Director, Departmental GAO–OIG Liaison Office, Department of Homeland Security.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S.1318, to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for protection of maritime navigation and prevention of nuclear terrorism, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute; and

The nominations of Dana J. Boente, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia for the term of four years, Robert Lloyd Capers, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York for the term of four years, John P. Fishwick, Jr., to be United States Attorney for the Western District of Virginia for the term of four years, and Emily Gray Rice, to be United States Attorney for the District of New Hampshire for the term of four years, all of the Department of Justice.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 29 public bills, H.R. 4208–4236; and 3 resolutions, H. Res. 561–563 were introduced. **Pages H9269–70**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H9271–72**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 2406, to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–377, Part 1); and

H. Res. 560, providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 644) to reauthorize trade facilitation and trade enforcement functions and activities, and for other purposes, and providing for consideration of the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 2250) making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 114–378). **Page H9269**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Jenkins (WV) to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H9209**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:22 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H9212**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:39 p.m. and reconvened at 2:48 p.m. **Page H9217**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Securing Fairness in Regulatory Timing Act of 2015: H.R. 3831, amended, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend the annual comment period for payment rates under Medicare Advantage; **Pages H9217–18**

Surface Transportation Board Reauthorization Act of 2015: S. 808, to establish the Surface Transportation Board as an independent establishment; **Pages H9218–23**

Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015: H.R. 4188, to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal years 2016 and 2017; **Pages H9223–42**

Department of Homeland Security CBRNE Defense Act of 2015: H.R. 3875, amended, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish within the Department of Homeland Security a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives Office; **Pages H9242–48**

DHS Science and Technology Reform and Improvement Act of 2015: H.R. 3578, amended, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to strengthen and make improvements to the Directorate of Science and Technology of the Department of Homeland Security, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 416 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 687; **Pages H9248–55, H9262–63**

State and Local Cyber Protection Act of 2015: H.R. 3869, amended, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require State and local coordination on cybersecurity with the national cybersecurity and communications integration center;

Pages H9255–57

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: "To amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to assist State and local coordination on cybersecurity with the national cybersecurity and communications integration center, and for other purposes.". **Page H9257**

First Responder Identification of Emergency Needs in Disaster Situations: H.R. 2795, amended, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to submit a study on the circumstances which may impact the effectiveness and availability of first responders before, during, or after a terrorist threat or event, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 396 yeas to 12 nays, Roll No. 689. **Pages H9257–62, H9264–65**

Question of Privilege: Representative Pelosi rose to a question of the privileges of the House and offered a resolution. The Chair ruled that the resolution did not constitute a question of the privileges of the House. Subsequently, Representative Pelosi appealed the ruling of the chair and Representative McCarthy 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 242 yeas to 173 nays, Roll No. 688.

Pages H9263–64

Senate Messages: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today and message received from the Senate today appear on pages H9217, H9223.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H9262–63, H9264, H9264–65. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6 p.m.

Committee Meetings

TERRORISM AND THE VISA WAIVER PROGRAM

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on National Security; and Subcommittee on Health Care, Benefits and Administrative Rules, held a joint hearing entitled "Terrorism and the Visa Waiver Program". Testimony was heard from Kelli Ann Burriesci, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Policy, Department of Homeland Security; and public witnesses.

CONFERENCE REPORT TO ACCOMPANY THE TRADE FACILITATION AND TRADE ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2015; SENATE AMENDMENTS TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on a conference report to accompany H.R. 644, the "Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015"; and Senate amendments to H.R. 2250, the "Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2016" [Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016]. The committee granted, by voice vote, a rule that provides for consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 644. The rule provides that the conference report shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration. The rule provides that the previous question shall be considered as ordered without intervention of any motion except one hour of debate and one motion to recommit if applicable. The rule dictates that debate on the conference report is divided pursuant to clause 8(d) of rule XXII. Additionally, the rule provides for the consideration of the Senate amendments to H.R. 2250. The rule makes in order a single motion offered by the chair of the Committee on Appropriations or his designee that the House concur in the Senate amendments to H.R. 2250. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the motion and provides that it is not subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule provides that the Senate amendments and the motion shall be considered as read. The rule provides one hour of debate on the motion equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. Testimony was heard from Chairman Brady of Texas, and Representatives Levin and Reichert.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE NATION'S WEATHER SATELLITE PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Environment; and Subcommittee on Oversight, held a joint hearing entitled "An Overview of the Nation's Weather Satellite Programs and Policies". Testimony was heard from Stephen Volz, Assistant Administrator, National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Services, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and David Powner, Director, Information Technology Management Issues, Government Accountability Office.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2015

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Joint Meetings

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: to receive a briefing on human rights violations in Russian-occupied Crimea, 2 p.m., B318, Rayburn Building.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

3 p.m., Monday, December 14

Senate Chamber

Program for Monday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond 5 p.m.), Senate will begin consideration of the nominations of Alissa M. Starzak, of New York, to be General Counsel of the Department of the Army, John Conger, of Maryland, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, Stephen P. Welby, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense, and Franklin R. Parker, of Illinois, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and vote on confirmation of the nominations at approximately 5:30 p.m.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 a.m., Friday, December 11

House Chamber

Program for Friday: Consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 644—Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015 (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of the Senate amendments to H.R. 2250—Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2016 (Subject to a Rule).

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