United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2015 No. 183

House of Representatives

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

PRAYER

Rear Admiral Margaret Grun Kibben, Chief of Chaplains for the United States Navy, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, whose way is in the sea and whose paths are in the great waters, we offer our gratitude to You, for the pastors, rabbis, priests, and imams who, over the course of 240 years, have left the safety of their homes and the comfort of their pulpits to wear the cloth of this country's Navy.

We would ask that You would grant Your blessing on these whom You have called to ensure that the voices of faith are never silenced, to provide the sanctuary of Your presence, to serve alongside the sons and daughters who faithfully serve in every clime and place to preserve the ideals You have offered.

In our efforts to preserve liberty, remind us that the freedoms we enjoy are gifts of Your grace.

In our deliberations to uphold justice, keep us bound to Your law of mercy.

In our encounters with each other, guide us with Your steadfast love that, in these days of tumultuous seas of conflict and raging waters of uncertainty, Your way be known and Your path revealed. It is in the strength of Your name we pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

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.*

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. ALLEN 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.

REMOVAL AND APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 2, 2015.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: I am writing to advise you of my intention to retire from federal service in early 2016. Accordingly, I hereby resign as Chief Administrative Officer of the House effective upon the election of my successor, or as you otherwise direct.

It has been a high honor and distinct privilege to serve you and your colleagues, past and present, since the 1970's; and especially so, to serve alongside the extraordinarily dedicated men and women in the Office of the CAO during the 113th and 114th Congresses.

In order to ensure a seamless transition, I am pleased that Clerk of the House Karen Haas has graciously detailed to my office Mr. Will Plaster, a senior member of her staff, to serve on an interim basis as Deputy Chief Administrative Officer.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate more than words can adequately convey the priceless opportunities afforded me throughout my career to serve this magnificent—and uniquely American—institution we call the people's House.

I congratulate you on your election as Speaker, and wish you all the best in the challenging days ahead.

Sincerely,

ED CASSIDY.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 1 of rule II, Mr. Ed Cassidy, of the State of Connecticut, is removed effective December 31, 2015.

Pursuant to the provisions of section 208(a) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, the Chair appoints William Plaster of the Commonwealth of Virginia to act as and to exercise the duties of Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives, effective December 31, 2015.

The Chair will administer the oath at this time.

Mr. Plaster appeared at the bar of the House and took the oath of office, as follows:

Do you solemnly swear that you will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that you will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that you take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that you will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which you are about to enter, so help you God.

The SPEAKER. Congratulations.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

HALT ON K–1 VISA PROGRAM

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the terrorist attack in San Bernardino, the deadliest attack on U.S. soil since September 11, made it clear that our homeland is vulnerable to terrorists.

The terrorist couple's attack also made it clear that there are serious screening problems associated with the K–1 fiance(e) visa program. That is exactly how the wife involved in these attacks came to the United States to begin with.

Mr. Speaker, protecting our homeland is my most sacred duty, which is why I want the American people to know that right now, I will be introducing legislation to put a halt on the K–1 visa program until the Congress votes to resume it.

In the meantime, my legislation would require the GAO to review the national security risks associated with this program and to submit findings to the Congress.

This is the right and commonsense thing to do. We must protect our homeland.

PANTHER PRIDE

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, the color purple and Panther Pride are alive and well in Texas.

Ridge Point High School has been open for 5 years—5 short years—yet last Saturday, they took us to heights that schools that have been around for 50 years have never achieved. They made the Final 4, the Texas 5A Division 2 State semifinal football playoffs.

Mr. Speaker, the Panthers came up a little short, but fans like me walked out darn proud of our guys. They never quit, and they never will.

I have a warning for teams we play next year: Panthers don't retreat—we reload.

FUNDING TO TEST RAPE KITS

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the House will vote on an omnibus spending bill, and I look forward to supporting that bill because it does so much good for America, moves us forward, and brings us together as a body to move America forward. Included in there is the amendment I have had on the House floor, and the Senate accepted to add an additional $4 million to test rape kits.

Mr. Speaker, there is a horrific backlog of rape kits in this country, and the Federal Government has stepped forward. Now we will step forward with $45 million—last year it was $41 million—to give to local governments to reduce the backlog. That means we will be able to catch the guilty and stop them before they violate the law again and violate another woman, because rapists are often serial offenders.

I look forward to supporting the omnibus bill, protecting women in America, and finding justice for criminals.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF FAILED EXCHANGES ACT

(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, the only thing 5 years of ObamaCare has shown us has been its multiple and continuous flaws. When this legislation was signed into law, the President freely gave money away to establish State exchanges. However, they forgot one piece of the puzzle: They provided no provisions for recouping funds when the State exchanges failed.

Mr. Speaker, these accounts spent billions of taxpayer dollars and provided zero solutions to protect taxpayers when States decided to stop operating the exchanges. Where is the accountability? This burden cannot be placed on the taxpayer.

Today I introduced the Transparency and Accountability of Failed Exchanges Act to ensure Americans are not on the hook for the billions that were recklessly doled out to the States to establish these State exchanges. By promoting accountability and transparency, my legislation fixes the problems by providing clear steps to recover Federal funds when State exchanges fail, and it requires unused funds to be returned back to the Treasury Department to pay down the national debt.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation that promotes accountability and transparency.

BOOSTING TIMBERING IN THE ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to once again reinforce the importance of proper management of our Nation's national forests.

Over the past two decades, timber harvests in the Allegheny National Forest have fallen dramatically, following a trend we have seen in national

forests nationwide. This has a domino effect on communities and school districts in and around the forest, because, since 1908, counties in national forests are entitled to 25 percent of the receipts from timber sales under the 1908 Good Neighbor Compact.

These are communities which were built on the lumber industry and natural resources. Many are among the most rural, poorest in Pennsylvania, and the funding from timber sales is critical for schools, roads, and other public services, something these towns and school districts depend on.

Due to this diminished revenue and various challenges forest communities continue to face, we must pass real reform that leads to good management practices in our national forests. As such, I continue to support the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2015, or H.R. 2647. I believe this legislation is a key to increasing timber harvests in our national forests, which will not only benefit our communities but will create a forest that is healthier and less prone to wildfires and invasive species.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ACADEMY NOMINEE ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce my nominees for appointment to our Nation's service academies. With the recommendations of my Veterans Council, we have nominated a group of young men and women that are committed to representing the First District and our great Nation.

For the U.S. Naval Academy, we have Trent Foster; we have Kody Rulofson and David Shattuck.

For the U.S. Military Academy, we have Nicholas Katz, Bradley Salyer, and Wyatt Wyckoff.

For the U.S. Air Force Academy, we have Christiana Jackman.

For our Merchant Marine Academy, we have Anna Lewis and Garret Reader.

For the U.S. Naval Academy and the U.S. Air Force Academy, we have Mason Royse.

And for the U.S. Naval Academy and the U.S. Military Academy, we have Rory Sprague.

Congratulations to them all.

We thank the Veterans Council for helping with the interview process and vetting these young people.

We thank the parents for raising them to be the go-getters that they are and for the dedication required to get to this point. And we thank the nominees themselves for the hard work that it takes and the service that they are willing to do and put out and their sacrifice for us.

God bless them all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PALAZZO). 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.

STEM CELL THERAPEUTIC AND RESEARCH REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 2820) to reauthorize the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendment is as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Reauthorization Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE C.W. BILL YOUNG CELL TRANSPLANTATION PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 379(d)(2)(B) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 274k(d)(2)(B)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''remote collection'' and inserting ''collection''; and

(2) by inserting ''including remote collection,'' after ''cord blood units,''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 379B of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 274m) is amended—

(1) by striking ''$30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2011 through 2014 and''; and

(2) by inserting ''and $30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020'' before the period at the end.

(c) SECRETARY REVIEW ON STATE OF SCIENCE.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Director of the National Institutes of Health, the Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, and the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration, including the Advisory Council on Blood Stem Cell Transplantation established under section 379(a) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 274k(a)), and other stakeholders, where appropriate given relevant expertise, shall conduct a review of the state of the science of using adult stem cells and birthing tissues to develop new types of therapies for patients, for the purpose of considering the potential inclusion of such new types of therapies in the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program (established under such section 379) in addition to the continuation of ongoing activities. Not later than June 30, 2019, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives recommendations on the appropriateness of such new types of therapies for inclusion in the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program.

SEC. 3. CORD BLOOD INVENTORY.

Section 2 of the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 274k note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''one-time'';

(2) by striking subsection (c);

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

(4) in subsection (d) (as so redesignated)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''paragraphs (2) and (3)'' and inserting ''paragraphs (2), (3), and (4)'';

(B) in paragraph (2)(B), by striking ''subsection (d)'' and inserting ''subsection (c)''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) CONSIDERATION OF BEST SCIENCE.—The Secretary shall take into consideration the best scientific information available in order to maximize the number of cord blood units available for transplant when entering into contracts under this section, or when extending a period of funding under such a contract under paragraph (2).

''(5) CONSIDERATION OF BANKED UNITS OF CORD BLOOD.—In extending contracts pursuant to paragraph (3), and determining new allocation amounts for the next contract period or contract extension for such cord blood bank, the Secretary shall take into account the number of cord blood units banked in the National Cord Blood Inventory by a cord blood bank during the previous contract period, in addition to consideration of the ability of such cord blood bank to increase the collection and maintenance of additional, genetically diverse cord blood units.'';

(5) in subsection (f) (as so redesignated)—

(A) by striking paragraph (4); and

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

(6) in subsection (g) (as so redesignated)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''$23,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2011 through 2014 and''; and

(ii) by inserting ''and $23,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020'' before the period at the end; and

(B) by striking paragraph (2).

SEC. 4. DETERMINATION ON THE DEFINITION OF HUMAN ORGAN.

Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall issue determinations with respect to the inclusion of peripheral blood stem cells and umbilical cord blood in the definition of human organ.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

□ 0915

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2820, the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Reauthorization Act, introduced by my colleagues, Representative CHRIS SMITH of New Jersey and Representative DORIS MATSUI of California.

This bill is another example of the Energy and Commerce Committee's ongoing effort to work together in a bipartisan manner to strengthen public health and solve problems in our Nation's healthcare system.

H.R. 2820 reauthorizes the National Cord Blood Inventory program and the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program through fiscal year 2020,

which provides Federal support for cord blood donation and research essential to increasing patient access to transplants.

The National Cord Blood Inventory, the NCBI, is a program to collect, store, and distribute umbilical cord blood to those in need of a cord blood stem cell transplant. These cord blood units must meet specific criteria, and are available through the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program to treat patients who need a transplant.

The blood-forming cells from cord blood have unique qualities that help some patients who would otherwise be unable to have a potentially lifesaving transplant. NCBI is the largest and most diverse marrow registry in the world.

The C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program provides support to patients who undergo a transplant and helps match donors to patients who are in need of an unrelated marrow donor. Seventy percent of all patients who need a transplant don't have a match donor in their family, and this program gives them somewhere to turn.

I support H.R. 2820. I urge my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 2820, the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Reauthorization Act, would continue the highly successfully Be The Match Registry for bone marrow and umbilical cord blood transplantation.

This program provides hope to people in need of lifesaving transplants. Each year about 20,000 patients receive blood marrow transplants. Seventy percent of those patients do not find a match within their family and instead rely on the Be The Match Registry to find a non-relative bone marrow donor.

That is why continued Federal support for the Be The Match Registry and its nearly 12.5 million registered bone marrow donors and collection of more than 209,000 cord blood units is so important.

I am glad that we have come together on a bipartisan basis in our committee and in the House and the Senate to support this lifesaving program.

I want to thank Congresswoman MATSUI for her leadership in this area. I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' to concur with Senate H.R. 2820.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I would like to reiterate the important work that the National Marrow Donor Program does for patients. Be The Match, operated by the National Marrow Donor Program, has facilitated more than 68,000 marrow and cord blood transplants, which is an average of more than 520 transplants a month. They conducted their first transplant as the National Marrow Donor Program in 1987.

They also continue to lead the way in developing new cellular therapies, in advancing services to speed the transplant process, and improving treatments for post-transplant complications. Be The Match invests in dedicated researchers whose countless hours in the lab and caring for patients have helped more patients than ever before to receive a transplant.

Beyond establishing the registry, investment in medical research over the years has been essential in helping find the answers that save the lives of more patients.

In 1990, the Nobel Prize in Medicine was awarded to Dr. E. Donnall Thomas for discoveries in cellular transplantation.

In 1994, the first peripheral blood stem cell collected for use in unrelated transplants occurred.

In 1998, the cord blood program was launched.

In 2001, the NMDP Repository was built, one of the world's largest tissue sample storage facilities used for medical research.

In 2004, Be The Match and the NMDP partnered with the Medical College of Wisconsin to create the Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research.

The great work and discovery continues. I urge bipartisan support for H.R. 2820 and support for discovery and cures for patients.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2820, the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Reauthorization Act of 2015.

This bill reauthorizes the National Cord Blood Inventory program and the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program, two programs that save lives every day through bone marrow transplants and blood infusions.

This bill is very similar to legislation that the Georgia General Assembly passed in 2007, establishing the newborn umbilical cord blood bank. I voted for that legislation in the Georgia General Assembly, and I will vote in favor of this legislation.

For some patients who have leukemia, lymphoma, sickle cell anemia, or a life-threatening blood cancer, help from programs like the National Cord Blood Inventory program and the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program, may be their last hope at living longer, healthier lives. That is why H.R. 2820 is so important.

This bill reauthorizes these two programs through 2020, and continues to provide lifesaving techniques and research to many who fight for their lives every day.

This bill originally passed the House on September 8 by voice vote. I encourage my colleagues to support it again.

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the prime sponsor of this legislation.

(Mr. SMITH of New Jersey asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank, first of all, our distinguished chairman, Chairman PITTS, for his extraordinary work on this legislation.

I also want to thank Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. PALLONE, and, of course, Chairman UPTON for his strong support of this reauthorization.

In the Senate, we have had a tremendous team of ORRIN HATCH, JACK REED, RICHARD BURR, and AL FRANKEN, who again worked in a very bipartisan way to ensure that this life-affirming, lifesaving legislation not only made it through the Senate, but was beefed up, made stronger.

People talk about the lack of bipartisanship. I do believe this is one of those bills where we have all come together to try to say—whether it be bone marrow or adult stem cells in the form of cord blood—that it be made available to as many people as possible in the most usable and efficacious way.

Mr. Speaker, just let me say—and we know this and I will try not to be too redundant because I think the chairman has explained it—the bill under consideration by the House today does reauthorize through 2020 two critically important and complementary programs, the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program and the National Cord Blood Inventory.

It is especially appropriate during this time of gift-giving to reauthorize these life-giving programs. Americans willing to give the gift of life to others are at the heart of the success of this program.

In reauthorizing it, we are grateful for the adult donors willing to provide bone marrow or peripheral blood stem cells as well as mothers who donate their child's cord blood through public cord blood banks.

Under the National Cord Blood Inventory program, Mr. Speaker, contracts are awarded to cord blood banks to collect cord blood units donated after mothers give birth.

Around 4 million births occur in the United States every year. God, in his grace and love, has left a gift that then gives life and helps to cure diseases, including leukemia and other devastating blood-related diseases, left after that birth.

Again, cord blood and the placenta itself is teeming with stem cells that are, again, highly efficacious in curing and mitigating disease.

Americans have access to more than 12 million adult volunteer donors and 209,000 cord blood units through Be The Match. The program's Bone Marrow and Cord Blood Coordinating Centers

make information about bone marrow and cord blood transplants available to donors and patients. The Office of Patient Advocacy helps support patients and families dealing with a life-threatening diagnosis. The Stem Cell Therapeutic Outcomes Database tracks results.

Again, if you want to know how something is working or not, you track it, and you are constantly recalibrating it in order to make it better.

Today's bill is the second reauthorization of the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005, a law that I authored a decade ago, joined by Artur Davis of Alabama, legislation that, again, cleared the Senate with the great help of Senator ORRIN HATCH.

That law built upon the excellent work of our distinguished, late colleague Bill Young of Florida to facilitate bone marrow transplants and created a brand-new national umbilical cord blood donation and transplantation program.

Dr. Jeffrey Chell, the CEO of NMDP/Be The Match, has noted that, for many diseases, including blood cancers and sickle cell anemia disease, cellular therapy is the best hope for a cure.

As he told Chairman PITTS and his committee, the patient population rising the most quickly is the elderly population, growing by double digits every year. The reason for that is that the medical conditions for which transplant is often the only cure tend to occur in older populations; diseases like acute leukemia, myelofibrosis, and others.

Breathtaking scientific breakthroughs have turned medical waste, post-birth placentas, and umbilical cord blood into medical miracles, treating more than 70 diseases—some say as many as 80—including leukemia, lymphoma, and sickle cell anemia.

Let me just conclude by pointing out that, during consideration of the Senate HELP Committee, language was added to direct relevant agencies to study the state of science using adult stem cells and birthing tissues to develop new therapies for patients.

Last year I visited Celgene Corporation in Summit, New Jersey, to learn of their extraordinary efforts to use cord blood to heal diabetic foot ulcers and how they turn amniotic membrane, an old placenta, into wound management that now has advanced past stage 3 clinical trials to the approval and regulatory filings stage.

Again, I want to thank the chief cosponsor, Ms. MATSUI; Mr. JOLLY; and Mr. FATTAH. Again, this is a bipartisan bill.

Mr. Speaker, the bill under consideration by the House today reauthorizes through 2020 two critically important and complementary programs—the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program and National Cord Blood Inventory.

During this time of gift-giving, it is incredibly timely to reauthorize these life-giving programs. Americans willing to give the gift of life to others are at the heart of the success of this program. In reauthorizing it we are grateful for the adult donors willing to provide bone marrow or peripheral blood stem cells, as well as mothers who donate their child's cord blood through public cord blood banks.

Today, Mr. Speaker, under the National Cord Blood Inventory Program (NCBI), contracts are awarded to cord blood banks to collect cord blood units donated after mothers give birth. These units are then made available through the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program also called the Be the Match Registry. The Program provides a single point of access, enabling those in need of lifesaving transplants to search for a match via an integrated nationwide network of bone marrow donors and cord blood stem cells. Americans have access to more than 12 million adult volunteer donors and 209,000 cord blood units through Be The Match. The Program's Bone Marrow and Cord Blood Coordinating Centers makes information about bone marrow and cord blood transplant available to donors and patients, and the Office of Patient Advocacy helps support patients and families dealing with a life-threatening diagnosis. And the Stem Cell Therapeutic Outcomes Database tracks results.

The leadership of Senators ORRIN HATCH, JACK REED, RICHARD BURR and AL FRANKEN was invaluable in shepherding this vital bill through the Senate. And special thanks to both Chairmen UPTON and PITTS for their outstanding leadership and help on this bill, as well as the strong support by Ranking Members PALLONE and GREEN. I am deeply grateful to original cosponsors Ms. MATSUI, Mr. JOLLY and Mr. FATTAH for their important contributions.

Today's bill is the second reauthorization of the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005, a law that I sponsored a decade ago joined by Artur Davis of Alabama; legislation that cleared the Senate with the incomparable help of Senator ORRIN HATCH. That law built upon the excellent work of our distinguished late colleague Bill Young of Florida to facilitate bone marrow transplants and created a brand new national umbilical cord blood donation and transplantation program.

Dr. Jeffrey W. Chell, CEO of NMDP/Be the Match has noted that for many diseases including blood cancers and sickle cell disease, cellular therapy is the best hope for a cure. He told Chairman PITTS' subcommittee that the patient population "rising the most quickly is the elderly population . . . growing by double digits every year, and the reason for that is the medical conditions for which transplant is often the only cure tend to occur in older populations for diseases like acute myeloid leukemia, myelodysplastic syndrome, myelofibrosis and others."

Breathtaking scientific breakthroughs have turned medical waste—post birth placentas and umbilical cord blood—into medical miracles treating more than 70 diseases including leukemia, lymphoma and sickle cell anemia.

Not only has God in His wisdom and goodness created a placenta and umbilical cord to nurture and protect the precious life of an unborn child, but now we know that another gift awaits us immediately after birth. Something very special is left behind—cord blood that is teeming with lifesaving stem cells.

In addition to currently treating more than 70 diseases like sickle cell anemia and leukemia, cord blood units from NCBI banks are also made available for research on future therapies. In groundbreaking research, Dr. Kurtzberg of Duke University also testified last June that "in addition to use in patients with malignant and genetic diseases, cord blood is showing enormous potential for use in cellular therapies and regenerative medicine. Cord blood derived vaccines against viruses and certain types of cancers are currently under development and in early phase clinical trials. Cells, manufactured from cord blood units are being developed to boost recovery of the immune system. Cells regulating autoimmunity (Regulatory T cells) are also in clinical trials. These approaches, which often utilize cord blood banked in family banks, may help patients with Type 1 Diabetes, as well as other diseases."

Dr. Kurtzberg further testified that she and others are developing uses for cord blood to treat acquired brain disorders. "Over the past six years" she said "we have initiated trials of autologous (the patient's own) cord blood in babies with birth asphyxia, cerebral palsy, hearing loss and autism . . ."

Dr. Kurtzberg has also said "We've learned that when donor cells are infused into one's body, they go to the brain and help heal the brain. When a child has a brain injury around birth, we can use their own cord blood cells to correct the damage that's occurred."

Inportantly, during consideration in the Senate HELP Committee, language was added to direct the relevant agencies to study the state of science using adult stem cells and birthing tissues to develop new therapies for patients. Last year, Mr. Speaker, I visited Celgene Corporation of Summit, New Jersey to learn of their extraordinary efforts to use cord blood to heal diabetic foot ulcers and how they've turned amniotic membrane—an old placenta—into wound management that has now advanced past stage 3 clinical trials to the approval and regulatory filings stage.

H.R. 2820 authorizes $265 million over five years and will ensure that thousands of present-day and future patients benefit from the exciting field of regenerative medicine.

Mr. PITTS. 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. PITTS) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 2820.

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. PITTS. 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.

□ 0930

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVIST DEBT RELIEF EXTENSION ACT OF 2015

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4246) to exempt for an additional 4-year period, from the application of the means-test presumption of

abuse under chapter 7, qualifying members of reserve components of the Armed Forces and members of the National Guard who, after September 11, 2001, are called to active duty or to perform a homeland defense activity for not less than 90 days.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4246

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 ''National Guard and Reservist Debt Relief Extension Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVISTS DEBT RELIEF AMENDMENT.

Section 4(b) of the National Guard and Reservists Debt Relief Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–438; 122 Stat. 5000) is amended by striking ''7-year'' and inserting ''11-year''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 4246, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Every day at home and abroad, uniformed men and women risk their lives to protect our freedom and way of life. Among those brave souls are military reservists and members of the National Guard, who have been called to duty in Iraq, Afghanistan, and in many other places across the globe. We are eternally grateful for their service to our country.

The Federal Government has a responsibility to ease the transition of reservists and guardsmen back into civilian life upon their return home. Some may return home with physical handicaps. For others, psychological challenges face them and their families. Some of these veterans and their families have suffered financial hardships, and, occasionally, bankruptcy is the unfortunate last resort. In a chapter 7 bankruptcy, debtors surrender virtually all of their assets to the bankruptcy trustee and receive a discharge from their debts at the end of the short case.

In 2005, Congress made a number of reforms to the Bankruptcy Code under the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act. A significant policy goal of that Act was to address abuses of the chapter 7 bankruptcy process. To that end, Congress inserted into the Bankruptcy Code a threshold test to gauge whether debtors have disposable income that can be used to pay their debts. This is commonly referred to as the ''means test.''

If debtors are able to pay some portion of their debts from their disposable monthly incomes, then the filing of a chapter 7 bankruptcy case is presumed to be an abuse of the bankruptcy system. Debtors can contest that presumption or can seek relief under other bankruptcy chapters, including chapter 13, under which they can restructure how to pay for their debts over time from their disposable incomes.

In 2008, Congress recognized that military reservists and National Guardsmen sometimes confront unique financial challenges as a consequence of their military service. For instance, if these military members receive hazard pay during their service, that could actually inflate the results of the disposable income calculation under the means test, lifting them out of chapter 7 eligibility. So Congress enacted the National Guard and Reservist Debt Relief Act, which President Bush signed into law in October of 2008. This Act allows reservists and National Guardsmen to bypass the means test, making it easier for them to file a chapter 7 case.

The original Act expired in 2011, but it was extended for an additional 4 years. The exemption is, once again, set to expire on December 19. H.R. 4246, introduced by Mr. COHEN and Mr. FORBES, further extends the existing exemption to 2019.

We continue to call on our guardsmen and reservists to serve our country. We should ensure that those military members who fall on hard times are not denied access to bankruptcy because of their service to their country. The bill before us today extends the sunset date by 4 years, at which time Congress will have the opportunity to reexamine whether this exception to the means test continues to be necessary.

I thank the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES) for introducing this legislation; and I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on the bill.

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

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

Mr. CONYERS is the ranking member, and I appreciate his support just as I appreciate Mr. GOODLATTE for bringing this bill to the floor. Bills don't get to the floor without the chairman of the committee having recommended them; so I thank Mr. GOODLATTE and I thank Mr. CONYERS, as I have been thinking about the apology for slavery and Jim Crow that came to this floor 7 years ago but that wouldn't have without the work of then-Chairman CONYERS; so I thank him again.

Today, I thank Mr. FORBES and my other sponsors, Mr. NADLER and Mr. ROHRABACHER, who have cosponsored this bill with me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4246, the National Guard and Reservist Debt Relief Extension Act of 2015.

This bipartisan legislation ensures that certain members of the National Guard and Reserves who fall on hard economic times after their service will continue to obtain the bankruptcy relief which we have granted them in the past so they won't have to fill out substantial paperwork that is required by the so-called ''means test'' under chapter 7 of the Bankruptcy Code and meet that test.

The means test came into effect about 10 years ago when President Bush signed into law what is called the BAPCPA, the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act, which made numerous amendments to the bankruptcy law. It provided a means test, which made it more difficult to get into bankruptcy court. This gives National Guardsmen and reservists an opportunity to extinguish their debts without having to go through that difficult test.

The National Guard and Reservist Debt Relief Act of 2008 created an exception to the means test's presumption of abuse for members of the National Guard and Reserves who after September 11 served on Active Duty or in a homeland defense activity for at least 90 days. The exception remains available for 540 days after the servicemember leaves the military.

Many servicemembers, we know, are subjected to unscrupulous lenders and payday loans, and we have seen stories that show that up to, I think, 11 percent of servicemembers have been taking out payday loans. Eleven percent of enlisted personnel in the Active Duty military obtain these loans, which include vehicle title loans, pawnshop loans, and other high-interest loans; so they are preyed upon.

In understanding they give service to our country and are preyed upon by folks near the military establishment in the communities, it is appropriate that we give them this relief. It is a way for our Nation to recognize the sacrifices made by National Guard and Reserve members who have served on Active Duty or in homeland defense since September 11 and who may be suffering from financial hardship.

The bill is supported by the National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys and by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Again, I thank Mr. GOODLATTE and Ranking Member CONYERS and my fellow cosponsors; and I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation that continues a very good practice that benefits our Guard and Reserve members.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4246, the ''National Guard and Reservist Debt Relief Extension Act of 2015.''

It has been ten years since President Bush signed into law the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act, a bill that made numerous amendments to the Bankruptcy Code, many of which pertained to consumer debtors.

In particular, the Act established a means test mechanism—purportedly intended to determine a debtor's ability to repay debts—that requires a presumption of abuse if the debtor has income in excess of specified thresholds.

H.R. 4246 would continue the current exemption from this presumption for certain qualifying National Guard members and reserve component members of the Armed Services.

This exemption, which was first enacted in 2008 on a bipartisan basis, is due to expire in just a few days on December 19th.

H.R. 4246 recognizes that some of those who serve in the military encounter financial difficulties during or in the wake of their service and that they merit relief from the additional proof requirements of the means test.

In fact, servicemembers are often targeted by unscrupulous lenders. As reported by the Wall Street Journal earlier this year, payday lenders prey on service members and their families at twice the rate that they use to target civilians.

These short-term, high-interest loans are often used to provide small amounts of money to pay for unexpected or emergency expenditures or to obtain advances on tax refunds.

Yet, as a result of excessive interest rates, these loans can quickly balloon into overwhelming debt obligations. According to the Journal, some servicemembers have paid as much as 600 percent to 700 percent for the life of their loans, or even four times the amount of the original loan.

In 2013, about 11 percent of enlisted personnel in the active duty military obtained payday loans, which included vehicle title loans, pawnshop loans, and other high-interest loans.

So, at least for those servicemembers who seek bankruptcy protection in response to financial distress, H.R. 4246 ensures that they are exempted from the presumption of abuse if he or she is on active duty or is performing a homeland defense activity for a specified period.

I commend the gentleman from Tennessee, STEVE COHEN, for his leadership on this legislation and for his enduring commitment to our Nation's servicemembers.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in supporting H.R. 4246.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4246.

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. COHEN. 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.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2015

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1090) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide eligibility for broadcasting facilities to receive certain disaster assistance, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1090

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 ''Emergency Information Improvement Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. ELIGIBILITY OF BROADCASTING FACILITIES FOR CERTAIN DISASTER ASSISTANCE.

(a) PRIVATE NONPROFIT FACILITY DEFINED.—Section 102(11)(B) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122(11)(B)) is amended by inserting ''broadcasting facilities,'' after ''workshops,''.

(b) CRITICAL SERVICES DEFINED.—Section 406(a)(3)(B) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5172(a)(3)(B)) is amended by striking ''communications,'' and inserting ''communications (including broadcast and telecommunications),''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. CARSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on S. 1090.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Currently, the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, also known as the Stafford Act, provides for assistance to governments and to nonprofit organizations to rebuild damaged facilities following a declared disaster.

S. 1090, the Emergency Information Improvement Act of 2015, clarifies the eligibility of certain not-for-profit broadcasting facilities for disaster assistance that is consistent with existing policy.

These stations provide essential alerts and information before, during, and after disasters and emergencies. In fact, these broadcasters are an integral component of our national public alert and warning system. Following a disaster, it is critical that these facilities get up and running as soon as possible to ensure the public receives necessary emergency information. For example, during recent major disasters, these broadcasters were critical to getting information to the public quickly.

I want to thank Congressman PALAZZO for his leadership on shepherding this bill through committee and for getting it here to the House floor.

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

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

S. 1090, the Emergency Information Improvement Act of 2015, would clarify the eligibility of certain broadcasting facilities for public assistance.

Broadcasters are critical partners when it comes to emergency management in the face of a disaster. One of the best ways to prevent deaths and injuries during a disaster is to warn those who are in harm's way of impending danger. This allows people to take the necessary precautions to avoid injury and death and to minimize property damage. Broadcasters work hand in hand with emergency managers to provide this notice before a disaster strikes. After a disaster, the broadcasters' role remains just as critical. They continue airing information about ongoing hazards and aid recovery efforts by providing how-to information on accessing recovery assistance.

From Hurricane Sandy to this year's floods in the Carolinas, the emergency broadcasts save lives and keep people out of harm's way. This is not just about large-scale disasters. When a violent storm caused the sudden collapse of a concert stage in my hometown of Indianapolis, Indiana, local broadcasters kept a tragedy from becoming that much worse. Timely alerts enabled Fair officials to clear the Midway minutes before the storm struck, potentially saving the lives of hundreds of people. We see this all over the country every year.

Unfortunately, broadcast facilities are not immune to hazards, which is why this bill is so important. When broadcasting facilities are damaged by a disaster, we must ensure that they are eligible for recovery assistance so that they can be up and running in time for the next hazard.

I would note, Mr. Speaker, that this language is absolutely identical to the language that my good friend from New York (Mr. NADLER) has been so tirelessly advocating for; so I want to thank him for his efforts in bringing this issue to our attention and for his diligence in ensuring this matter was brought to the House floor.

I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

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

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of the bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I give my full support of Senate Bill 1090, the Emergency Information Improvement Act. Congressman BRIAN HIGGINS of New York and I sponsored

the House version of this bill, and we are proud to see this simple but very important piece of legislation pass.

Disasters strike every year in every corner of America. Hurricanes on the Gulf Coast and Eastern Seaboard, ice storms in the Midwest and plains states, wild fires in the West, tornados through our Nation's heartlands and flooding in Texas, the Carolinas, and elsewhere.

During a disaster, local public radio stations play an essential role in delivering information about response efforts, local relief supplies, evacuation orders and emergency routes, where to find food, shelter and fuel as well as on-the-ground, at-the-scene reporting to help affected communities understand and respond.

Approximately 98 percent of the American population has access to a public radio or TV signal. Current federal emergency response and relief statutes are ambiguous on whether local public broadcasting stations are eligible for emergency financial assistance when damaged by storms and other disasters. This legislation amends the Stafford Act to make clear that local public radio and broadcasting stations are eligible recipients of disaster relief. The Emergency Information Improvement Act brings greater stability to the availability of critical information during times of crisis.

Its passage by Congress will significantly boost our efforts to ensure that all Americans have the information they need when they need it during occurrences of natural and man-made disasters. It will guarantee that locally licensed stations are eligible for federal disaster relief funding in the event their facilities are impacted by a disaster.

I want to personally thank my colleagues in the Senate, Senators TED CRUZ and CORY BOOKER, for introducing companion legislation in the Senate and for their hard work in seeing this important piece of legislation pass their chamber.

□ 0945

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1090.

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. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. 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.

FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 78) making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2016, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The text of the joint resolution is as follows:

H.J. RES. 78

Resolved by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016 (Public Law 114–53) is further amended by striking the date specified in section 106(3) and inserting ''December 22, 2015''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the consideration of H.J. Res. 78.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present H.J. Res. 78, a short-term continuing resolution that will fund the government through December 22.

This morning, we posted a full-year omnibus funding bill. The bill will responsibly fund the government for the remainder of fiscal 2016 year at the level set by the Bipartisan Budget Act passed in October. We are set to consider it later this week.

However, our current funding mechanism expires today at midnight. To allow for enough time to read and process this legislation, it is necessary at this point that we pass another continuing resolution to keep the lights on in our government.

The legislation we have before us today simply extends current levels of funding for critical government programs and services for 6 additional days through next Tuesday. It is very short and limited in scope, buying us enough time to shepherd the omnibus through to enactment and then for the bill to be enrolled, sent to the President, and signed into law.

So I urge my colleagues to support this bill, to give us the time to consider the full appropriations package, and bring the fiscal year 2016 appropriations process to a close.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

For the second time in a week, I rise in half-hearted support for the continuing resolution before us. This is the third time the Republican majority has brought us to the brink of a shutdown in just the past 11 weeks. It has been over 2½ months since we passed a bipartisan 2-year budget agreement that set guidelines for appropriations. We should have final bills signed into law by now. There are no excuses for these constant delays.

Unfortunately, Republicans' insistence on including dangerous, harmful policies in spending bills that would restrict women's reproductive health decisions, harm the environment, and roll back consumer protections, just to name a few, delayed the ability of Congress to come to a fair, bipartisan agreement on time.

However, we did know throughout this process that Republicans would need Democratic votes to pass the omnibus. That is why I am pleased to say we were able to get rid of more than 150 poison pill riders, including those related to women's health, labor, such as efforts to block the fiduciary rule and the joint employer rule, consumer financial protection, clean air and water—all gone. However, I was disappointed we were unable to reverse a 19-year-old prohibition on Federal funding for the research of gun violence.

The budget agreement enacted in November provided additional funding, allowing us to make critical investments, reflecting Democratic values. There are some large increases to the National Institutes of Health and the Army Corps of Engineers, for example, Head Start, energy research, COPS hiring, nutrition funding, and so much more. We also prevented further cuts to the EPA and other agencies routinely targeted by Republicans. I am disappointed that the omnibus does not deal adequately with Puerto Rico's crisis. It does carry the 9/11 health and compensation fund. The omnibus carries some tax matters, including the Cadillac tax and solar and wind tax credits.

In all, the package is a mixed bag. Each Member will have to read the details for him- or herself.

While I will vote to keep the government open today, Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve a Congress that does its job on time and puts the interests of hardworking families ahead of special interests.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. 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 Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 78.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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:

Concurring in the Senate amendment to H.R. 2820, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 4246, by the yeas and nays;
S. 1090, by the yeas and nays;
H.R. 3654, de novo.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

STEM CELL THERAPEUTIC AND RESEARCH REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 2820) to reauthorize the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 421, nays 0, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 695]

YEAS—421

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
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
Boyle, Brendan F.
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
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
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
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
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
Nolan
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
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Rangel
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
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 (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—12

Cuellar
DeGette
DeSantis
Deutch
Granger
Herrera Beutler
Hultgren
Kildee
Lipinski
Slaughter
Stivers
Wilson (FL)

□ 1030

Messrs. BARTON and AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendment was concurred in.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN RECOGNITION OF THE LIVES LOST IN THE SAN BERNARDINO TERRORIST ATTACK

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

Mr. AGUILAR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise with a heavy heart to pay tribute to the 14 innocent lives lost on December 2 in San Bernardino, California, in the terrorism attack at the Inland Regional Center.

In the wake of this terrorist act, our San Bernardino community has come together and supported one another during this dark chapter in our region and our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues, fellow Americans, and those who hear this message around the world, to pray for the families of the 14 victims, the speedy recovery of the 22 injured, the countless first responders that helped that day, and for the health and resilience of the San Bernardino community.

In the aftermath of this pain, I have seen firsthand the tenacity and the spirit of the area that we call the Inland Empire. We have said loudly, as one community, that this tragedy will not define us and it will not divide us.

We will not be afraid to come together in fellowship, to work together, to mourn together, or to rebuild together. Across faiths and across culture, we will support one another in this time of need.

Mr. Speaker, San Bernardino has been forced to soldier through difficult times before. As we face this new and difficult hurdle, I know my community will continue to stand together to show our country and our region the resolve of this city and of these people to heal. We are San Bernardino united.

Mr. Speaker, I am joined by my colleagues, and I ask the House to pause for a moment of silence in honor of those affected by the terrorist act in San Bernardino on December 2.

The SPEAKER. The House will observe a moment of silence.

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVIST DEBT RELIEF EXTENSION ACT OF 2015

The SPEAKER. Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4246) to exempt for an additional 4-year period, from the application of the means-test presumption of abuse under chapter 7, qualifying members of reserve components of the Armed Forces

and members of the National Guard who, after September 11, 2001, are called to active duty or to perform a homeland defense activity for not less than 90 days, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 419, nays 1, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 696]

YEAS—419

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
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
Boyle, Brendan F.
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
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
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
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
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
Nolan
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
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Rangel
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
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
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

NAYS—1

Amash

NOT VOTING—13

Cuellar
DeGette
DeSantis
Deutch
Granger
Herrera Beutler
Huffman
Hultgren
Kildee
Lipinski
Slaughter
Stivers
Waters, Maxine

□ 1042

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, there are a few certainties in life: death, taxes, and my good friend from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) asking for a colloquy about every week, but the schedule of this House in December is not one of those certainties. So I rise today to ensure that the Members of this body have the most up-to-date information on the floor schedule in the House.

Currently, the House is scheduled to be in session and voting on Thursday and Friday of this week. Members are advised that we are expected to remain in session until we finish our business for the year.

At this point, we expect to consider the tax extender package tomorrow, and the omnibus on Friday. Should there be any further changes to the schedule, I will be sure to notify the Members as soon as possible.

□ 1045

Mr. HOYER. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MCCARTHY. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend for yielding.

Can the leader tell me what the expectation would be for Members on Friday as to when would be a target date to complete business on Friday?

Mr. MCCARTHY. We will convene at 9 a.m. It is our anticipation as long as it goes as scheduled that we can be walking off the floor by noon.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for the information.

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

EMERGENCY INFORMATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EMMER of Minnesota). Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1090) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide eligibility for broadcasting facilities to receive certain disaster assistance, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 420, nays 1, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 697]

YEAS—420

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
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
Boyle, Brendan F.
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
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
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
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
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
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
Nolan
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
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Rangel
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
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

NAYS—1

Massie

NOT VOTING—12

Cuellar
DeGette
DeSantis
Deutch
Granger
Herrera Beutler
Huffman
Hultgren
Kildee
Lipinski
Slaughter
Stivers

□ 1053

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall vote Nos. 695, 696 and 697. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall vote Nos. 695, 696, and 697.

COMBAT TERRORIST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACT OF 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 3654) to require a report on United States strategy to combat terrorist use of social media, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3654, 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.

□ 1100

HEZBOLLAH INTERNATIONAL FINANCING PREVENTION ACT OF 2015

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 2297) to prevent Hezbollah and associated entities from gaining access to international financial and other institutions, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendments is as follows:

Senate amendments:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Hizballah International Financing Prevention 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. Statement of policy.
TITLE I—PREVENTION OF ACCESS BY HIZBALLAH TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS
Sec. 101. Report on imposition of sanctions on certain satellite providers that carry al-Manar TV.
Sec. 102. Sanctions with respect to financial institutions that engage in certain transactions.
TITLE II—REPORTS AND BRIEFINGS ON NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING AND SIGNIFICANT TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES OF HIZBALLAH
Sec. 201. Report and briefing on narcotics trafficking by Hizballah.
Sec. 202. Report and briefing on significant transnational criminal activities of Hizballah.
Sec. 203. Rewards for Justice and Hizballah's fundraising, financing, and money laundering activities.
Sec. 204. Report on activities of foreign governments to disrupt global logistics networks and fundraising, financing, and money laundering activities of Hizballah.
TITLE III—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS
Sec. 301. Rule of construction.
Sec. 302. Regulatory authority.
Sec. 303. Termination.

SEC. 2. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It shall be the policy of the United States to—

(1) prevent Hizballah's global logistics and financial network from operating in order to curtail funding of its domestic and international activities; and

(2) utilize all available diplomatic, legislative, and executive avenues to combat the global criminal activities of Hizballah as a means to block that organization's ability to fund its global terrorist activities.

TITLE I—PREVENTION OF ACCESS BY HIZBALLAH TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

SEC. 101. REPORT ON IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS ON CERTAIN SATELLITE PROVIDERS THAT CARRY AL-MANAR TV.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership a report on the following:

(1) The activities of all satellite, broadcast, Internet, or other providers that have knowingly entered into a contractual relationship with al-Manar TV, and any affiliates or successors thereof.

(2) With respect to all providers described in paragraph (1)—

(A) an identification of those providers that have been sanctioned pursuant to Executive Order 13224 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note; relating to blocking property and prohibiting transactions with persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism); and

(B) an identification of those providers that have not been sanctioned pursuant to Executive Order 13224 and, with respect to each such provider, any information indicating that the provider has knowingly entered into a contractual relationship with al-Manar TV, and any affiliates or successors of al-Manar TV.

(b) FORM OF REPORT.—The report required by subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form to the greatest extent possible, but may include a classified annex.

(c) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES AND LEADERSHIP DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees and leadership'' means—

(1) the Speaker, the minority leader, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Financial Services, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the majority leader, the minority leader, the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate.

SEC. 102. SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS THAT ENGAGE IN CERTAIN TRANSACTIONS.

(a) PROHIBITIONS AND CONDITIONS WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN ACCOUNTS HELD BY FOREIGN FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall prescribe regulations to prohibit, or impose strict conditions on, the opening or maintaining in the United States of a correspondent account or a payable-through account by a foreign financial institution that the President determines, on or after such date of enactment, engages in an activity described in paragraph (2).

(2) ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED.—A foreign financial institution engages in an activity described in this paragraph if the foreign financial institution—

(A) knowingly facilitates a significant transaction or transactions for Hizballah;

(B) knowingly facilitates a significant transaction or transactions of a person identified on the list of specially designated nationals and blocked persons maintained by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the Department of the Treasury and the property and interests in property of which are blocked pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) for acting on behalf of or at the direction of, or being owned or controlled by, Hizballah;

(C) knowingly engages in money laundering to carry out an activity described in subparagraph (A) or (B); or

(D) knowingly facilitates a significant transaction or transactions or provides significant financial services to carry out an activity described in subparagraph (A), (B), or (C).

(3) PENALTIES.—The penalties provided for in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) shall apply to a person that violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of regulations prescribed under this subsection to the same extent that such penalties apply to a person that commits an unlawful act described in subsection (a) of such section 206.

(4) PROCEDURES FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—If a finding under this subsection, or a prohibition, condition, or penalty imposed as a result of any such finding, is based on classified information (as defined in section 1(a) of the Classified Information Procedures Act (18 U.S.C. App.)) and a court reviews the finding or the imposition of the prohibition, condition, or penalty, the President may submit such information to the court ex parte and in camera.

(B) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to confer or imply any right to judicial review of any finding under this subsection or any prohibition, condition, or penalty imposed as a result of any such finding.

(b) WAIVER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President may waive, on a case-by-case basis, the application of a prohibition or condition imposed with respect to a foreign financial institution pursuant to subsection (a) for a period of not more than 180 days, and may renew the waiver for additional periods of not more than 180 days, on and after the date on which the President—

(A) determines that such a waiver is in the national security interests of the United States; and

(B) submits to the appropriate congressional committees a report describing the reasons for such determination.

(2) FORM.—The report required by paragraph (1)(B) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may contain a classified annex.

(c) SPECIAL RULE TO ALLOW FOR TERMINATION OF SANCTIONABLE ACTIVITY.—The President shall not be required to apply sanctions to a foreign financial institution described in subsection (a) if the President certifies in writing to the appropriate congressional committees that—

(1) the foreign financial institution—

(A) is no longer engaging in the activity described in subsection (a)(2); or

(B) has taken and is continuing to take significant verifiable steps toward terminating the activity described in that subsection; and

(2) the President has received reliable assurances from the government with primary jurisdiction over the foreign financial institution that the foreign financial institution will not engage in any activity described in subsection (a)(2) in the future.

(d) REPORT ON FOREIGN CENTRAL BANKS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter, the Secretary of the Treasury shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that—

(A) identifies each foreign central bank that the Secretary determines engages in one or more activities described in subsection (a)(2)(D); and

(B) provides a detailed description of each such activity.

(2) FORM OF REPORT.—Each report required by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex.

(e) IMPLEMENTATION.—The President may exercise all authorities provided under sections 203 and 205 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702 and 1704) to carry out this section.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In this section:

(A) ACCOUNT; CORRESPONDENT ACCOUNT; PAYABLE-THROUGH ACCOUNT.—The terms ''account'', ''correspondent account'', and ''payable-through account'' have the meanings given those terms in section 5318A of title 31, United States Code.

(B) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(i) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives; and

(ii) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate.

(C) FINANCIAL INSTITUTION.—The term ''financial institution'' means a financial institution specified in subparagraph (A), (B), (C), (D), (E), (F), (G), (H), (I), (J), (K), (M), (N), (P), (R), (T), (Y), or (Z) of section 5312(a)(2) of title 31, United States Code.

(D) FOREIGN FINANCIAL INSTITUTION.—The term ''foreign financial institution'' has the meaning given that term in section 1010.605 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations.

(E) HIZBALLAH.—The term ''Hizballah'' means—

(i) the entity known as Hizballah and designated by the Secretary of State as a foreign terrorist organization pursuant to section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189); or

(ii) any person—

(I) the property or interests in property of which are blocked pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.); and

(II) who is identified on the list of specially designated nationals and blocked persons maintained by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the Department of the Treasury as an agent, instrumentality, or affiliate of Hizballah.

(F) MONEY LAUNDERING.—The term ''money laundering'' includes the movement of illicit cash or cash equivalent proceeds into, out of, or through a country, or into, out of, or through a financial institution.

(2) OTHER DEFINITIONS.—The President may further define the terms used in this section in the regulations prescribed under this section.

TITLE II—REPORTS AND BRIEFINGS ON NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING AND SIGNIFICANT TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES OF HIZBALLAH

SEC. 201. REPORT AND BRIEFING ON NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING BY HIZBALLAH.

(a) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership a report on the activities of Hizballah related to narcotics trafficking worldwide.

(2) FORM.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form to the greatest extent possible, but may include a classified annex.

(b) BRIEFING.—Not later than 30 days after the submission of the report required by subsection (a), the President shall provide to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership a briefing on—

(1) the report;

(2) procedures for designating Hizballah as a significant foreign narcotics trafficker under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (21 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.); and

(3) Government-wide efforts to combat the narcotics trafficking activities of Hizballah.

(c) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES AND LEADERSHIP DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees and leadership'' means—

(1) the Speaker, the minority leader, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the majority leader, the minority leader, the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, the Committee on Finance, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate.

SEC. 202. REPORT AND BRIEFING ON SIGNIFICANT TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES OF HIZBALLAH.

(a) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership a report on the significant transnational criminal activities of Hizballah, including human trafficking.

(2) FORM.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form to the

greatest extent possible, but may include a classified annex.

(b) BRIEFING.—Not later than 30 days after the submission of the report required by subsection (a), the President shall provide to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership a briefing on—

(1) the report;

(2) procedures for designating Hizballah as a significant transnational criminal organization under Executive Order 13581 (75 Fed. Reg. 44,757); and

(3) Government-wide efforts to combat the transnational criminal activities of Hizballah.

(c) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES AND LEADERSHIP DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees and leadership'' means—

(1) the Speaker, the minority leader, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the majority leader, the minority leader, the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, the Committee on Finance, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate.

SEC. 203. REWARDS FOR JUSTICE AND HIZBALLAH'S FUNDRAISING, FINANCING, AND MONEY LAUNDERING ACTIVITIES.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that details actions taken by the Department of State through the Department of State rewards program under section 36 of the State Department Basic Authorities Act (22 U.S.C. 2708) to obtain information on fundraising, financing, and money laundering activities of Hizballah and its agents and affiliates.

(b) BRIEFING.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of State shall provide a briefing to the appropriate congressional committees on the status of the actions described in subsection (a).

(c) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate.

SEC. 204. REPORT ON ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS TO DISRUPT GLOBAL LOGISTICS NETWORKS AND FUNDRAISING, FINANCING, AND MONEY LAUNDERING ACTIVITIES OF HIZBALLAH.

(a) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that includes—

(A) a list of countries that support Hizballah or in which Hizballah maintains important portions of its global logistics networks;

(B) with respect to each country on the list required by subparagraph (A)—

(i) an assessment of whether the government of the country is taking adequate measures to disrupt the global logistics networks of Hizballah within the territory of the country; and

(ii) in the case of a country the government of which is not taking adequate measures to disrupt such networks—

(I) an assessment of the reasons that government is not taking such adequate measures; and

(II) a description of measures being taken by the United States to encourage that government to improve measures to disrupt such networks;

(C) a list of countries in which Hizballah, or any of its agents or affiliates, conducts significant fundraising, financing, or money laundering activities;

(D) with respect to each country on the list required by subparagraph (C)—

(i) an assessment of whether the government of the country is taking adequate measures to disrupt the fundraising, financing, or money laundering activities of Hizballah and its agents and affiliates within the territory of the country; and

(ii) in the case of a country the government of which is not taking adequate measures to disrupt such activities—

(I) an assessment of the reasons that government is not taking such adequate measures; and

(II) a description of measures being taken by the United States to encourage that government to improve measures to disrupt such activities; and

(E) a list of methods that Hizballah, or any of its agents or affiliates, utilizes to raise or transfer funds, including trade-based money laundering, the use of foreign exchange houses, and free-trade zones.

(2) FORM.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form to the greatest extent possible, and may contain a classified annex.

(3) GLOBAL LOGISTICS NETWORKS OF HIZBALLAH.—In this subsection, the term ''global logistics networks of Hizballah'', ''global logistics networks'', or ''networks'' means financial, material, or technological support for, or financial or other services in support of, Hizballah.

(b) BRIEFING ON HIZBALLAH'S ASSETS AND ACTIVITIES RELATED TO FUNDRAISING, FINANCING, AND MONEY LAUNDERING WORLDWIDE.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the heads of other applicable Federal departments and agencies shall provide to the appropriate congressional committees a briefing on the disposition of Hizballah's assets and activities related to fundraising, financing, and money laundering worldwide.

(c) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Financial Services, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate.

TITLE III—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SEC. 301. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act or any amendment made by this Act shall apply to the authorized intelligence activities of the United States.

SEC. 302. REGULATORY AUTHORITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall, not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, promulgate regulations as necessary for the implementation of this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

(b) NOTIFICATION TO CONGRESS.—Not less than 10 days before the promulgation of regulations under subsection (a), the President shall notify the appropriate congressional committees of the proposed regulations and the provisions of this Act and the amendments made by this Act that the regulations are implementing.

(c) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate.

SEC. 303. TERMINATION.

This Act shall terminate on the date that is 30 days after the date on which the President certifies to Congress that Hizballah—

(1) is no longer designated as a foreign terrorist organization pursuant to section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189); and

(2) is no longer designated for the imposition of sanctions pursuant to Executive Order 13224 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note; relating to blocking property and prohibiting transactions with persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism).

Amend the title so as to read: ''An Act to prevent Hizballah and associated entities from gaining access to international financial and other institutions, and for other purposes.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material on this resolution.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this measure.

In particular, I want to thank the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. MARK MEADOWS, for being an early leader on this issue, focusing on Hezbollah and on this legislation.

I also want to thank Congressman DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. He served for 8 years on the Foreign Affairs Committee as vice chairman of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

I would just mention that, as chairman of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Committee that researched and wrote the report on Iran's nuclear weapons program, he has unique insights with respect to the threat posed by Hezbollah—not just to Israel, but to the West. We thank them both for their work on this measure.

I also want to thank Senators RUBIO and SHAHEEN for recognizing the urgency of this problem and working in a bipartisan way to ensure that this legislation was able to pass the Senate so that today we can send it to the President's desk.

And, most importantly, I want to thank my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from New York, Mr. ELIOT ENGEL, for his work to push back against Iran and its proxies that threaten the United States and threaten our allies globally.

Now, I will say that this day is overdue. This past May, the House passed this bill by a vote of 423–0. In fact, last Congress the House also passed legislation spearheaded by Mr. MEADOWS in the 113th Congress 404–0, which the

other body failed to take up. Thankfully, this year is different because right now, Iran is on a roll.

Last week we learned the regime test-fired another ballistic missile in violation of two U.N. resolutions. Meanwhile, Iran continues to hold American hostages. And its terrorist proxy—which is Hezbollah—is wreaking havoc throughout the Middle East.

Mr. Speaker, it is critical that we confront this kind of aggression. We cannot stand by while the Iranian regime exports violence and exports its revolutionary ideology. That is why this legislation targeting Hezbollah is so important.

Prior to September 11, 2001, Hezbollah was responsible—before that attack by al Qaeda—for more American deaths than any other terrorist organization on this planet. In 1983, Hezbollah suicide bombers struck the U.S. marine barracks in Beirut, killing 241 American servicemen, and in a similar attack in 1996, in Saudi Arabia, killed 19 American servicemen.

Hezbollah continues to serve as Iran's frontline against Israel, with 100,000 rockets pointed at our ally. The terrorist group also plays a key role in Iran's effort to prop up Syria's murderous Assad regime. Thousands of Hezbollah fighters freely cross the border between Lebanon and Syria to join the fight.

Unfortunately, the threat posed by Hezbollah and other Iranian proxies is poised to become even more dangerous.

Iran is Hezbollah's primary benefactor, giving the Lebanese political party and militant group some $200 million a year in addition to weapons, training, intelligence, and logistical assistance as well.

Over the past few years, Iran has been forced to cut back its financial support to Hezbollah due to the international sanctions regime that the Obama administration will dismantle in the coming months.

As a result of the sanctions relief due to Tehran under the Iran deal, Hezbollah will see additional funding come its way, a boost that will benefit Hezbollah's regional and international operations.

With more money, Hezbollah will step up its aid to Shia militias in Iraq and Yemen in cooperation with Iran. It will increase its presence in Syria, and, most significantly, it is going to increase its threat to Israel.

Finally, increased funding will help Hezbollah rebuild its capabilities beyond the Middle East. A newly enriched Hezbollah will be more aggressive at home and abroad, boosting its destabilizing activities inside and outside of Lebanon.

Yet, this is not a foregone conclusion. This legislation represents an important first step in pushing back against Iran and Hezbollah and repairing the damage that the administration's sanctions relief for Tehran has done to our national security.

Hezbollah is worried, as this bill puts Hezbollah's sources of financing under additional scrutiny, particularly those resources outside of Lebanon, given that many Lebanese banks have stepped up their game now to prevent money laundering.

It will also promote the application of advanced antiterrorism and antimoney laundering methods to both financial institutions and business enterprises operating as financial institutions, such as those adopted by regional banks, including many in Lebanon.

In addition to targeting the terrorist organization's diverse financial network, the legislation also requires the U.S. Government to focus on Hezbollah's global logistics network and its transnational organized criminal enterprises, including its drug smuggling operations, key areas of expansion for that terrorist organization.

How do I know they are worried? Because they said so in their own words. After the Senate passage of this legislation, Hezbollah issued a formal statement condemning the Senate vote and describing it as a ''crime'' against Hezbollah. With their international networks, particularly their most lucrative networks outside of Lebanon in Africa and Latin America, in our crosshairs, they should be worried. They should be worried.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this critical measure.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in strong support of the Hezbollah International Financing Prevention Act.

The House first passed this bipartisan legislation on May 14 by a vote of 423–0. That is as bipartisan as you can get. On November 17, the Senate sent the bill back to us with a number of very modest changes. By passing it again today, we send it to the President's desk.

I want to commend my friend, Chairman ROYCE, for being the driving force behind this very, very important bill. When Chairman ROYCE introduced the bill, I was glad to join as an original cosponsor.

I also want to acknowledge Representatives DEUTCH, MEADOWS, and MENG for their had work on this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, over a decade ago, I authored the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act, which is now law. My partner, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN of Florida, and I pushed very hard for many years to get this bill finally passed by both Houses and signed into law by the President.

This measure aimed to end Syrian support for terrorism, including support to groups such as Hezbollah. Since then, Hezbollah has found new ways to siphon resources and expand its reach, all the while working toward the same goal: to undermine Lebanese political independence and support Iran's dangerous agenda throughout the region.

It is a bit ironic that the group that really controls Lebanon today is not really the Lebanese Government, but it is Hezbollah, which really has the same type of duplication, but they are stronger militarily than the Lebanese Government. That is a shame for Lebanon. It really is.

We know the aggregation that Hezbollah has had with Lebanon's wars against Israel and being Iran's proxy in Syria and doing all kinds of things that are detrimental to the world. Our laws to crack down on this group of Hezbollah need to keep pace. Again, their goal is to undermine Lebanese political independence and support Iran's dangerous goals. We need to be one step ahead of them.

Iran is the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism. Let's not forget that. While the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and its Quds Force spread instability throughout the region, Iran's most destructive terrorist tool has been Hezbollah.

Among other things, this heinous group was behind the bombings of the U.S. Embassy and marine barracks in Lebanon and the Israel embassy and Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Hezbollah's nefarious activities are not limited to terrorism. The group has put down roots in drug trafficking and other forms of transnational crime. Hezbollah has become a sophisticated and complex terrorist organization, and we need a response adequate to meet this challenge.

This legislation will move the ball forward by sanctioning foreign banks for knowingly doing business with Hezbollah. We need to send a clear message to companies getting tangled up with this terrorist group. That message is: Walk away or face the consequences of the United States of America.

The bill would also shine a bright light on Al-Manar, Hezbollah's television station, itself a specially designated terrorist group. Chairman ROYCE and I, working together through the years, especially listen to what is being broadcast.

During the cold war, when we had Radio Free America and television broadcasts, we felt that the message that the United States was getting to these countries was very important. And we believed—both of us—that it did, in fact, play a major role in the collapse of the Soviet Union because they were fed the truth by us. We are strong supporters of continuing that kind of thing.

Hezbollah uses Al-Manar for logistical propaganda and fundraising purposes. It defies reason that this station is still carried by the satellite providers all over the world. Can you imagine that?

Let me say that again. This legislation shines a bright light on Al-Manar, which is Hezbollah's television station—itself, a specially designated terrorist group—and Hezbollah uses this station for logistical propaganda and fundraising purposes. It is outrageous that this station is still carried by satellite providers all over the world.

□ 1115

We need to expose this puppet organization for what it is. Our government needs new powers provided in this legislation, and I am pleased that the House and Senate worked together to get the bill across the finish line.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation; and I, again, thank Chairman ROYCE for pushing this, for being the driving force of this legislation.

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

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI), a member of the House Committee on Armed Services.

Mrs. WALORSKI. I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2297, legislation that will impose sanctions on international financial institutions that knowingly engage in business with Hezbollah.

Hezbollah is one of the world's largest, most dangerous, well-funded terrorist organizations. Trained, funded, and deployed as a proxy of the Iranian Government, with operations spanning several continents, the Shiite group has effectively taken over the Lebanese Government and has launched thousands of rockets at Israeli civilians.

There is no question that Hezbollah is stronger than ever. They have murdered Americans, Israelis, Syrians, and citizens of other nations. They have amassed an arsenal of advanced weaponry, including 150,000 rockets and missiles; have made technological advances; and have gained battlefield experience in Syria, all which have helped turn Hezbollah into what could be Israel's most dangerous enemy in a generation.

The bill also requires that President Obama report to Congress on Hezbollah's involvement in its drug business, money laundering, and other criminal activities—all of which are critical to funding its terrorism.

We cannot jeopardize our national security and continue to ignore the serious threat that Hezbollah poses to our country and to our allies, including Israel. While this bill is not a silver bullet, it is a huge step in the right direction.

I thank the chairman and the committee for their work on this important measure.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DAVID SCOTT), who serves on the Financial Services Committee, who was a valued member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, who has served as vice chairman of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade. Congressman SCOTT is also a member of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. He does such a fine job, and I want everyone to know he grew up in my district.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman and really appreciate that.

I, certainly, want to thank Chairman ROYCE for his very kind remarks that he gave to me concerning our work.

Ladies and gentlemen of the House and ladies and gentlemen of America, we have before us, perhaps, the most singular, significant bill and thing that we can do right now to send a bold, powerful message to the world that we are going to finally begin that really intricate process, with determination, to dismantle one of the single most horrific terrorist groups on this Earth—Hezbollah.

Now, why do I say that?

I don't say that just to get up and say a few words. I have spent 12 years on the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and I have served as chairman of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee. For 3 hard years, we did the research, and we wrote the report specifically on getting the real truth out about Iran's nuclear weapons program. In the process of doing that, we discovered the intricals, the tunnels and all of the different things that gave support to Hezbollah by Iran. This is why this is so important.

Let me just tell you that almost the single, solitary, main purpose for Hezbollah is to destroy Israel. Make no mistake about it. Right now, they have already got hundreds of missiles pointed toward Israel.

How can we do something right now to address this?

It is with this bill. You always follow the money, and the money trails are so complex. You have corporations; you have dummy companies; you also have individuals and third and fourth parties that our work found out that Iran works through.

The language in this bill clearly points to and gives the President of the United States the authority. As a matter of fact, it is almost like a very strong demand and request from us in the Congress. It is the executive branch that has investigative power. The CIA, Special Ops, and the entire military are at its disposal, including the FBI.

We are the single most powerful nation in the world, and it is about time we stood up and showed the world that we are no longer going to tolerate Hezbollah and that we are no longer going to tolerate Iran's working through these third parties to make the people of Israel suffer and live under the conditions under which they are living.

Let me get to the other crux of this matter.

It is as I said on CNN, in my commentary, that I was fighting very strongly against—and I talked with the President—and fighting as to how weak the position the Iranian agreement has put us in. Sure, they are going to get a nuclear weapon, probably within the next 9 years. That worries us.

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

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

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. But the real Achilles' heel in this Iranian agreement is where we simultaneously lift up the sanctions on their economy—and they are thriving now—and also unleash $150 billion right away—cash. At the same time, we know that, with this cash, already both Russia and China have signed agreements to get the most sophisticated weapons there are.

This bill will help us because, in section 201, it very clearly states that the President shall identify any country that is helping to finance the terrorism coming out of Hezbollah. We will be able to track this. We are sending a powerful message with this. Once Iran has this cash, there is no boundary as to what they can use it for. I guarantee you, because Hezbollah is an arm—a very terroristic arm—of Iran, they will channel money there, and that will help us.

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

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

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Finally, in my few minutes, ladies and gentlemen, we can't stop there, because Israel, as I said, is a target, and we have got to put forth a new memorandum of understanding. We need to do this, Members of the House, and we need to do it right away. The President and the executive branch need to go to work and start identifying these people who are providing this support.

There is another step we have got to go through right away. We support Israel with a memorandum of understanding in the form of military aid. Right now, it is at $3.1 billion annually; but, ladies and gentlemen, given the circumstances, we need to increase that to $5 billion annually.

Now, why do I say that?

I hope that my previous remarks will give support to that. At no time has Israel needed our help as they need it now. This was, in my humble opinion, a weak Iranian agreement. A lot was made out of it as to the United States and Israel. We need to send a powerful, strong message that there is no light between the United States and Israel and that we are going to send $5 billion.

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

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

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. The other point is that our current appropriations for Israel end in 2017. I want to repeat that because I don't think the people of America know the aid they will get. Where would Israel be? It could have been blown away if they hadn't had the Iron Dome; but it is because we had an understanding—a memorandum—and because we are giving them $3.1 billion.

With all of this upsurge of terrorism all around the world now—right here in California just last week, in Paris, and all over—we may not think we are

going to war, ladies and gentlemen, but war has been declared on the United States, on Israel, and on Europe. By George, it is time we declared war back on them. That is why we need to increase this memorandum of understanding to that $5 billion mark for that year, and that will send a powerful message as to how strong Israel and the United States' relationship is.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I thank the gentleman.

First of all, let me thank our distinguished chairman for offering yet another important bill in the fight against terrorism, especially as it relates to Hezbollah. The Hezbollah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015, has been very adequately explained by both the chairman and the ranking member. I don't want to be redundant, but it is a very, very important bill that will make a difference.

Hezbollah, as we all know, is a terrorist organization and is a proxy of the Iranian regime, which directly threatens our close ally Israel as well as ourselves. This bill would help hobble Hezbollah's ability to finance its terrorist activities, and it is strongly deserving of the support of every Member of this Chamber.

This bill sends a message to the administration. It seeks to mitigate at least some of the damage that has been unleashed by President Obama's misguided policy towards Iran, and by an egregiously flawed nuclear arms deal that lifts sanctions that will free up billions of dollars for the regime in Tehran to finance anti-American and anti-Israel terror groups, such as Hezbollah.

Let's not forget that Hezbollah is an organization that has attacked Americans. It not only fires missiles unprovoked—like Hamas—into Israel, but it finances all sorts of terror and bombings, including of U.S. Embassies. Many of the terrorists associated with Hezbollah were involved with the killing of the marines back in the early 1980s. One of those marines was Paul Innocenzi, from my district—from my hometown—who left behind his dear wife and children. She was left a widow, as were many others, by that horrific act of terrorism.

I ask Members to support this bill. Again, I thank Chairman ROYCE for his leadership. I will remind my colleagues that, I think, to date, the chairman has had about 35—three dozen—hearings on Iran and on issues related to Iran. Every aspect of our misguided policy has been focused upon, as have the ideas that seek, to mitigate the damage. This is one of those initiatives. Interdict the money flow, and you can help to stop some of the terrorism.

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

Colleagues, in closing, we all know too well that Iran is the world's leading state sponsor of terror and that its most destructive terrorist tool is Hezbollah. This group's nefarious activities are not limited to terrorism. They range from drug trafficking to other forms of illicit activity. Hezbollah has transformed into one of the world's most sophisticated and complex and dangerous terror organizations.

H.R. 2297 is the adequate response to meet this challenge. On the terror financing front, this bill would move the ball forward by sanctioning foreign banks for knowingly doing business with Hezbollah. The bill would also expose Hezbollah's television apparatus, as I mentioned before, Al-Manar, which is used for logistical, propaganda, and fundraising purposes.

□ 1130

Again, I want to commend Chairman ROYCE and commend all the other people who worked so hard making this a reality. This will be signed into law. This will go to the President's desk. I think we can all be proud, once again, of the bipartisan way in which the Foreign Affairs Committee works.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I would just remind our colleague that, yes, indeed, Hezbollah has cost the lives of 260 marines and other U.S. service personnel.

I would share with you that in 2006, during the second Lebanon war—during the Hezbollah war, as I would call it—I was in Haifa. At that time, I witnessed what were probably 4,000 to 5,000 rockets being fired over a period of time into Israel and saw firsthand the human cost of this.

I mentioned the 260 marines that died in two attacks. Going down to the trauma hospital and seeing firsthand the 600 victims of those Hezbollah attacks, including the realization that Hezbollah had tunnelled underneath Israel's territory to bring fighters up within Israel, you see the impact that Iran's encouragement, money, and training is having on these terrorist fighters, and you see the consequence and the cost in terms of human lives lost.

Representative ELIOT ENGEL and I, after the Gaza conflict, by the way, were in one of these tunnels that came up right outside of a school. This one was coming from Hamas but, again, financed by Iran. The engineering work for the tunnels in Lebanon underneath the border there was, again, done by Iran.

You look at these rockets, whether they are the antiaircraft rockets or the antiship rockets and missiles or the ground-to-ground missiles, where do they get these rockets? They get them from Iran. When I was in Haifa, there were maybe 15,000 of those rockets. Today, as you know, there are over 100,000.

Mr. ENGEL and I have held a number of hearings on this subject. But those 100,000 rockets have a much longer range, again, thanks to Iran. Hezbollah, in the meantime, is gaining in its position and strength monetarily, both from the money it gets from Iran and from its clandestine activities in smuggling. We have an opportunity with this legislation to cut off its international financing.

I want to thank my colleagues for their work because we have got to have a strategy that cuts off their illicit activities and that holds other countries and banking systems accountable. We have got to go after the vulnerabilities that Hezbollah has in terms of sustaining this terror network. Let's cut off their cash and their support system with this legislation. I urge passage.

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. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill, H.R. 2297.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

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

S. 571. An act 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.

FIRST RESPONDERS PASSPORT ACT OF 2015

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3750) to waive the passport fees for first responders proceeding abroad to aid a foreign country suffering from a natural disaster, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3750

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 Responders Passport Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. PASSPORTS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 1 of the Passport Act of June 4, 1920 (22

U.S.C. 214), is amended, in the third sentence, by inserting after ''to attend a funeral or memorial service for such member;'' the following: ''from an individual who is operating under a contract, grant, or cooperative agreement with the United States Government, including a volunteer, who is proceeding abroad to aid a foreign country suffering from a natural disaster as determined by the Secretary;''.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the end of the first full fiscal year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report on the number of waivers of fees for the execution and issuance of passports to first responders under section 1 of the Act of June 4, 1920, as amended by subsection (a) of this section, for such fiscal year.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material for the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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

I begin by thanking Representative DARRELL ISSA, a senior member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the former chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, for authoring this very straightforward piece of legislation.

When catastrophe strikes overseas, America's first responders deploy all over the world. They assist in some of the most difficult and damaged environments that we could only imagine: the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the 2014 flooding in Paraguay, earlier this year following the earthquake in Nepal. Rushing to the front lines of human need, leaving their own families, they represent the true face of American compassion.

The gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) is at the cutting edge of this issue, and his trips to visit these spots speak on an issue that he knows of very well when he says that these brave men and women have saved countless lives on this planet over the years. This bill that he has written, the First Responders Passport Act, is an important amendment to the Passport Act of 1920, allowing the Secretary of State to waive passport fees for those first responders who have volunteered to serve our country and volunteered to travel abroad to aid others in their time of greatest need.

Currently, the passport fee waiver can only be exercised for a very limited group, largely comprised of officers or employees of the U.S. traveling abroad on official duty. What this bill would do is to extend that waiver to include first responders that are working under a contract with the United States Government.

The U.S. Agency for International Development contracts with approximately 450 first responders every year. These first responders are required to maintain a valid passport in case of immediate deployment, which can cost as much as $165 per passport for a first-time applicant. These fees are not covered by the USAID contract or the country but, rather, are paid out of pocket by the individual.

These first responders are serving in support of our national interests. They are putting their own lives at risk to provide immediate medical response following a natural disaster like the '04 Indian Ocean earthquake, which unleashed devastating tsunamis on Thailand, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka.

Many of the first responders that deploy abroad come from the search and rescue teams based in Los Angeles County, California, and Fairfax County, Virginia. Waiving the passport fee for those brave and selfless enough to help those in the greatest need is the least we can do. I commend Congressman ISSA for doing this.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Chairman ROYCE, Ranking Member ENGEL, my colleague and friend from California (Mr. ISSA), and my fellow Foreign Affairs Committee colleagues for their unanimous support in helping our first responders answer the call to service when a natural disaster strikes abroad.

Every year, Americans bravely go abroad to help victims of natural disasters in foreign lands, such as the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the 2008 cyclone in Yemen, and 2015 Hurricane Patricia in Mexico, just to name a few.

Earlier this year, the world was shocked by the images of Nepal's 7.8 magnitude earthquake that killed over 8,600 and injured over 16,800. The United States was one of the largest donors to the relief and rebuilding effort in the wake of this catastrophe through charitable donations, DOD donations, and search and rescue operations and efforts. The United States' search and rescue teams searched for survivors trapped in debris.

These first responders continuously put their lives on the line at home and abroad. Mr. Speaker, this is an example of American leadership. Their bravery and efforts do not go unnoticed. We should all do what we can to make their endeavors easier.

Unfortunately, American contractors and volunteers, despite being coordinated by USAID, are subject to passport fees at their own expense when attempting to travel abroad in response to these disasters. To alleviate this obstacle, H.R. 3750, the First Responders Passport Act, would allow the Secretary of State to grant their passports free of charge.

I am proud to have introduced this commonsense bill with the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) because contractors and volunteers deserve the same treatment as government employees when they are being sent abroad to offer their service on behalf of our Nation.

Cultural diplomacy, like the services these brave men and women provide in the face of international disasters, is critical to our international image and international relations. I ask that my colleagues support this bipartisan, commonsense legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA), a senior member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the author of this bill.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for bringing this, in a timely fashion, to the floor. I want to thank my partner in this legislation, Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.

Now, Congress often does things and makes a lot of to-do about it. I don't want to overstate this simple technical correction, but I don't want to understate it either. The fact is America is proud of people who volunteer or choose, in the worst possible conditions, to go in harm's way, to go in devastation's way.

It is a small thing, but very meaningful, to say that, one, they won't have to pay for their passport out of their own pocket, and, two, although normally the contracts for these first responders come out of Los Angeles and Fairfax County, should there be a major disaster again that is beyond these first responders' capability, the law will allow for anyone authorized by the United States Government to go and help in these areas to be granted, as necessary, a passport, including expediting fees, in order to get to the devastation quickly and with a minimum of bureaucracy involved.

America knows about Haiti, Nepal, Japan, and so many other devastated areas over the last few years. Until today, America never took the time to simply say in this small way thank you to our first responders: Thank you for what you do. We certainly appreciate it enough for it to come out of the taxpayers' pocket to make sure it doesn't have to come out of your own pocket when you are going, on behalf of the American people, to help those in need around the world.

Again, I thank the chairman for his leadership in bringing this in a timely fashion. I urge support.

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for the purpose of closing.

I would just say, briefly, that we are reminded each and every day that

American leadership abroad is needed now more than ever. Yes, this has a military component, it has an international relations and diplomacy component, and it also has this soft power component.

Mr. Speaker, this is a part of the soft power of the United States, harnessing the idealism and volunteerism of our people to do good for others around the world when they are most in need. This is a rather simple step that we can take to help those who are helping others. I am proud to support it, and I ask that all Members support our legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I would like to recognize the work of Representative ISSA and also Representative BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. I think that this bill, this First Responders Passport Act, is going to be an important change in the law in terms of encouraging people to be first responders.

□ 1145

By extending a courtesy that we currently grant to employees of the government, we here have an opportunity to get first responders who have that expertise, those volunteers who travel the greatest distances to work in the harshest of conditions and to help those in greatest need. This, to me, I think is a great concept.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill so that we can take care of those who take care of others, our first responders.

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. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3750, 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. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

GLOBAL HEALTH INNOVATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2241) to direct the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to submit to Congress a report on the development and use of global health innovations in the programs, projects, and activities of the Agency, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2241

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 ''Global Health Innovation Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. ANNUAL REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for a period of 4 years, the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development shall submit to Congress a report on the development and use of global health innovations in the programs, projects, and activities of the Agency.

(b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A description of—

(A) the extent to which global health innovations described in subsection (a) include drugs, diagnostics, devices, vaccines, electronic and mobile health technologies, and related behavior change and service delivery innovations;

(B) how innovation has advanced the Agency's commitments to achieving an HIV/AIDS-free generation, ending preventable child and maternal deaths, and protecting communities from infectious diseases, as well as furthered by the Global Health Strategic Framework;

(C) how goals are set for health product development in relation to the Agency's health-related goals and how progress and impact are measured towards those goals;

(D) how the Agency's investments in innovation relate to its stated goals; and

(E) progress made towards health product development goals.

(2) How the Agency both, independently and with partners, donors, and public-private partnerships, is—

(A) leveraging United States investments to achieve greater impact in health innovation;

(B) engaging in activities to develop, advance, and introduce affordable, available, and appropriate global health products; and

(C) scaling up appropriate health innovations in the development pipeline.

(3) A description of collaboration and coordination with other Federal departments and agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in support of global health product development, including a description of how the Agency is working to ensure critical gaps in product development for global health are being filled.

(4) A description of how the Agency is coordinating and aligning global health innovation activities between the Global Development Lab, the Center for Accelerating Innovation and Impact, and the Bureau for Global Health.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIRES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in support of the Global Health Innovation Act introduced by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIRES).

I would just point out that, over the past two decades, we have made unprecedented progress in addressing some of the most difficult global health challenges of our time. Global rates of child mortality have dropped by 53 percent. Malaria deaths are down by 47 percent. Maternal mortality has been reduced by 44 percent. The eradication of polio is within reach.

Yet, despite these successes, we have a long way to go. The Ebola outbreak in West Africa should serve as a stark reminder of the global threat of infectious disease. Though child and maternal mortality rates have been drastically reduced, there are still 5.9 million children under the age of 5 who died from preventable causes in 2015. There were 830 mothers who died from preventable causes every day. I have been to Africa and have often seen the disastrous effects of these diseases.

USAID's Global Development Lab and Center for Accelerating Innovation and Impact is working to address these global health challenges by bringing together science, technology, innovation to develop low-cost, high-impact health technologies.

This legislation, written by Mr. SIRES, before us today seeks to support these efforts while bettering congressional oversight. It directs the administrator of USAID to submit to Congress five annual reports on the development and use of global health innovations in its programs, particularly those relating to HIV/AIDS, to maternal and child health and to combating infectious diseases.

I want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIRES), the ranking member of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, for bringing this forward in a timely manner.

I urge Members to support the bill.

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

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I rise in support of this measure.

I want to start by thanking Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for their work on global health and their efforts to bring this bill to the floor.

I would also like to thank the many Members who have cosponsored this bill, especially Congressman MARIO DIAZ-BALART, who has gracefully acted as the Republican lead.

Additionally, I would like to thank the staffers who worked diligently to bring H.R. 2241 to the floor for a vote.

Infectious diseases and other health conditions still claim the lives of nearly 9 million people each year. Emerging health threats, such as drug resistance, pose a serious threat to human health across the globe.

New vaccines, drugs, tests, and other health tools are desperately needed. Progress cannot be made without a sustained investment in research and development.

U.S. investments in global health research are central components of U.S.

foreign policy to increase national security, strengthen U.S. relations around the world, and reduce infectious diseases.

The U.S. has a legacy of leadership in global health research through agencies like USAID. That is why I was proud to introduce H.R. 2241, the Global Health Innovation Act. This will provide the oversight needed to gain a clearer picture of USAID's global health research and development.

Over the years, research and development projects have greatly expanded at the USAID, searching for advancements toward an HIV- and AIDS-free generation and preventable maternal and childhood deaths, and preventable infectious diseases.

This legislation is an effort to keep up with the scope of USAID's expanded efforts and ensure their research and development activities reflect their goals and priorities. This report asks them to provide clarity on their goals and metrics to better understand their work.

H.R. 2241 directs the USAID administrator to report annually to Congress on the development and use of global health innovations in USAID programs, projects, and activities. The report must also include how the Agency measures progress, investments, and developments toward their health-related goals.

I urge my colleagues to vote in support of H.R. 2241 to allow Congress to exercise its oversight powers and ensure USAID's research and development efforts reflect their priorities.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL once again. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2241.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, the Global Health Innovation Act will enable Congress to conduct more effective oversight of USAID's effort to develop and expand access to low-cost, high-impact health technologies.

I support this bill, and I urge its adoption.

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. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2241, 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. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

TRACKING FOREIGN FIGHTERS IN TERRORIST SAFE HAVENS ACT

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4239) to require intelligence community reporting on foreign fighter flows to and from terrorist safe havens abroad, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4239

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 ''Tracking Foreign Fighters in Terrorist Safe Havens Act''.

SEC. 2. INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY REPORTING TO CONGRESS ON FOREIGN FIGHTER FLOWS.

(a) REPORTS REQUIRED.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter, the Director of National Intelligence, consistent with the protection of intelligence sources and methods, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on foreign fighter flows to and from terrorist safe havens abroad.

(b) CONTENTS.—Each report submitted under subsection (a) shall include, with respect to each terrorist safe haven, the following:

(1) The total number of foreign fighters who have traveled or are suspected of having traveled to the terrorist safe haven since 2011, including the countries of origin of such foreign fighters.

(2) The total number of United States citizens present in the terrorist safe haven.

(3) The total number of foreign fighters who have left the terrorist safe haven or whose whereabouts are unknown.

(c) FORM.—The reports submitted under subsection (a) may be submitted in classified form. If such a report is submitted in classified form, such report shall also include an unclassified summary.

(d) SUNSET.—The requirement to submit reports under subsection (a) shall terminate on the date that is two years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(e) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(1) in the Senate—

(A) the Committee on Armed Services;

(B) the Select Committee on Intelligence;

(C) the Committee on the Judiciary;

(D) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs;

(E) the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs;

(F) the Committee on Foreign Relations; and

(G) the Committee on Appropriations; and

(2) in the House of Representatives—

(A) the Committee on Armed Services;

(B) the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence;

(C) the Committee on the Judiciary;

(D) the Committee on Homeland Security;

(E) the Committee on Financial Services;

(F) the Committee on Foreign Affairs; and

(G) the Committee on Appropriations.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO) and the gentleman from California (Mr. SWALWELL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 4239.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, terrorism remains one of the greatest threats facing our Nation today. As a member of both the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and the Committee on Armed Services, I have seen how the brave men and women of our Nation's Armed Forces and the intelligence services battle this threat on a daily basis.

But the recent terrorist attack in San Bernardino has highlighted that this is not just a threat to be faced by our servicemen and -women. We face this threat here at home, in our communities, from individuals who have been radicalized abroad and entered our country with the intent to do us harm.

We must focus our intelligence efforts and bring them to bear directly on the problem of individuals radicalizing abroad and traveling to commit terrorist acts here at home. We must ensure that this important information gets into the hands of our Nation's representatives here in the United States Congress.

The bill we are debating today will do just that. The Tracking Foreign Fighters in Terrorist Safe Havens Act requires the intelligence community to report to Congress three important categories of information:

The total number of foreign fighters who have traveled to terrorist safe havens, including their country of origin;

The number of U.S. citizens present in terrorist safe havens; and

The total number of foreign fighters who have left terrorist safe havens or whose whereabouts are unknown.

This information is crucial to policymakers. It will help Members understand the size and scope of the threats we face, the potential risk of terrorism at home, and how terrorist safe havens can undermine our national security.

By ensuring that this information goes to a wide range of congressional committees, the bill ensures that relevant committees of Congress can begin to address this growing threat.

This legislation is also bipartisan. I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. SWALWELL) for cosponsoring this legislation.

I want to also thank Chairman NUNES and Ranking Member SCHIFF and my colleagues on Homeland Security, Chairman MCCAUL and Ranking Member THOMPSON.

Before closing, I want to take a moment to thank the men and women of

this country who serve our intelligence community and our Armed Forces. I am honored to know so many of them in the course of my oversight work and to see their diligent efforts in helping to keep our Nation safe.

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

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

First, let me express my thanks to Mr. LOBIONDO, my colleague on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and the chairman of its CIA Subcommittee.

I serve as the subcommittee's ranking member. I appreciate the bipartisan way that the chairman of the whole committee and our ranking member, Mr. SCHIFF, as well as the way that Mr. LOBIONDO and I have approached this critical issue of foreign fighter flow.

ISIS is one of the greatest threats facing the United States today. Defeating ISIS means that the United States and its allies must be more coordinated in our efforts to scrub ISIS from this Earth and to protect Americans at home than ISIS is in attacking us. This will require a multifaceted approach, involving both foreign policy and the way that our intelligence community tracks ISIS here at home.

The threat posed by foreign fighters who travel to and from a foreign zone or a terrorist safe haven and then return to wreak havoc in the West is both real and persistent.

The challenge is that, when these foreign fighters go to these countries, if they are not killed on the battlefield, oftentimes they learn even better training and are able to return either to Western Europe or other parts of the world or even the United States with improved training and an increased hatred for innocent people. That leaves us very vulnerable.

□ 1200

To help confront this threat, the Tracking Foreign Fighters in Terrorist Safe Havens Act builds on important provisions in the 2016 Intelligence Authorization Act which require a report on foreign fighter flows into and out of Syria and Iraq. This would expand the scope of that report.

This bill broadens this requirement by calling on the Director of National Intelligence to report regularly on foreign fighter travel to and from any foreign safe haven or terrorist safe haven. If we do not know who is going to fight in these hot zones, we will have an incomplete picture of our own vulnerabilities.

And, these reports have to be specific. They must include, for example, the foreign fighters' countries of origin, the number of foreign fighters who have traveled to or departed each safe haven, and the number of those whose whereabouts remain unknown.

Importantly, to the extent a report is submitted in a classified form, it must also include an unclassified summary of the report's contents. I appreciate the chairman agreeing to my request to include this unclassified requirement.

Increased transparency and public awareness is very important in the fight against terrorism. These broad, comprehensive reports will allow us to better understand the foreign fighter threat and, in turn, help all of us better protect our national security.

Let me again thank Mr. LOBIONDO. I urge my colleagues to vote in support of the Tracking Foreign Fighters in Terrorist Safe Havens Act.

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

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY).

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4239, the Tracking Foreign Fighters in Terrorist Safe Havens Act. This legislation fulfills a recommendation of the Committee on Homeland Security's Task Force on Combating Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel, of which I was proud to be a member. In fact, our chairman, Mr. KATKO, and another member, Mr. HURD, are with us today to speak on this important legislation.

Our bipartisan task force investigated America's security vulnerabilities for 6 months. We produced a final report in September that made 32 key findings and over 50 recommendations to make Americans safer. Today's bill, which I cosponsored, is the direct result of one of these recommendations.

We know that ISIS is adept at propaganda and has used social media extensively to attract fighters to their cause. At least 30,000 people from 100 different countries have traveled to Iraq and Syria, including 250 Americans. But their calls to action now extend past Syria and Iraq. In fact, our Task Force found ISIS now has a direct presence, affiliates, or groups pledging support in at least 19 countries.

In my 26 years in uniform, including six deployments to the Middle East and Afghanistan and a final assignment at U.S. Africa Command, we watched foreign fighters flow to safe havens in Africa and the Middle East to get training and join the Islamic extremist fight. ISIS has accelerated this dangerous dynamic and is expanding, despite the President declaring otherwise. So our efforts to track these fighters should not be limited to Iraq and Syria. That is why our Task Force recommended that the intelligence community regularly track and update Congress on foreign fighter flows to all terrorist sanctuaries, which is what this bill requires.

The administration's response to ISIS can only be described as anemic. We must take decisive action to defeat the ISIS threat and protect Americans.

I am pleased that, in the last month, the House has taken action on several of our Task Force's recommendations. It is obvious that more work remains. And if the President won't act, the House will.

I urge all Members to join me in supporting H.R. 4239.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF), the ranking member.

Mr. SCHIFF. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Tracking Foreign Fighters in Terrorist Safe Havens Act, and I want to thank Chairman LOBIONDO, Representative SWALWELL, and the full committee chairman, Mr. NUNES, for their leadership on this issue.

This bill will help inform Congress and the public on one of the most pressing counterterrorism challenges we face today: the flow of foreign fighters from the West to and from Syria, Iraq, and other terrorist safe havens.

The Paris attacks brought home the dangers posed by citizens of Western nations who can move easily between countries, traveling to Syria and Iraq to fight with ISIS, and who may then return home to commit horrific acts of terror and violence in their own countries.

Tracking foreign fighters is a constant concern of the intelligence community and an issue on which we receive continual briefings. I believe these new reporting requirements will help keep Congress and the Nation more fully informed about this very serious threat to our national security.

Of course, tracking foreign fighters is not enough. We have to redouble our efforts to staunch the flow of foreign fighters to and from Syria and Iraq. In addition to intelligence coordination, this requires a serious, substantial, and new commitment from Turkey, whose border with Syria has proven to be a conduit for a large number of fighters, as well as oil, money, and arms entering and leaving Syria.

From the Mara line to the Euphrates, there is a 60-mile stretch along the Turkish-Syrian border through which much of the illegal trafficking in fighters and goods flow to ISIS. Turkey must close that border to ISIS. It has the power to do so, but does it have the will? Thus far, the answer has been, tragically, no, and this must change.

Turkey must stop the flow of foreign fighters from crossing into Syria to join the fight. Where the Turks have been unable or unwilling to stop that flow, Kurdish forces have stepped up and demonstrated much greater success. I believe that if the Turks are unwilling to do more to shut down the flow of foreign fighters and resources that cross that border, we should increase our assistance to the Kurds, who have proven themselves far and away the most effective anti-ISIS fighting force in the region.

Once again, I thank the chairman and Representative SWALWELL for their leadership on this issue. I hope that, in addition to these reports, we will also hear from the intelligence community

about actions that Turkey takes to close down this critical 60-mile stretch of border between the Mara line and the Euphrates.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD).

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, threat equals capabilities plus intent.

ISIS has demonstrated that it has both the capabilities and the intent to attack the homeland. ISIS has expanded far beyond Iraq and Syria. It has affiliates that have carried out deadly attacks in Egypt, Libya, Afghanistan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and France.

Groups and individuals have pledged their support to ISIS in numerous other places, including the Philippines, the Palestinian territories, Nigeria, and Sudan. Tracking foreign fighters who travel to Iraq and Syria alone is not enough to mitigate the threat they pose to our national security. Terrorist safe havens around the globe are potential petri dishes for bad guys aiming to do bad things to the U.S.

ISIS has explicitly encouraged fighters who cannot make it to Iraq and Syria to join their struggle in other locations. It is imperative that our intelligence and defense efforts aim at tracking and stemming the flow of fighters to and from all terrorist safe havens, even those outside of Iraq and Syria.

I was an undercover officer in the CIA, and I understand how important it is to track threat indicators early. We cannot wait until one of these foreign fighters in a terrorist safe haven attempts an attack. We must preempt rather than react. This legislation supports our intelligence community's efforts to do just that.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Texas for his service in the intelligence community, and I appreciate the bipartisan nature of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL).

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in support of our Nation's security and in our ongoing fight against terrorists and extremism around the world. As a Member who serves on the Intelligence Committee, the safety and security of the American people is my top priority.

H.R. 4239, the Tracking Foreign Fighters in Terrorist Safe Havens Act, requires the intelligence community to report on foreign fighter flows to and from terrorist safe havens abroad.

The recent horrific terrorist attacks that occurred in Paris, Beirut, and here at home in San Bernardino, California, not only shake our very conscience, but also cause us to evaluate our own security measures and intelligence protocols.

This bill expands on the approach to tracking foreign fighters outlined in the Intelligence Authorization Act, and requires the DNI to produce an additional written report on foreign fighter flows to and from terrorist safe havens abroad every 180 days. Each report would include invaluable details, such as countries of origin, the numbers of U.S. citizen foreign fighters, and the numbers of foreign fighters whose whereabouts are unknown to us.

The threat of extremists returning to the United States from the battlefields in Iraq and Syria are serious, and we must do what we can to prevent it. I am convinced that a more vigilant and robust foreign fighter tracking and reporting process is critically important to fighting terrorism and combating ISIS abroad, as well as extremism here at home.

We must evaluate our national counterterrorism strategy and policies continuously to ensure that we are doing everything within our power to protect the American people and to defeat and destroy ISIS and all terrorists that seek to do us harm.

I want to congratulate the chairman and my colleague, Mr. SWALWELL, for their leadership on this effort, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO).

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from New Jersey for introducing this bill, and I rise today in support of it.

The tragic events in San Bernardino have brought ISIS violence to our shores. Attacks like this are aimed at undermining our democratic way of life and sowing fear among the citizens of our Nation. This threat must be defeated, plain and simple. To defeat it, we need to respond in an intelligent manner that deals with the vulnerabilities and protects the constitutional liberties that we hold dear.

The measure before us today strengthens our hand against terrorism, and I hope the House will join today in a strong, bipartisan manner to support this bill.

I had the privilege of chairing the bipartisan Task Force on Combating Terrorism and Foreign Fighter Travel. Over 6 months, we investigated security gaps at home and abroad to determine the best ways to make America safe. We heard from stakeholders here in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East, about the unique challenges they face every day in combating terrorism.

Out of this Task Force, we came up with 32 findings and over 50 recommendations that will make our country and our allies safer, if adopted. This bill, Mr. Speaker, contains one of those recommendations, that our intelligence community should report regularly on the flow of foreign fighters to terrorist safe havens.

The bill takes action to stop ISIS' practice of encouraging fighters to go to what it calls provinces in places like Libya to carry out acts of terrorism by improving the sharing of information on the flow of these foreign fighters between nations.

Understanding where the enemy's safe havens are and tracking and analyzing foreign fighter flows will better allow our intelligence agencies and the Department of Defense to strike effectively and deadly and give us a better picture of the ISIS threat.

As we leave to celebrate the holidays with our families, let's leave having taken action on this commonsense bill that will make every American safer.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. CARSON).

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation, which I believe is critical to our national security and that of our allies.

Public estimates indicate that over 30,000 foreign fighters, including some from the United States, have traveled to Iraq and Syria.

Over the last few years, Mr. Speaker, Americans watched as three teenage girls from Denver were arrested on their way to Syria. Ten young men from Minnesota were arrested—including the ringleader just last week—for a similar attempt.

These young men and women, Mr. Speaker, and many others who make it to Syria, intend to carry out terrible atrocities against innocent people. Even more concerning, we know that some people hope to return and bring their fight to American soil.

□ 1215

As a member of the House Intelligence Committee, I have confidence that the men and women in our intelligence community have the resources and expertise to keep us safe.

Every day, they are tracking foreign fighters around the world, coordinating with our allies, and shutting down threats before they become a reality. We need to better understand this threat to create a whole-of-government response.

Mr. Speaker, this information will help us conduct outreach into affected communities here at home so we can show parents what their kids are doing online and how to protect them from radicalization.

Mr. Speaker, it will help us expand our support and coordination with our allies, including Turkey and Iraq, to show them what they can do, what we can do, and combine our efforts to stop these fighters.

These reports, mandated in this legislation, will show where terrorists are coming from and where they train. It will help us assess when they may be returning home and what precautions we need to put in place. In light of the attacks in San Bernardino and Paris, this is absolutely critical.

I encourage support from my colleagues.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the

gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL), the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I want to first thank Chairman LOBIONDO for his hard work on this legislation. And I want to thank the House Intelligence Committee for working closely with my committee to get this important legislation done. I can think of no more timely piece of legislation. I want to thank Ranking Member SWALWELL from California for his hard work on this as well.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill. Hundreds of our people have been radicalized, lured to the jihadist safe haven in Syria. They have been joined by thousands of Westerners, forming a terrorist army unlike anything we have ever seen.

These foreign fighters represent a triple threat: They strengthen groups like ISIS on the ground; they radicalize others back home; and, worst of all, they may be sent back to conduct terrorist attacks against us in the homeland.

We saw this in the streets of Paris, where battle-hardened extremists returned from Syria prepared to kill. And here at home, we have arrested so-called returnees from Syria, including one individual plotting a terrorist attack in Ohio.

Earlier this year, I launched a bipartisan congressional Task Force on Combating Terrorists and Foreign Fighter Travel. One of their findings was that we must do more to track ''the great jihadi migration'' around the world.

Our intelligence about foreign fighters in Syria is improving, but as we have seen, the threat can change almost overnight. ISIS is already urging its followers to go to its other sanctuaries in places like Afghanistan and Libya.

We need to stay a step ahead of this threat, which is why this legislation requires the intelligence community to track extremist travel patterns and to report on a regular basis to Congress. It also requires agencies to monitor the number of U.S. citizens in terror hotspots and to report on how many individuals have departed those locations.

This is the kind of early-warning intelligence we need in order to create a ''firebreak'' to slow the spread of Islamist terror, and to keep Americans from being lured to new jihadist safe havens.

I would like to commend the task force for their hard work on this, including Mr. KATKO.

And let me just say this. I get regular threat briefings, and I have never seen a higher threat environment than we have seen since 9/11, and it is from the flow of foreign fighters.

We have 5,000 of them that have Western passports, 30,000 foreign fighters from 100 different countries; 250 Americans have left to join the fight, and, Mr. Speaker, that is just who we know about.

Now we know they are communicating in dark space. As the Director of the FBI says, they have one simple message: Come to fight in Syria or kill where you are. Unfortunately, we have seen them too often come to fight in Syria and, unfortunately, just recently, too many that have come to kill here in the United States.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY).

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, in these trying times, Congress needs to provide leadership and answer the question: What really keeps Americans safe?

ISIS has directed U.S. and Western passport holders to launch attacks at home and abroad, and this threat requires our vigilance. But it is foolish to think we can effectively combat this terrorism blindly. Congress needs an accurate estimation of the number of foreign fighters who have traveled to terrorist havens like Syria. We need to know how many U.S. citizens are currently there, and we need to know the whereabouts of those who have left.

Given that many of the terrorist attackers were European nationals, the need for this intelligence is crucial in the fight against ISIS and those who wish to harm the U.S.

The Tracking Foreign Fighters in Terrorist Safe Havens Act provides for a more clear understanding of the real threats to U.S. security and allows Congress to work in partnership with our national security agencies to defend against these threats. I am happy to support this commonsense step to keep Americans safe.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers on this side, so I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Again, I want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey for working in a bipartisan way to address one of the greatest threats that the United States, our allies, and people in the Middle East face today, and that is ISIS. ISIS is a brutal, growing force, growing in its influence and ability to carry out successful terrorist attacks, but also growing in its ability to inspire others to take up attacks on their own.

ISIS has been so successful these days that they don't even have to order attacks here in America. Their success has inspired others to take up their own attacks. Until we are as coordinated as they are, they will continue to be successful. We saw, in Paris, that a number of the attackers were people who had traveled from Western Europe to Syria and then returned to carry out the horrific attacks we saw back in November.

But we can defeat ISIS. We have defeated evil as a country before, and this country works best when its leaders work to protect the American people in a bipartisan way, as we are seeing today.

There is no silver bullet we can fire to stop ISIS. Instead, ISIS' defeat will come at the hands of American leadership—American leadership in stitching together a coalition of countries willing and able to defeat ISIS—but also American leadership and its own intelligence community to protect us here at home.

Mr. Speaker, let me close by reiterating my strong support for the Tracking Foreign Fighters in Terrorist Safe Havens Act. The information that this will provide is an important step regarding foreign fighter training, and it will be of great importance as we continue to fight terrorism at home and abroad and secure our homeland.

Again, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Once again, I join in thanking my colleague from California (Mr. SWALWELL). I think the approach we have had to this is exactly what we need in combating terrorism.

It is hard to imagine, even just a few years ago, that we would be facing this threat that we face today and this threat of terrorism that we have seen, this barbaric face in Paris and in San Bernardino, the fact that the enemy is evolving in so many different ways, and the fact that we have to be right 100 percent of the time and that they have so many different avenues that they can pursue.

This piece of legislation is another piece to the puzzle which will help our country and our agencies be able to figure things out. Our intelligence community works tirelessly with law enforcement to be able to figure out what the next challenge is.

I hope the people of America understand the expertise and professionalism that the intelligence community and law enforcement bring to the table to keep our country safe. I hope my colleagues understand how important this legislation is and everyone votes ''yes'' to support it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TIPTON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4239, 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. LOBIONDO. 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.

STRENGTHENING CYBERSECURITY INFORMATION SHARING AND COORDINATION IN OUR PORTS ACT OF 2015

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules

and pass the bill (H.R. 3878) to enhance cybersecurity information sharing and coordination at ports in the United States, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3878

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 ''Strengthening Cybersecurity Information Sharing and Coordination in Our Ports Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. IMPROVING CYBERSECURITY RISK ASSESSMENTS, INFORMATION SHARING, AND COORDINATION.

The Secretary of Homeland Security shall—

(1) develop and implement a maritime cybersecurity risk assessment model within 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, consistent with the National Institute of Standards and Technology Framework for Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity and any update to that document pursuant to Public Law 113–274, to evaluate current and future cybersecurity risks (as that term is defined in the second section 226 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 148));

(2) evaluate, on a periodic basis but not less than once every two years, the effectiveness of the cybersecurity risk assessment model established under paragraph (1);

(3) seek to ensure participation of at least one information sharing and analysis organization (as that term is defined in section 212 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 131)) representing the maritime community in the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center, pursuant to subsection (d)(1)(B) of the second section 226 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 148);

(4) establish guidelines for voluntary reporting of maritime-related cybersecurity risks and incidents (as such terms are defined in the second section 226 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 148)) to the Center (as that term is defined subsection (b) of the second section 226 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 148)), and other appropriate Federal agencies; and

(5) request the National Maritime Security Advisory Committee established under section 70112 of title 46, United States Code, to report and make recommendations to the Secretary on enhancing the sharing of information related to cybersecurity risks and incidents between relevant Federal agencies and State, local, and tribal governments and consistent with the responsibilities of the Center (as that term is defined subsection (b) of the second section 226 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 148)); relevant public safety and emergency response agencies; relevant law enforcement and security organizations; maritime industry; port owners and operators; and terminal owners and operators.

SEC. 3. CYBERSECURITY ENHANCEMENTS TO MARITIME SECURITY ACTIVITIES.

The Secretary of Homeland Security, acting through the Commandant of the Coast Guard, shall direct—

(1) each Area Maritime Security Advisory Committee established under section 70112 of title 46, United States Code, to facilitate the sharing of cybersecurity risks and incidents to address port-specific cybersecurity risks, which may include the establishment of a working group of members of Area Maritime Security Advisory Committees to address port-specific cybersecurity vulnerabilities; and

(2) that any area maritime security plan and facility security plan required under section 70103 of title 46, United States Code approved after the development of the cybersecurity risk assessment model required by paragraph (1) of section 2 include a mitigation plan to prevent, manage, and respond to cybersecurity risks.

SEC. 4. VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS AND SECURITY PLANS.

Title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in section 70102(b)(1)(C), by inserting ''cybersecurity,'' after ''physical security,''; and

(2) in section 70103(c)(3)(C), by striking ''and'' after the semicolon at the end of clause (iv), by redesignating clause (v) as clause (vi), and by inserting after clause (iv) the following:

''(v) prevention, management, and response to cybersecurity risks; and''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) and the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. 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 materials on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3878, and I urge its passage.

Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the U.S. Congress has appropriated $2.4 billion in port security grant funds to protect port facilities against potential terror attacks. As a nation, we have done a fairly good job of updating the physical security at ports, but the U.S. Government has been very slow to ensure that our ports are secure from cyber vulnerabilities.

For example, cybersecurity of our Nation's critical infrastructure has been on the Government Accountability Office's High Risk List since 2003, yet we have not fully engaged on cybersecurity efforts at the Nation's 360 seaports.

The threat of a cyber attack is real, and, when addressing the protection of maritime critical infrastructure, we must clearly define the roles and responsibilities for ensuring our Nation's ports are protected.

Under the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002, the Coast Guard is identified as the government agency responsible for ensuring the physical security at our Nation's port infrastructure. This bill makes it clear that the Coast Guard is also the primary agency responsible for ensuring the maritime sector is prepared to prevent and to respond to cybersecurity risk and vulnerability.

More than $1 trillion of goods—from cars, to oil, to corn, and everything in between—move through our Nation's seaports each and every year. Like many industries in America, port facilities and ship operators are increasingly moving cargo through our ports using automated industrial control systems.

While this automation certainly has a lot of benefits, such as reducing the time that it takes to stock our shelves and lowering the cost of doing business, it doesn't come without risks. These computer systems are controlling machinery at port facilities to move containers and fill tanks and onload and offload ships.

Terror groups, nation-states, criminal organizations, hackers, and even disgruntled employees could breach these systems, with potentially catastrophic results to the Nation's security and economy.

Breaches in the maritime domain are particularly concerning, not only from an economic standpoint, but because the dangerous cargos, such as liquefied natural gas and other dangerous cargos, that also pass through our Nation's seaports are at risk.

Just as we have hardened physical security at our Nation's ports, we need to do the same in virtual space to protect the systems critical to the maritime transportation system against malicious actors. This bill does just that, and it requires the Coast Guard to develop a comprehensive cyber risk assessment specific to the vulnerabilities of the maritime industry. It directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to encourage participation with information sharing to better streamline coordination at the national level.

H.R. 3878 is a bipartisan piece of legislation, introduced by my colleague from California (Mrs. TORRES), and I give her great credit for this piece of legislation, working with so many Members on this. It actually is the result of a hearing held by the Homeland Security Subcommittee that I chaired back in October on the subject of cybersecurity at our Nation's ports.

□ 1230

The bill clarifies the Department of Homeland Security's role in maritime cybersecurity as well as it ensures that port facilities work with the Coast Guard to identify cyber risks and vulnerabilities and share best practices across the industry. This is the first step, Mr. Speaker, in protecting our ports from cyber threats, and I certainly urge my colleagues to join this commonsense, bipartisan legislation.

Again, I want to thank the gentlewoman from California for her work on this issue.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3878, the Strengthening Cybersecurity Information Sharing and Coordination in Our Ports Act.

Mr. Speaker, I introduced H.R. 3878, the Strengthening Cybersecurity Information Sharing and Coordination in

Our Ports Act, to ensure the Department of Homeland Security takes a more proactive approach to address cybersecurity risks at our Nation's ports and to improve cybersecurity information sharing and coordination between public and private partners at maritime facilities.

The United States has approximately 360 commercial sea and river ports which use cyber technology to move over $1 trillion worth of cargo each year. The Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and other ports in California account for almost 40 percent of the cargo entering this country, and nearly 30 percent of the country's exports leave through California ports.

The Port of Los Angeles is the number one port by container volume and cargo value in the United States, seeing around $1.2 billion worth of cargo each day. Each year, the Port of Long Beach handles more than 6.8 million 20-foot container units in cargo value at $180 billion and is the second busiest port in the U.S. With so much economic activity happening at our Nation's ports, protecting the cyber networks they rely on is critical to our local and national economy.

This past October, the Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security on which I serve held a hearing focused on the threat of cyber attacks at a port and how the Coast Guard is working with private and public partners to protect maritime critical infrastructure against such attacks. This is of particular interest to me because many of the goods that enter through the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles come directly to my district where the goods are redistributed throughout the Nation. The hearing was called in response to a June 2014 GAO report recommending the Department of Homeland Security take action to strengthen cybersecurity at our Nation's ports.

Mr. Speaker, the report found that maritime Sector Coordinating Councils are no longer active. These councils include port owners, operators, and related private industry associations. This means that today there is no one entity that coordinates information sharing between the ports, the private sector, and government stakeholders.

At the October subcommittee hearing, we received testimony that information sharing on cyber risks at ports should be stronger and that some ports lack the resources to prevent, identify, and respond to cyber attacks. To address these challenges, I introduced H.R. 3878, which will require the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard to take several steps to enhance cybersecurity at our ports.

Specifically, it requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish guidelines for reporting cybersecurity risks, to develop and implement a maritime cybersecurity risk model, and to make recommendations on enhancing the sharing of cyber information. It also requires the Coast Guard to direct Area Maritime Security Committees to address cybersecurity risks. These measures will create an environment where DHS, the Coast Guard, ports, and stakeholders work together to enhance cybersecurity at our Nation's ports.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Chairman MCCAUL and Subcommittee Chairwoman MILLER for their cooperation and the bipartisan nature of the staff discussions on this bill. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3878.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. DONOVAN).

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3878, the Strengthening Cybersecurity Information Sharing and Coordination in Our Ports Act of 2015.

This bill by my friend Representative TORRES contains an amendment I offered at committee, which makes an important change to the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002.

More than $1.3 trillion worth of cargo travels through U.S. ports each year, making them a truly critical part of our Nation's infrastructure. Any disruption or slowdown of activity could have a tremendous impact on the entire economy, costing billions of dollars every day.

Ensuring the security of our maritime infrastructure is a complex task and one that falls primarily on the United States Coast Guard. However, while the Coast Guard has the history and the expertise to provide physical security, its mission of ensuring that our maritime infrastructure is safe from cyber threats is still evolving.

Currently, the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 requires vessels and port facilities to conduct vulnerability assessments and develop security plans for physical security, access controls, procedural security measures, and communication systems. My amendment in committee added cybersecurity to that list. This addition will make it crystal clear that the Coast Guard has the specific authority to require maritime vessels and facilities to incorporate cybersecurity into their assessments and plans.

The need for this change and the underlying legislation was highlighted during a hearing before the Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee on the topic of cybersecurity at our Nation's ports. In that hearing, we heard how a range of actors—from narcotics traffickers to terrorist organizations, and even nation-states—could exploit cyber vulnerabilities at our ports for the purpose of smuggling illicit materials or causing severe economic disruption. Mr. Speaker, this legislation will ensure that we are better prepared to respond to the growing cyber threat to our Nation's maritime infrastructure.

I thank Representative TORRES for offering this legislation and for accepting my amendment at committee.

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

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. LOWENTHAL).

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

Mr. LOWENTHAL. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3878, the Strengthening Cybersecurity Information Sharing and Coordination in Our Ports Act of 2015.

Mr. Speaker, in southern California, I represent the Port of Long Beach, which is one of the busiest seaports in the country, is set to handle more than 7 million containers this year, and accounts for nearly 20 percent of all the loaded containers moving throughout our Nation. It is a critical link for trade between our country and Asia and is a linchpin for our national security and our national economy. In other words, the security of the Port of Long Beach is not to be treated lightly.

I am not a stranger to the critical nature of the port, but we are now learning about emerging port-specific cyber threats. This body recently took the first steps to fight off the growing threats to our Nation's cybersecurity with a number of bills and hearings on this topic. I am glad that out of those hearings, our attention now turns to the cybersecurity of our critical infrastructure, including the hundreds of cargo ports in this country.

As a result of H.R. 3878, we would see working groups forming at our ports and coming together to address port-specific cybersecurity vulnerabilities. These findings would be shared with appropriate stakeholders, including Federal and local governments, port authorities, terminal operators, as well as law enforcement, in an effort to enhance cybersecurity situational awareness at the ports.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that these working groups will continue to find innovative solutions in response to this emerging threat. Within the working groups, I hope that they will codify key definitions and classification mechanisms and that they will come out of these discussions to ensure the effectiveness of the group.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Ms. HAHN. I thank my colleague, Congresswoman TORRES, for introducing this very important bill.

Mr. Speaker, as co-chair and co-founder of the Congressional PORTS Caucus and also as a representative of the busiest port complex in the Nation,

I have long advocated for much-needed cybersecurity at our Nation's ports.

In 2013, a report by the Brookings Institution found that there is a serious cybersecurity gap at many of our Nation's ports, putting them at risk for an attack. A significant cyber attack at one of our major ports could bring commerce in an entire region to a halt and send shock waves throughout the national and global economies.

This is a problem that needs to be addressed, but unfortunately, we do not have a clear picture of where cybersecurity vulnerabilities exist at our ports.

Earlier this year, the House passed my amendment to instruct the Department of Homeland Security to identify gaps in cybersecurity at the Nation's 10 most at-risk ports and then to make recommendations for how we can address these problems. I am pleased that that amendment has been included in the omnibus that we will be voting on later this week.

Mr. Speaker, the bill we are talking about today expands on this progress and is a great vehicle to identify cybersecurity problems at our Nation's ports. I would like to commend my colleague Congresswoman TORRES for bringing this important issue to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on this bill.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. If the gentlewoman from California is prepared to close, I will then close for our side.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3878 will enhance our understanding of cyber risks at our ports and the countermeasures needed to mitigate them.

With the increased levels of technology at maritime facilities, all public and private port stakeholders must share information and coordinate efforts to make sure that our Nation's ports are protected from cyber attacks.

Again, I appreciate the bipartisan cooperation on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 3878.

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

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I simply, once again, urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3878. It is a very good bill, and it is a very important bill—again, in a bipartisan way—for the security of our ports and the homeland security of our Nation as well.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I speak in support of H.R. 3878, the Strengthening Cybersecurity Information Sharing and Coordination in Our Ports Act.

I thank Chairman MCCAUL and Ranking Member THOMPSON for their bipartisan work and stewardship of the Committee on Homeland Security's work, which includes H.R. 3878.

Congresswoman TORRES should be commended for her hard work that led to the introduction of the Strengthening Cybersecurity Information Sharing and Coordination in Our Ports Act.

H.R. 3878, requires the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to seek to enhance cybersecurity situational awareness and information sharing between maritime security stakeholders, the maritime industry, port owners and operators, which include maritime terminal owners and operators.

This bill requires DHS to:

consult with the Coast Guard to enhance participation by the Maritime Information Sharing and Analysis Center in the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center; and

request that the National Maritime Security Advisory Committee report and make recommendations to DHS on methods to enhance cybersecurity and information sharing between stakeholders.

The bill also assures DHS leadership in port security by requiring the agency's maritime security risk assessments to include cybersecurity risks to ports and the maritime border of the United States.

Ports serve as America's gateway to the global economy. The nation's economic prosperity rests on the ability of containerized and bulk cargo arriving unimpeded at U.S. ports to support the rapid delivery system that underpins the manufacturing and retail sectors.

My service in the House of Representatives has focused on making sure that our nation is secure and prosperous.

A central component of national security is the ability of our International Ports to move goods into and out of the country.

The Port of Houston is critical infrastructure:

According to the Department of Commerce in 2012, Texas exports totaled $265 billion.

The Port of Houston is a 25-mile-long complex of diversified public and private facilities located just a few hours' sailing time from the Gulf of Mexico.

In 2012 ship channel-related businesses contributed 1,026,820 jobs and generated more than $178.5 billion in statewide economic impact.

In 2014, the Port of Houston was ranked among U.S. ports as the 1st in foreign tonnage; largest Texas port with 46 percent of market share by tonnage and 95 percent market share in containers by total TEUS in 2014; largest Gulf Coast container port, handling 67 percent of U.S. Gulf Coast container traffic in 2014; and 2nd ranked U.S. port in terms of total foreign cargo value.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO), reports that this port, and its waterways, and vessels are part of an economic engine handling more than $700 billion in merchandise annually.

A Maritime Cyber-RISKS report published in 2014 outlined examples of cybersecurity vulnerabilities that are specific to ports.

The Cyberattacks examined included:

Theft of money by deceiving a company into transferring large amounts of funds to a bank account owned by criminals;

In 2013, the FBI issued a warning to maritime companies warning them of a fraud committed against several companies using a man-in-the-middle cyberattack that resulted in $1.65 million in losses.

In this attack an impersonation occurs when the email address of a trusted party is co-opted or taken over by an unknown 3rd party.

The trusted 3rd party makes a request to change banking information that should be used to provide payment for legitimate services provided an established business relationship.

The legitimate business is not aware of the request to change bank payment information.

When the payment is sent, thieves receive it and quickly close the account so that the funds cannot be retrieved.

Another malicious attack that does not involve theft of funds can occur if the location of cargo information is deleted by a cyber-attacker.

According to CyberKeel this type of attack happened to a shipping company in 2011.

In this attack data related to rates, loading, cargo number, date and place were corrupted.

This cyberattack meant that no one at the port could identify where containers were, whether they loaded, nor identify which containers were on ships.

Cyberattack that targeted technology used by companies who are taking receipt of cargo at port locations.

The Firmware software code on handheld scanning technology that reads barcodes on containers was corrupted by malware.

When the scanners were plugged into the company's network the corrupted code started a series of automated cyberattacks that searched the company's network for financial information.

After finding the information, a connection was established with a computer in China.

Cyberattack at the Port of Antwerp was run by a drug smuggling ring.

In this attack the cyber criminals were able to gain control of the port terminal system that allowed them to release containers to their own trucks without the knowledge of port authorities.

This attack is particularly chilling when considering our efforts to protect against weapons of mass destruction in the form of biological, nuclear and chemical weapons from being brought into the country undetected.

This type of attack also has implications for persons entering the country undetected.

The same attack carried out against port worker automated identification systems would open the door on a host of domestic security issues.

Our nation has thousands of miles of coastlines, lakes, and rivers and hundreds of ports that provide opportunities for legitimate travel, trade, and recreation.

At the same time, these waterways offer opportunities for terrorists and their instruments, and drug smugglers to enter our country.

Cybersecurity at ports must be national priority, for this reason, I ask my colleagues to join me in voting in favor of H.R. 3878.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DONOVAN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3878, 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.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair

declares the House in recess until approximately 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 43 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas) at 2 p.m.

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:

Concurring in the Senate amendments to H.R. 2297, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 3750, by the yeas and nays; and

H.R. 4239, 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.

HEZBOLLAH INTERNATIONAL FINANCING PREVENTION ACT OF 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 2297) to prevent Hezbollah and associated entities from gaining access to international financial and other institutions, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 425, nays 0, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 698]

YEAS—425

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
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
Boyle, Brendan F.
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
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
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.
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
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
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
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
Nolan
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
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
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
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—8

Cuellar
DeSantis
Deutch
Herrera Beutler
Joyce
Kildee
Rangel
Rogers (KY)

□ 1430

Messrs. JEFFRIES and GRIFFITH changed their vote from "nay" to "yea."

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendments were concurred in.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FIRST RESPONDERS PASSPORT 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. 3750) to waive the passport fees for first responders proceeding abroad to aid a foreign country suffering from a natural disaster, 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 California (Mr. ROYCE) 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 421, nays 2, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 699]

YEAS—421

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
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
Boyle, Brendan F.
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
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Kaptur
Katko
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
McGovern
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
Nolan
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
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Rangel
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—2

Amash
Sanford

NOT VOTING—10

Cicilline
Cuellar
DeSantis
Deutch
Herrera Beutler
Hudson
Joyce
Keating
Kildee
Meadows

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1439

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. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 699, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 699, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 699, I was inadvertantly detained and missed the vote on H.R. 3750. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

TRACKING FOREIGN FIGHTERS IN TERRORIST SAFE HAVENS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4239) to require intelligence community reporting on foreign fighter flows to and from terrorist safe havens abroad, 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 New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO) 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 423, nays 0, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 700]

YEAS—423

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
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
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
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.
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Kaptur
Katko
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
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
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
Nolan
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
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Rangel
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert

Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
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—10

Collins (NY)
Cuellar
DeSantis
Deutch
Herrera Beutler
Joyce
Keating
Kildee
Simpson
Takai

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1448

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.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, December 16th, I am not recorded on any votes because I was absent due to a death in the family. If I had been present, I would have voted: "yea", on rollcall 695, to concur in the Senate Amendment to H.R. 2820—Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Authorization Act of 2015; "yea", on rollcall 696, passage of H.R. 4246—National Guard and Reservist Debt Relief Extension Act of 2015; "yea", on rollcall 697, passage of S. 1090—Emergency Information Improvement Act of 2015; "yea", on rollcall 698, to concur in the Senate Amendment to H.R. 2297—Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015; "yea", on rollcall 699, passage of H.R. 3750—First Responders Passport Act of 2015, as amended; "yea", on rollcall 700, passage of H.R. 4239—Tracking Foreign Fighters in Terrorist Safe Havens Act.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

WAYNE COUNTY STATE CHAMPS

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

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the Wayne County High School football team on winning the 5A Mississippi State Football Championship.

The War Eagles finished their 12–3 season in a 45–41 victory over the defending State champion, Oxford High School.

In the final minutes of the game, four-star defensive tackle Benito Jones caught a touchdown pass from Reggie Stewart, putting the War Eagles ahead. Earlier this year, Jones was named a Dandy Dozen, which is a title given to the top 12 high school football players in Mississippi.

It takes resilience, perseverance, and, most importantly, skill to beat a defending champion on its home turf in Oxford. That is why I congratulate the team, Coach Todd Mangum and his staff, and the parents and administrators for bringing home the State title.

We are proud of you.

TAKE OFF YOUR MASKS

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

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Las Vegas Review-Journal, which is the largest newspaper in Nevada and is one of the largest in the Southwest, was sold to a group of unknown investors.

We know little about the details of the sale except that the paper was purchased for $140 million by a group of financiers, including some who allegedly have ties to Las Vegas. We know nothing about the group, nothing about its business ties, its political positions, or its potential conflicts of interest.

Several watchdog and journalistic integrity groups, including the Society of Professional Journalists, have rightly called for the new owners to be transparent and reveal their identities or risk having the quality and value of the information they provide rightly questioned by readers and employees.

I applaud the many hard-working reporters, editors, photographers, and columnists at the RJ who have protested this lack of transparency and journalistic ethics.

It is time for the new owners to take off their masks and prove they have nothing to hide.

OBAMACARE

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

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, being uninsured in the era of ObamaCare is about to get a lot more expensive. The penalty for individuals and families who cannot afford ObamaCare-approved plans will double next year.

Congress will soon finalize a reconciliation bill that will repeal this punitive individual mandate tax. We urge the President to sign this bill for the sake of American families who can't afford this penalty.

Rather than punish Americans who can't afford to buy ObamaCare's expensive insurance with an equally unaffordable tax, here is a better idea: Let's give uninsured Americans the freedom to purchase high-quality private insurance on a more affordable basis.

House Republicans have and will continue to offer the American people an alternative to ObamaCare. We call it the American Health Care Reform Act. This legislation, which I helped draft and which I cosponsored, will actually decrease the cost of health care without growing government.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to end this costly experiment called ObamaCare and to actually focus on solutions that will lower costs and make life easier for the American people.

REMEMBERING AURORA GODOY

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

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and to honor the life of 26-year-old Aurora Banales Godoy of San Jacinto, California, whose life was taken in the December 2 terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California.

"Rora," as she was called by her family, had a caring, loving, and happy personality, and she smiled a lot. She would always lend a helping hand when needed even without being asked.

Rora graduated from Carson High School in California and attended culinary school. She worked for the San Bernardino County's Department of Environmental Health. She married her high school sweetheart, James Godoy, and is mother to Alexander, a beautiful 2-year-old boy.

Rora's legacy will live on through Alexander's happy demeanor and smiles. Rora's passion was to be a great mom and wife. She enjoyed baking, scrapbooking, Disneyland, the Green Bay Packers, and "Star Wars" movies.

We will miss Rora's laugh; but as she would say, "What can I do to get through this? Smile. Everything will be okay, and happiness will come back again."

BOKO HARAM

(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, as we remain correctly focused on the

ISIS threat, less attention is being paid to Boko Haram.

Over the past few years, Boko Haram has evolved from a regional to a global threat. Boko Haram is one of the world's deadliest terror groups, and it has pledged allegiance to ISIS. It has also been almost 2 years since Boko Haram kidnapped hundreds of Nigerian schoolgirls.

I want to thank my south Florida colleague, FREDERICA WILSON, for her leadership in reminding all of us about this tragic terrorist attack.

We must bring back our girls. We are right to be concerned by the threat that ISIS poses to our national security and to the world; but we cannot ignore the threat posed by Boko Haram.

Mr. Speaker, ISIS, Boko Haram, and so many other radical Islamic groups are being given the time and space to operate; so we must redouble our efforts to defeat these Islamic extremist groups.

CONGRATULATING THE LOS ANGELES CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I have had both the sobering and serious responsibility of serving on the Homeland Security Committee since the heinous acts of 9/11.

I rise today to give comfort to and to thank the Los Angeles Consolidated School District for its swift response. I know that the reports of its actions received conflicting commentary, but it had the responsibility for over 600,000 children. I believe, when administrators act seriously, competently, and thoughtfully, they need to know that we appreciate it.

We live in very difficult and challenging times. It is a horrific person who sends false threats and who frightens the general public; but it is a wise leader who takes it seriously to protect his constituents. In this instance, the Los Angeles Consolidated School District, its superintendent, and all of those involved in making the decision to protect those children did the right thing.

We live in very difficult times, and we here in the United States are continuing to try and define and refine our alert system and to do the kind of intelligence work to provide our local authorities with the right information; but, as a parent, I congratulate them for standing up for the children and making sure that those children and teachers and others were safe.

God help us that we will purge out the horrificness and horribleness of terroristic acts.

□ 1500

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

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

Mr. HARDY. Mr. Speaker, we are $18 trillion in the red. Specifically, our Federal debt, which is a combination of debt held by the public and debt held by government accounts, stands at $18.7 trillion. That means every man, woman, and child owes roughly $58,000 right now, and it will no doubt rise day by day.

At the beginning of the year 2000, we were $5 trillion underwater. Fast-forward a few years to when President Obama took office, and we were approximately $10 trillion in debt. Today, we are almost double that.

I came to Congress to make the difficult decisions to help put our Nation back on the path of growth, because right now I am fearful that my children and my grandchildren will not have the same opportunities.

It is for these reasons that I have authored and introduced a balanced budget amendment. In fact, 45 States have some type of balanced budget requirement already in law. It is time the Federal Government follows suit.

My amendment will prohibit outlays from exceeding receipts. It will prevent Congress from raising the debt ceiling. It will prevent the President—any President—from instituting an executive order without first presenting Congress a balanced budget.

Every business and every family balances their budget. It is time for the Federal Government to do the same.

HONORING REVEREND ALBERT E. CHEW, JR.

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

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a community leader, Reverend Albert E. Chew, Jr.

Reverend Chew was born in a little town in east Texas and moved to Fort Worth, where he served as pastor of the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church for 56 years. I can tell you that, during his time at Shiloh, Reverend Chew not only impacted the Northside community where the church was located, but the greater overall Fort Worth and Tarrant County communities.

Reverend Chew served on the Fort Worth Human Relations Commission, the Missionary Baptist Church General Convention of Texas, and also was one of the early founders of a group, the Black Ecumenical Leadership Alliance, also known as BELA. His church was very committed to the NAACP and often held various NAACP meetings at the church. Reverend Chew, previous to his service in the ministry, was also a veteran of World War II.

He will be greatly missed in the Fort Worth community. He was a great gentleman, a legend. Let's pray for our friends at the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church.

REMEMBERING GRETCHEN QUIE

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of former Minnesota First Lady Gretchen Quie, who, sadly, passed away this past weekend.

Gretchen grew up in Minneapolis and graduated from Central High School before heading to St. Olaf College, where she met her future husband, Al Quie.

Gretchen was active in local church and civic organizations and was by her husband's side as he served 21 years here in the United States Congress and 4 years as Governor of the State of Minnesota.

With an eye for art, Gretchen was instrumental in upgrading the Minnesota Governor's residence and opening it up to the public. She would often host ''Night at the Mansion'' programs, where Minnesotans were invited to have dinner and then stay the night.

Gretchen Quie was also a member of Minnetonka Lutheran Church and a community leader, serving on a number of nonprofit boards.

Minnesotans' thoughts and prayers are with Governor Quie, his family, their five children, their 29 grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

HONORING REVEREND SAM ''PAPA'' CRAIG, JR.

(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 honor the accomplishments and the contributions of Reverend Sam Craig, Jr., and to offer my condolences to his family.

Reverend Craig passed away peacefully on the 29th of November this year. He was 91 years old, and he is survived by his wife, Catherine Caldwell.

Reverend Craig was the assistant pastor at First Baptist Church in Santa Ana, where he was a member for over 42 years.

Reverend Craig enlisted in the Marines Corps in 1947, and he served with honor for 22 years. He served in World War II, in the Korean war, and in Vietnam, and eventually retired in 1969 as a warrant officer.

After retiring from the military, he taught for 17 years in our local Santa Ana Unified School District as both an elementary and a junior high school teacher.

Reverend Craig was committed to his church, and he had a passion. He had a passion for teaching Bible study and for leading the Mission Society. Reverend Craig's dedication to education, to community service, and to his faith

is highly commendable. The people of California's 46th Congressional District will miss him.

HONORING AM GENERAL CEO CHARLIE HALL ON HIS RETIREMENT

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

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of Charlie Hall as he retires as CEO of AM General after 5 years of leadership of this iconic company, the manufacturer of the Humvee.

A natural and driven born leader, Hall joined AM General as CEO in January 2011 and led a top-to-bottom revitalization by launching key partnerships with the National Guard and Reserve, bolstering foreign military sales, and diversifying the company's commercial portfolio.

Hall is known for his collaborative, deliberative, no-nonsense leadership style and has never lost track of his top priority, delivering the best, light tactical vehicles on the planet for our men and women in uniform. Under his leadership, AM General has truly been transformed and now stands poised for a very bright future.

On behalf of the outstanding workforce at AM General and all Hoosiers in the Second Congressional District, I thank Charlie Hall for having such an extraordinary impact on this company and for serving as a role model for the next generation of leaders in our community. I wish him and his family the very best in his retirement.

HONORING BRIGADIER GENERAL HERBERT JACK LLOYD

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor an American patriot and hero. On December 10, 2015, Brigadier General Herbert Jack Lloyd was called home to be with his Savior, away from the war and strife he knew most all of his adult life.

General Lloyd served 35 years in the United States Army, moving from private to brigadier general, commanding at entry level from squad leader to assistant division commander. On July 16, 2014, General Lloyd was inducted into the Army Ranger Hall of Fame. Brigadier General Lloyd has received numerous decorations throughout his service, including three combat jumps with the 6th Vietnamese Parachute Battalion, two Silver Stars, seven Bronze Stars, and two Purple Hearts.

Mr. Speaker, though I could expound on the godly, courageous, and patriotic life lived by General Lloyd, I will simply read a sentence from the General's obituary that he wrote himself: ''If there is nothing worth dying for—in this sense—there is nothing worth living for.'' I believe this speaks directly to who General Lloyd was as a man. He lived his life in complete service to God, country, and family.

I offer my most heartfelt condolences to his son, Mark; daughter-in-law, Beth; and his grandchildren, Hannah and Matthew. May the general's example and memories continue to live on in Hope, Arkansas, and around the world.

WEAR RED WEDNESDAY

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

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today is Wear Red Wednesday to bring back our girls.

As millions here in America prepare for the holidays, we must think of the Nigerians whose celebrations will be tempered by fear and sorrow. Think of the Nigerian Christians fearful of fully celebrating Christmas and attending their places of worship, haunted by the Boko Haram Christmas Day church bombings of years past.

Think of the families that were devastated 611 days ago by the kidnapping of the Chibok girls. For these families, Christmas is a sobering reminder that their precious sisters and daughters are gone.

Please include these 219 girls and their families in your Christmas prayers this year. Pray that next year they will enjoy a peaceful and joyous Christmas together.

Please continue to tweet, tweet, tweet #bringbackourgirls. Tweet, tweet, tweet #joinrepwilson.

FUTURE FORUM: CLIMATE CHANGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from California (Mr. SWALWELL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to kick off the latest Future Forum Special Order hour. Today we will be talking about something of unique importance to millennials across the United States and, in fact, the world: climate change and what we do about it.

Joining me today are Members from across our country. We have Congressman BOYLE from the Philadelphia area, Congressman LIEU from the Los Angeles area, and Congressman GALLEGO from the Phoenix area.

Why is the risk of climate change so unique and important to millennials? Well, they know that the very world in which they live—and the one that we will give to our children—is in danger of experiencing catastrophic environmental changes. It is our future that is on the line, and it is our future that is in danger.

I also encourage anyone watching this to participate in the conversation at #futureforum, and I will engage our Members under that hashtag.

First, I want to start with Congressman LIEU.

I would ask you, Congressman, in the Los Angeles area, a place where young people are thriving and young people across the world are moving to, what are you hearing from millennials in the Los Angeles area?

Is it anything like what I heard in southern California when SCOTT PETERS and I were down there last month and we talked to students at the University of California, San Diego, and we had a word cloud? This is where you ask participants in the audience to text in what issue is most important to them, and the one that is more important gets bigger and bigger in font size. As you can see here in this photograph, climate was the number one issue on the minds of people down in San Diego. Is that what you are hearing in the Los Angeles area?

I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. TED LIEU).

Mr. TED LIEU of California. Absolutely. That is why I am very pleased and proud that the University of California system became the first, and currently the only, university to be a part of Bill Gates' breakthrough energy fund.

We are taking some great steps in California to mitigate carbon pollution. As you know, California passed the Global Warming Solutions Act last decade, and it is one of the strongest laws in the world. One of the first bills I authored seeks to replicate California's laws nationwide.

It is an important issue for millennials because it is going to directly affect you in the coming decades. It is going to affect our children and grandchildren. So we need to make sure that we mitigate carbon pollution.

All of us are busy. We all deal with a thousand issues, but carbon pollution is the one issue that can kill humanity as a species if we don't do anything about it.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Thank you, Congressman LIEU.

Something that is quite interesting to me is that for millennials, when polled or asked about climate change, it is not a partisan issue. In this House, it feels quite like a partisan issue.

My question for Congressman BOYLE: Across the country from Los Angeles, is addressing climate change a partisan issue, and what are you hearing from millennials in the Philadelphia area?

I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE).

□ 1515

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. First, I just want to commend the gentleman Mr. SWALWELL for his excellent leadership when it comes to this issue of utmost importance to our generation, but also to all the other issues that face our generation, especially the student loan debt issue that he and I have spoken about a number of times here on this House floor.

With respect to climate change, this should not be a partisan issue. Indeed, in Europe, for decades, centre-right parties acknowledged and still to this day acknowledge the existence of global climate change and work to address it.

Here in the United States, however, it has, unfortunately, become a partisan issue. Yet, what is so interesting is that, when I go about my district in Philadelphia and in suburban Philadelphia and Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, and I speak specifically to small-business owners, small-business owners, by the way, at least half of whom are probably Republican, each and every one of them is talking to me about ways and investments that they are making to ensure that they can get more bang for their buck when it comes to energy and things that they are doing, investments that they are making to ensure that we do better as far as the environment, yet at the same time also reduce costs.

I did a tour back in the spring of a major company in my district that has made a massive investment in terms of solar panels on the roofs. This is a major facility, a family-owned business. This is not an insignificant amount of money they have spent in terms of this investment. They would not be doing so if they thought this was a hoax. They would not be doing so if they thought, by transitioning to renewables, they are able to bring down their energy costs and pour more money back into their business.

We need to end, especially in this House, this false dichotomy between doing what is right for our economy and doing what is right for our climate and for the next generation. The fact is, if we are smart and show the best of American ingenuity, we can do both.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Congressman GALLEGO, I am curious. You look at this poster board, and we see that 73 percent of people aged 18 to 29 believe that the Earth is warming. Clearly, 73 percent of people in that age range are not Democrats. They are not Republicans. In fact, young people are quite independent minded.

Are you finding that people in your congressional district in the Phoenix area believe that the Earth is warming and that mankind is not only responsible for that, but has an obligation to do something about it?

Mr. GALLEGO. Well, in Phoenix, we are always used to pretty warm weather. Of course, as of late, we actually have noticed it has actually gotten a lot, lot warmer, and we are worried.

Within that 73 percent range, you will meet a lot of people from all demographic backgrounds, especially Latino and African American communities, that are particularly worried. These are the communities that are growing still, a very young population, but also, unfortunately, tend to have less money.

What that means is, when it gets hotter—and it continues to get hotter in Arizona—and they are going to have to pay for higher air-conditioning costs or are going to have to pay more for water service, they are the ones who are going to be directly impacted by climate change.

These young people—the average age of the Latino in Arizona is about 25—have to see into the future. What they see in the future is a State and a country that is warmer, that has less water, and that did not make the kind of energy investments that we could have done for many years.

Right now the politicians of today do not have the vision for the new energy future. That is why you see those high numbers. Those high numbers are a direct reflection of young millennials who really, truly care about the future and are projecting into the future what they think is important for stability of not just this country, but the population on Earth.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Now, Congressman LIEU, talking about this statistic, in the Los Angeles area, there is a lot that young people are doing with startups, especially in clean energy.

I had the opportunity to visit an incubator hub, thousands of square feet where they are working in Los Angeles in the Arts District to try and solve some of the greatest climate challenges we have through renewable energy sources.

What are you seeing as far as innovation in your area where people are saying: You know what. This is not a false choice between fossil fuels and doing nothing about it? Are you seeing something there at home?

Mr. TED LIEU of California. When California passed our landmark Global Warming Solutions Act, we had huge investments in green energy actually come into the State. California has now been a leader in green technology in terms of solar, in terms of biofuels and other technologies.

If you want to do that, people do come to California. It really has helped to jump-start parts of our community. I agree with Representative BOYLE. It is a false choice between the economy and climate mitigation. You can do both.

I also do want to note that it is not just young people who realize this. You have also now organizations that you traditionally would not call progressive coming on board, saying that carbon pollution is a problem. You have got the Catholic Church saying that we need to address climate change now. You have got the U.S. military.

One of the great things about our military is it is exceptional, it is amazing, because it actually deals with facts. The U.S. military takes the world as it is, not as they think it should be or in some fantasyland. When the U.S. military looked at the science and the facts, they said that this is a national security problem.

We are having more severe weather events. We are going to have food shortages in other parts of the world causing migrations, causing conflicts. In terms of the U.S. military's own fuel use, it is very difficult to transport a lot of fuel over long distances. They are actually looking at renewables, at solar, at other renewable sources.

Lastly, let me just say, as we stand here today, one of the world's largest oil companies, ExxonMobil, believes in climate change. They believe it is caused by the burning of fossil fuels, and they support a price on carbon. Now, we wish it didn't take them over three decades to come to this position, but that is their position today.

Since they don't say it very loudly, I am going to say it very loudly. ExxonMobil believes in climate change. For those who don't, you may want to think what does that oil company know that you don't.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. If oil companies believe in climate change, you can, too. I think that is the message here today.

In Paris, over the past few weeks, over a hundred countries, thousands of world leaders, gathered to declare what over 98 percent of the scientific community has always known, which is that climate change is real. Man has caused it, and we must do something about it.

The reaction in my congressional district has been one of enthusiasm. People are happy to see that internationally this is being addressed. It is not just the United States. It is not just the giants, but every country across the globe is recognizing this.

What are you hearing at home, Congressman BOYLE, about the Paris talks and what can come out of it?

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Well, the first thing is the fact that 194, 195 nations or so from all around the world could come together and agree on one document as ambitious as this one is is truly inspiring not just on the issue of climate change, but, indeed, as we look at all the other immense challenges that we face as a human race.

I think that it is great specifically for this issue, but it also shows what we can do together if our hearts are in the right place and we are dedicated toward saving this planet.

I also just want to follow up on something that Mr. LIEU said, which is a great point in terms of talking about the broader coalition of people who want action on this incredibly important issue.

I would add one more to his extensive list, and that is the insurance companies. Insurance companies, especially on the East Coast, especially in south Florida and the entire Florida peninsula, have a great deal of exposure at stake.

They understand that right now—not 20 years from now, not 100 years from now—as we speak, there are parts of Florida, there are parts of Virginia Beach, that are flooding when it is not even raining. These are real consequences that we have to deal with.

For those of us in the Philadelphia area, in New York, New Jersey, I never imagined we would be riding out a hurricane and having to deal with the aftereffects—3 years later still dealing with those aftereffects, by the way—and the price tag for that for insurance companies was absolutely enormous.

One thing that we all need to consider—and this is a really shocking statistic, but sadly true—last month, November of 2015, was the warmest month in recorded history. Those records have gone back since 1880. We know that this is not a 1-month phenomenon, that indeed it is just a continuation of the trend that we have been dealing with.

I would really urge those who want to make this a partisan issue and part of the usual food fight that too often goes on around here, this issue is going to face Democrats, Republicans, Independents, every single person in our country, every single person on Earth.

The sooner that we take politics out of this and that we come together on a comprehensive solution that balances, yes, our economic needs with, also, our needs to tackle this issue, the better off all Americans will be.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. I am glad that you mentioned, Congressman LIEU, the work that is being done in and among our Armed Forces.

Congressman GALLEGO, you served in Iraq, and you are a member of the Committee on Armed Services right now. I strongly believe that drilling our way out of this is not going to produce the energy results that we need, and, of course, as we know, it will be harmful to the Earth, that there are actually ways through innovation.

That is something that America has always done. We have innovated our way out of the problems that have challenged us. Whether it comes to wind, solar, alternative fuel cells, we are doing that from a national security posture.

In my congressional district, we have Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and Sandia National Laboratory. At Sandia, they are doing work with oil companies at what is called the combustion research facility, where they are trying to make the automobile engine more efficient. At Lawrence Livermore, at the national emission facility, which is the largest and most energetic inertial confinement fusion device built to date and the largest laser in the world, fusion holds the promise of providing a practically limitless supply of clean energy to the world.

I am wondering, Congressman GALLEGO, just as someone who has worked in the military, defending our country before, somebody who overseas the military now in Congress, what can we do from a national security posture to address climate change?

Mr. GALLEGO. Well, first we have to recognize that it truly is a national security issue in two areas. One, if you look at how we mobilize our troops, when you are out there—and I was a frontliner. I served with the United States Marine Corps as an infantryman.

Many times I was far away from a base, but I still needed resources. So people had to drop off my food. People had to drop off a generator to power the computers that gave us the information we needed.

That was all done, unfortunately, by trucks that were exposing themselves to IEDs to bring us gasoline to basically power these generators to even keep us warm when it got really cold, things of that nature.

If we had a strong investment in green technology that allowed us to have energy independence down at the module level, it would reduce the amount of men and women that have to be on these dangerous roads.

When we kind of look at the grander scope of how you actually effectively fight a war, the first thing you do is you try to take away their energy resources. The first thing you do is you take out their electrical grid, you take out any opportunity for them to actually be able to move. That includes what we know now as gasoline.

If you look at some of our greatest victories, when Sherman was pushing through Europe, when Patton was fighting in World War II, what they did was effectively cut off the axis powers' ability to basically feed their engines by destroying their capability of refining oil into gasoline.

If we want to also make sure that we, as a country, have strong national security going now and into the future, we have to make sure that we are energy independent. Most of the hydrocarbons that are still in existence in this world are not in the United States. They are found in a lot of countries that are not stable allies of ours or in a very unstable region.

For example, Venezuela is one of our biggest oil partners. Even if you go down to the Middle East, they are in a very unstable area. We still rely on that area for a lot of our oil or the world, in general. If we do not receive their oil, they do set the price of the commodities, which also affects, obviously, a lot of our national security posture.

If we were truly serious about understanding what we need to do in the future to continue having a strong national security that defends the American way of life, energy independence through renewables is the way to do it.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Congressman GALLEGO, you come from one of the hottest spots in the United States.

Congressman BOYLE, you also alluded to November being the hottest month on record. It seems like every month we learn that the month before was the hottest month on record.

We are in the United States. If we were in Australia or South America, hearing that November is the hottest month on record may not be as surprising as a month that is in the dead of fall and the dawn of winter in the United States.

Congressman LIEU, you represent a district that for 40 years before you were there was represented by the great Henry Waxman, someone who did a lot of good work on this floor to address climate change.

In our home State of California, while the future specific day-to-day effects of climate change are not yet known, projections not only show a rise in sea levels across the world and threatening our coast in California, but models are also suggesting increasingly extreme weather events.

Whether you are in the Los Angeles area or in the San Francisco Bay area, we have been experiencing drought-like conditions for years as well as hurricanes on the East Coast in places like the northeast that have not seen the intensity like Hurricane Sandy, which we have seen before.

□ 1530

And so, as we adapt for our current climate and any rapid change in our environment, I want to know, Congressman LIEU, can you talk a little bit about weather events and why this is a threat to coastal communities?

Mr. TED LIEU of California. Representative SWALWELL, that is a great point you make. Whether you call it science, facts, or measurements, you can measure climate change. So we know that last year was the hottest year in recorded history, only to be outdone by the first 6 months of this year, only to be outdone again, as Representative BOYLE mentioned, by November—last month. We know that ocean levels have risen 8 inches in about the last century, and just since 1992, they have risen about 3 inches.

I love my district, which stretches from Malibu, south through Santa Monica, Manhattan Beach, Palos Verdes, and along the coast, and I don't want my constituents all moving to Representative GALLEGO's district because they are getting flooded.

It is important that we look at this. The projections show that by 2050, large parts of American coastal areas will be at risk of flooding—and that is a huge problem. So we have to not only pay attention to that as a national security interest, but just for people to live their normal lives. And Mother Nature does not discriminate.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Congressman LIEU, an interesting fact about that number. NASA projects that by 2050, between $66 billion and $106 billion worth of existing coastal property will likely be below sea level nationwide, with $238 billion to $507 billion worth of property below sea level by 2100. And so it certainly has, as you said, not just the livelihood effect on it, but also a price tag, as we have seen.

I mentioned Congressman GALLEGO served in the military. I believe you also serve today as a reservist. If you will, talk about the national security threat because of climate change.

Mr. TED LIEU of California. I am very honored to have Los Angeles Air Force Base in my district. It was the first base to actually go green in terms of its vehicles. So all the vehicles the L.A. Air Force Base uses on the government side are energy-efficient electric vehicles. They are the first large institution to develop a vehicle-to-grid program where you actually plug in the vehicle and it gives electricity back to the grid when the grid needs it. If you can get that widespread, that would be a game changer across America. So the military is very focused on this issue.

Again, what makes America an exceptional country—one of the best in the world—is we actually rely on facts and science and measurements. Ninety-seven percent of scientists looking at this issue have said that climate change is real, it is largely caused by humans, and we need to do something about it or else we are going to be in a great world of hurt.

If 9 out of 10 doctors said your child shows the symptoms of diabetes, would you keep feeding your child Snickers bars? You would be crazy if you do that. You would actually go and seek treatment. It makes no sense for folks to believe in doctors and science and math and technology and then, on this one narrow issue of carbon pollution, simply for ideological reasons, say we are not going to trust any science or facts or measurements.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Bringing us back to what millennials believe on this issue. Some of you have participated in our Future Forum dialogue.

On January 14, Congressman LIEU will be in the Los Angeles area hosting a Future Forum dialogue on climate change, student loan debt, and the other issues facing our generation. But some of the science, as you mentioned, behind millennial beliefs is quite powerful.

According to a 2014 Harstad poll, 80 percent of millennials favor the idea of requiring utilities to generate at least a third of their power from renewable sources like solar and wind by 2030. That also falls in line with what much of the rest of the developed world is doing.

There was a New York Times story last year highlighting that, by the end of 2014, Germany would receive nearly a third of its energy through renewable sources. Two-thirds of young adults age 18 to 34, according to a National Geographic article, say they are inclined to vote for candidates who support cutting greenhouse gases and increasing financial incentives for renewable energy. And in a 2015 poll by NextGen Climate, 75 percent of voters under the age of 35 say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who pledged to turn the country to 50 percent clean energy by 2030.

So we have talked about the national security argument, we have talked about the economic advantages and, of course, the livelihood threat of flooding in extreme weather events.

Congressman BOYLE, what about American exceptionalism? Are we any less capable than Germany or Denmark or any of these other countries of addressing climate change?

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Well, for anyone to believe that—I know there are some right now who are running for President trying to denigrate America and talk about what is all supposedly wrong with us. I would point out that the whole history of our country has been seeing enormous challenges and meeting them and defeating them. That has been the entire history from Valley Forge, which I am privileged to represent, all the way through to the present day.

I would also say to the men and women of my generation—of our generation—who might be understandably skeptical on this issue because each and every month they hear the same statistics we do that this past month was the hottest month on record, only to be beaten by the succeeding month, that we have actually been here before in terms of dealing with environmental degradation.

As for our parents' generation, they faced two particularly strong issues that seemed very difficult to meet and defeat. One was with respect to the ozone layer. If we were having this conversation in the early 1970s, a great deal of the talk was about repairing the ozone layer. Even when some of us were kids, that was an issue. Notice that you don't hear about that anymore. That is because we made the important changes that were necessary, and we solved that problem.

A second was with respect to our waterways and rivers. I am proud to represent, Mr. Speaker, and to my colleagues here, the Delaware River in Philadelphia, which actually separates Pennsylvania from New Jersey. It is a beautiful waterway. It is also a very historic one, as that is where, famously, on Christmas Day 1776, George Washington and our soldiers crossed the Delaware into the Battle of Trenton to defeat the Hessians and help launch our young Nation on its way to independence.

Well, a previous generation ago, that waterway, as well as the Hudson River and countless others, was in its worst state ever. Today, that same Delaware River is cleaner than at any point in our grandparents' lifetime. That is an enormous achievement. It is one that, 40, 50 years ago, most people would have predicted could not have been accomplished.

So I would say to all Americans, but especially to those of our generation, yes, this is an enormous problem, but, yes, we can also defeat it. Yes, we can also rise to the occasion, just as we have with each and every other major challenge our Nation has faced.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. That is right, Mr. BOYLE.

Mr. GALLEGO has seen this with me. He came out to my congressional district and spoke with millennials in the San Francisco Bay Area. We are aspirational. We are optimistic. We are collaborative. In fact, we came out of the family cell phone plan, so we are used to solving all sorts of problems with group think and then actually arriving at a decision. That is what we do: We collaborate, we solve small problems, we think big, and we take on the larger problems.

Your closing thoughts, Congressman GALLEGO, on what our generation can do to address this threat to our national security, our livelihood, and our economy.

Mr. GALLEGO. I think if we actually lean back on the strengths of our generation, that is what we need to do. We are a very empathetic generation. We care about our community. We care about our world. And being able to translate that into political power is important.

Whether you vote for a Democrat, Republican, or Independent, make sure they understand that is your priority, to be represented by somebody who understands the threat of climate change and you want to see action.

We also need to get involved more on the economic innovation side that comes with the new energy future. We are going to be developing the technologies that are really going to be making the biggest impacts in terms of slowing down the warming of the Earth.

And it is our friends and colleagues now that are working in labs and doing the startups in Los Angeles, Phoenix, and San Francisco that are creating the technology of tomorrow. We need to continue to be pushing forward, supporting their efforts, supporting them through R&D. But, more importantly, having a Congress that is supportive and understanding of the challenges of climate change is the key to all that.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Thank you, Congressman GALLEGO, for participating today.

Thank you, Congressman LIEU, for your service to our country and for standing up for Americans now in this new world and understanding that this is a national security issue as well.

Congressman LIEU, if you want to, give us your closing thoughts on climate change and what millennials—and everyone, as you said—can do about this issue.

Mr. TED LIEU of California. Mother Nature does not discriminate. Whether you are 20 years old, a Republican or Democrat or a member of the Green Party, the laws of physics and the laws of chemistry do not negotiate.

We are now in a danger zone when it comes to carbon pollution. If we don't act quickly to reduce carbon pollution, in the coming decades we are going to be in a world of hurt. We are going to have far more extreme weather events, far more national security issues.

So, working together, it is my hope that we can pass strong legislation through this Congress, and I believe we will because, in a democracy, the side with the facts eventually wins.

Thank you, Representative SWALWELL, for having this terrific Future Forum event on the floor today.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Thank you, Congressman LIEU.

It has been exciting going to the nine cities across America and talking to young people and learning their thoughts. As the Future Forum, our goal has been first to listen, and then to engage with millennials, whether it is going to their college campuses, community colleges, workforces, incubator and startup hubs; and then it is to crowdsource these problems, and then for the lawmakers of Future Forum to come back to this body and this Chamber and act on the issues that young Americans care about.

It is the largest generation America has ever known. It is the most diverse generation that America has ever known. It is an aspirational generation that wants to solve problems and not sit on the sidelines and watch our sea levels rise and watch the Earth get warmer. It is a generation that feels a sense of responsibility that we are only on this Earth for a very short period of time, and we will be judged by what we leave to the next generation.

So, yes, we can do something about it. Young Americans are committed to fighting climate change. They know it is our own reality and the reality of those who will inherit this Earth, and they know it is better to start now, before it is too late.

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

□ 1545

BUDGETARY CONCERNS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, as we get ourselves sort of organized, you will actually notice a couple of these boards are a little worn. It is because it is a, shall we say, the continuation of a theme. But this is sort of an auspicious day to actually do some of this, as we are getting ready to do the omnibus, the big budgetary bill.

What is so important here is, I want, everyone, first, to understand the $1.1-plus trillion we are talking about is solely what we call the discretionary portion of the budget. This is the portion of the budget we debate here, we do amendments, we work through; and then, in this particular case, because of a series of blocks and frustrations and game-playing that happened previously, we get here to the end and we are trying to package it all together. But it is not the majority, it is not anywhere near close to the majority of our Federal spending.

So take a look at this board. And this is for 2015. So we are right now working on the budget for the 2016 appropriation cycle.

If you see the blue, the blue is mandatory spending. Those are things like Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid and other parts of the welfare portion of our budget that are formula-driven, that you hit a certain age, you get a benefit; you fall below a certain income, you get a certain benefit. It is about 69-plus percent of our spending, and this is for last year.

Only 31 percent of the 2015 budget actually goes through this sort of normal appropriation process, and that is really important to understand the scale of the spending and how little of it actually is debated, because it is a formula. It is also the portion of our spending that is exploding.

So we are going to walk through a couple of these boards today. One of my goals is actually to also walk through and talk about what is actually happening in some of the mandatory spending, and why, for all of us, we are going to have to have that very honest, very difficult, very math fact-based conversation.

In my district, the Scottsdale, Phoenix area, I am incredibly blessed. I have an amazing constituency, I have a wonderful area, but we have done 100+ of these budget townhalls over the last couple of years, and I will get people who will come in and say, but that number doesn't feel right. I know it may not feel right.

Previous politicians on both sides, I think, have underplayed what is happening in this country demographically and what it actually means to our commitment.

So if you are someone who really, really, really cares about keeping this country safe, you need to be willing to start to understand what is happening in these numbers. You need to understand the financial pressure that is going to be on your ability to finance the military. If you care about health care, you need to understand the financial pressure that is going to be coming to deal with those, medical research, education.

So let's first get our head around what is both happening, and then we are going to actually walk through some demographic slides. And the reason I want to do that is to understand, this isn't the type of discussion where you can throw a switch and the solutions are simple.

The next slide, this is actually sort of walking through the projections, and, understand, these projections have actually changed a little bit, but I didn't have a chance to finish all the calculations. So this is, functionally, four budget cycles from now. So it is the 2020 budget. We are right now doing the 2016 budget.

At that point, 76 percent of the spending is Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, interest on the debt, veterans benefits, and other transfer programs, welfare programs; 76. Remember, the budget cycle we just finished, it was 69. In, functionally, 4 or 5 years, it becomes 76 percent of all of our spending.

So if you care about the military, if you care about healthcare research, if you care about foreign aid, if you care about any of those things, it is shrinking rather dramatically as a percentage of our total spending.

Yet, you have got to understand, from 2015 to that 2020 budget, this government is going to go from, I think it is a $3-some trillion budget to a $4.1 trillion budget. So in that few years, we are going to actually increase by $1 trillion in spending and revenues, and some of those revenues come from borrowing. Yet, the ratio continues to explode because it is going into that mandatory spending.

This is demographics. This is reality. And unless you have a solution for baby boomers to stop, like me, turning gray, we have to grow up and deal with it. I find here in Washington there is pathological avoidance of the reality that is upon us.

I am going to do this without knocking anything down. And I believe these are already up on our Web site, the ability to sort of take a look and see where is the money actually going; because I can't tell you how many times we would do those budget townhalls and someone would come in the door and say, Well, DAVID, if you just did this, if you would get rid of foreign aid, that would take care of the problem. Then you go to this slide and try showing them that the tiny, tiny, tiny little sliver right there was foreign aid.

Well, DAVID, if you would just get rid of this. Well, waste and fraud is huge. The reality of it, we know in Medicare and Medicaid and many of these things, we have to come up with more dramatically efficient ways, the use of technology. We are going to start to talk about that at the end of this, that there really are some solutions we need to be embracing. But they are little slivers.

Do you see the blue areas? Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, welfare benefits, interest on the debt? As you saw today, with the Fed starting to raise interest rates, we expect, in just a few years, interest to be bigger than the defense budget. In about 7 years, interest will be approaching $1 trillion a year.

Understand, this is the reality of the math. This is no more happy talk that seems to go around in politics. It is math.

This portion over here, if you take out the Defense Department—so if you look at defense and all this blue, these here are all the agencies. It is important to understand these numbers, because I have been heartbroken at how often we do townhalls around our State, and there is this misunderstanding of where the money is actually being appropriated.

So we are going to talk about a little bit of the demographics of what is going on, but also, how much trouble, how much difficulty is Social Security in?

Remember, they used to say it is the third rail of politics, you are not allowed to talk about it or tell the truth about it, but we have a moral obligation to explain what is going on. How about Medicare? How about some of these others?

So I wanted you to see this particular slide here, and this just gives you a sense of also what is happening with us demographically.

I can remember many, many years ago, sitting in a statistics class over at Arizona State University—I love that school—and this is, I think, in the early eighties, and the professor is showing graphs saying, you have got to understand, in the 2015–2028 point, you have all these baby boomers that move into retirement, so I am sure the government, I am sure Washington, D.C., will make sure they have these massive amounts of reserves set aside to provide benefits for our seniors.

Well, being one of those ''end of the baby boomer folks,'' and now being here in Washington realizing: That money isn't there. So when you look at this particular chart—and the only reason it is partially here—you see 2018, it is the next to the last bar. And then, all of a sudden, the last bar, do you see it is shooting up? We have hit the time they have called the inflection point.

So, in 22 months, we hit the time that we have talked about for 30 years, that the debt is going to start to explode in this country; 2018. We are doing the 2016 budget right now. We are already in the 2016 budget. So 22 months from now, the debt starts to explode.

So we are going to have a good year this year, though, because of some of the budget deal that was done about a month or so ago; and some of the other, lifting some of the spending caps of sequestration, we are going to end up with a larger deficit this year.

So I guess the best number I have seen right now is $440 billion, $450 billion this year. But come 2018, a couple of years from now, it starts to take off, and it takes off for, functionally, the next 40 years. This is the reality that is facing us. So, if you care about the military and education and all these other things, understand what is about to happen.

Here, actually, are some of the slides that start to become more difficult to talk about, and I am actually sort of frustrated that we don't do more of this.

This particular chart here—and actually, I think this one I may have taken from The Wall Street Journal. And for folks who are actually interested in these demographic facts and how they affect your country, but also affect the world, The Wall Street Journal actually just recently finished a series I think they call ''2050,'' and it actually has some of the best narratives, best graphs, best details I have ever seen in sort of walking through, that this just isn't an American trend.

Take a look at the numbers you see in China and other places around the world, where the aging of the population, compared to the benefits that have been promised, compared to the number of workers, and that imbalance, and what that means to future economic growth for the world, let alone just the United States.

But do you see this line where it starts to explode off the charts? That is, functionally, enrollment in Social Security. So when we were at 2008, we had about 41 million folks who were in Social Security. Today, I believe now we have crossed 50 million, so 2008–2015, this is the reality of how quickly that slope. And it is the what? It is the baby boomers.

Remember, we have about 76 million of our brothers and sisters who turn 65 in about an 18-year period. The first one, the first baby boomer crossed that threshold, I believe, in late 2008. So we are in that demographic inflection.

You are going to start to see more and more of this reflected in our economic growth, in the debt, and the movement of your Federal Government resources into retirement programs for those who are over 65. Whether it be medical, whether it be indigent medical, whether it be Social Security and others, it is our commitment. We have made these promises. We have also made a promise that we need to find some way to pay for them, and that is where this discussion, hopefully, is going to take us.

This slide is a bit more of a concern. We are doing a project in our office right now. We have a little, a couple of folks set aside in our office called the ''Idea Shop,'' and they try to do sort of detailed research outside the day-to-day chaos that is being a Member of Congress.

It is really the bottom point here that I want to pop out at you, and that is the number of our brothers and sisters, the number of our fellow Americans, that are 55–64, so they are heading towards retirement. Nineteen percent of them have no retirement savings at all, so they are solely dependent on Social Security and the medical benefits that they will receive from Medicare.

If we bounce up one, 25 percent of those older than 45 have, functionally, no money set aside.

Now, I accept we have just come through a pretty rough economic cycle, but the last couple of years it is getting better. It is still not great, but this is a point where we are starting to step up and understand we need a revolution in this country's Tax Code. We need a revolution in how we regulate in this country.

We all walk around with these supercomputers in our pocket. Information is ultimately the greatest regulator in a society, and yet we still try and design these command-and-control functions of bureaucracies like it was the 1930s.

We are also going to do a little talking about embracing the new economy, the hyper-efficient economy, that will, hopefully, maximize economic growth.

But everything, whether it be from immigration, to Tax Code, to regulatory codes, everything, now the first words out of that politician's, that policymaker's, that researcher's, and you, as the constituent's mouth needs to be, how does this maximize economic growth for the country, because I want to keep my commitment to the young and our commitments to seniors. When you look at the numbers, it does not happen unless we can get this economic expansion, some economic growth really working.

So as we go through these slides—the other thing is also, for someone that is also really interested in these, we try to put these up on our social media, but these are some of the different projects we are working on.

Now, on this one, this is just to sort of understand, one more time—and I know I am repeating myself with the different slides, but we did a budget deal about, what, 2 months ago? Social Security Disability was going broke. Social Security Disability in early, mid-2016 was, functionally, the trust fund for that was going to be gone.

□ 1600

So the solution that Congress supported—I voted ''no,'' but that is because we thought we had a more elegant solution. Functionally, the political will was not there for the types of reforms we thought were appropriate.

They reached in and took $114 billion out of the big Social Security trust fund and moved it over here to the Social Security disability fund to shore it up. Okay. That was their solution, but there was almost no discussion around this body that it shortened the life of Social Security by about another year.

So when you take a look—the reason we are showing these is—take a look at this middle one. If you were to exclude the interest—now, understand, the revenues for Social Security come from really two pots, the taxes and then the money it has loaned to the government back to the general fund.

So the Federal Government—I know it is just an accounting gimmick back and forth because we are paying ourselves interest, but that is what we do. We pay ourselves interest, and that is considered one of the revenue sources for Social Security.

So if you were to take taxes and interest, but if you were to look at that midline and say, instead of the sort of bookkeeping entry we do back and forth, no interest, just the revenues from taxes on FICA, Social Security, it went negative in 2010. So more money was going out to beneficiaries than what has been coming in in taxes.

But if you actually put both the interest and the tax stream, it goes negative no longer in 2022. It goes negative now in 2021. So if I had a big marker, I would walk over there and cross that out. Of course, I would also knock over the board in doing it. So, functionally, 5 years, 60 months from now, Social Security goes negative.

Mr. Speaker, this is no longer that theoretical discussion we were having saying sometime off in the future, sometime in 2027, sometime in 2040. It is 5 years. It is less than one U.S. senatorial term that Social Security goes negative.

Mr. Speaker, how much discussion do you see in the political class, in the researcher class, the policy class, and in our communities saying: ''We need to deal with this today because every day we wait it becomes more difficult''?

If we look at the history of the last couple of decades when those of us who care about this deeply have gotten behind microphones and started to point out the numbers, we see the television ad the next campaign, whether it be pushing PAUL RYAN or a look-alike off of a cliff and saying that PAUL RYAN wants to try to reform your entitlements because—the fact of the matter is Medicare is going bankrupt. He wants to save the system. But if we can scare you to death, it becomes a great political issue.

I also believe the voters are way ahead of the political class in understanding we need to step up and do hard things to fix these. I also want to make the argument that these are the biggest issues in front of us because, if we don't do it, then everything in the future is going to be how do we survive the promises we have made in our entitlements. And it is coming fast. Remember, Social Security goes negative in about 60 months. That is how fast it is coming at us.

This was just to sort of reemphasize the fact—do you see that little red area? That is what we did in the budget deal a couple months ago. We grabbed that $114 billion and pulled it out of Social Security. Because of that, we shortened the life. We tried to do this without knocking them over. This was just another variation of the same set of numbers.

So now you know the reality. We have some on Medicare. But when you start to see some of the charts, we have charts that say that, if there is not a substantial economic expansion, Medicare could be 7 years and the trust fund is substantially drained.

Remember, these are supposed to be freestanding trust funds. The way the law works is you start to cut benefits. We need to avoid these. So how do you do it? How do you avoid these?

The first argument I want to make is it is next year when we start to discuss tax reform, a tax reform that maximizes economic growth, maybe not the benefit for the group you belong to or the industry you are in, but the tax reform that benefits the entire country to maximize economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, I am also asking for a revolution in the way we look at the regulatory state. There are a few people who have written about this. There are a few people who have thought about this.

For a couple of years I sat on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee. We would have debates back and forth with the EPA on: ''How did you get to this regulation? How did you find this out?''

They would say: ''We are not going to give you our data sets. It is proprietary. We are just doing the command and control.''

I learned there is this intense frustration. There is this fight out there between I believe people who make money off the regulatory state and those who functionally pay for it, which is all of us.

The fact of the matter is the crowdsourcing of information and data. Are we actually doing the most efficient methodology to have clean water and the most efficient technology to have clean air?

How about in my financial world? I sit on the Financial Services Committee. This is going to get a little geeky. But, in 2008, the bonds that were backed by mortgages blew up.

All of a sudden we found out there were lots and lots and lots of mortgages and deeds of trust rolled into these bonds that stopped performing. There were lots of debates and discussions of these were toxic loans, they were Alt-A that were put into these bonds, whatever the reason. How did we not know?

So we set up a financial system that bundled these mortgages into bonds. Are you telling me that, from the regulatory state, if we had designed an information-based regulatory system where those of us—when I was Maricopa County treasurer and you were looking at buying debt to park the cash you had so you would get a rate of return for your taxpayers, you would pick up the phone and call Moody's or call S&P or call the rating and say: ''Hey, is this a safe bond? Is this A rated? Is it AAA?'' or whatever it is. You would get a phone call back. They would say: ''Yes. It is fine.'' That was your due diligence.

How about a system that uses information so the information flows saying: ''Hey, the bond you are looking at, you now have 5 percent of the loans on it that aren't making their payments,'' ''Hey, do you realize this bond has an intense geographic concentration so, if something happens in that geography, you are going to have ever greater difficulties?''

All of a sudden the regulators that are built into the system come in and bayonet the wounded after the war is lost. Sorry. That was one of my father's favorite sayings.

But the fact of the matter is the way we do much of our regulation is after the sins have happened instead of using information to avoid the mistake in the beginning. So I am making the argument that that type of revolutionary thinking in the way we, as a society, regulate will maximize economic growth.

On immigration, you need to change this immigration system. When you realize that two-thirds of the immigration population is familial—and I know this sets people's hair on fire.

But if you are going to take in 1 million, 1.2 million, legal immigrants into the country this year, you do realize two-thirds of that population functionally gets to come to the United States because of a family member, where much of the rest of the world, whether it be Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Canada, have moved to a system that maximizes talent because they figured out they desperately need economic growth to keep their commitments.

But there is a fourth one that is almost never talked about and I can actually start to see here in Congress and I see it in our State legislatures, and that is actually the new economy.

I promise sometime when we get back in January we are going to do a presentation of how the new economy can both change how the government functions, but also, if we can get out of its way, it provides opportunity for everyone and, hopefully, maybe some escape velocity economically.

So let me throw you first just a simple concept. How many of you out there have ever ridden in a ride share or seen these things they call like Zipcar where you hit the button on your phone and you are able to just use a car? Why doesn't government do that?

I think we saw some data that there are 176,000 cars that are either owned or leased by the Federal Government. We found one small agency that had more vehicles than employees.

So if I came to you right now and said: ''Let's rethink this. Does this agency here belong owning their own little vehicle fleet and this agency that is right next door belong owning theirs?''

Why wouldn't you pool them together and create a simple app that does two things? It says the cars belong to everyone in the agency. You hit the button and say: ''I need to use one today, and tomorrow I don't need one'' and, ''Oh, by the way, the technology says that I am going to this community'' and it tells you who else from the bureaucracy is also going in the same direction.

It is already happening in the private sector. Now think of it even more expansive. Why is it just the Federal Government? Why wouldn't it be your State, your local, your tribal?

Another example we are working on right now in Arizona and we are actually working on with some of my State legislators is this concept for capital assets.

Mr. Speaker, I live in Maricopa County. It is maybe the third or fourth most populous county in the country. It is made up of 30-some cities and tribal communities.

How many of those communities own the really expensive earthmovers? How many of those earthmovers are used to their max every single day? If they are not, why isn't a simple app created to

share? So do this tribal community, this city, this county, and this government each need to own their own? Why aren't they put on sharing platforms?

The concept is real simple. Capital assets need to be maximized. It is like the concept of a classroom. At 3:45, when school is out, does that classroom become the community college? At 7:30, does it become the senior learning class? It is a building. We are paying to heat and cool it. It is there. We spent the capital money. How do you maximize the utilization of capital assets?

Mr. Speaker, this is happening in the private world. Much of this technology is coming out of Silicon Valley and other hubs of innovation in our country. We need to open ourselves up in the government and say: ''We need to be embracing this technology to move it to ourselves.''

In the last half of this, I see fights starting to break out on the new technology and how it changes how we work. It changes our optionality. We need to understand that technology is changing our society. But if we can get out of the way, it can actually really provide us some opportunities.

So there are crazy thoughts. We are researching these. Let's say you are one of these drivers, whether it be an Uber platform or something else and there is this argument saying, well, you are being treated as a self-employed 1099 or you are getting direct payments electronically or you are doing Airbnb or these sorts of things. How is that going to help you fund your Social Security?

Maybe we need to rethink it. Maybe it really is time to have that honest conversation of should you be allowed to have that account that is truly yours and set up your technology that every time you have a client and you take them and deliver them to a location, every time you have guests in your Airbnb, every time you provide a certain service, you can use that technology so that a little bit of that money goes to your retirement account.

We have the technology. It would be a very low-cost way to do it. And we start to engage in the technology revolution that is happening around us to basically embrace it, not be scared of it, and at the same time use that technology to shore up what we have just talked about, the devastating actuarial math we are running into.

Mr. Speaker, I know there is a political battle coming in this because, for some of my brothers and sisters on the other side, it is very much: How do I unionize that population? How do I do this type of control? How do I have this?

For many of those on the more free market side, we are making the argument for individuals to be able to use technology and the new economy to pursue their optionality, maximizing the value of their time. They need to be allowed to do that.

We are Americans. Being free is part of the basic—it is supposed to be part of our DNA. At the same time, use that same creativity, that same optionality, to not be afraid of it, but to use that technology to actually grow the economy and embrace the empowerment of individuals to deal with the very problems we were showing on those slides.

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

RESOLUTION TO HONOR AND PRAISE THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE ON ITS 109TH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject matter of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as I move forward with this Special Order hour, because the AJC has been very close in Houston, Texas, to a leading citizen, the Honorable William Alexander Lawson, I think it appropriate to let it be known that the AJC stands in sympathy with a good many persons with reference to Pastor Lawson's loss of his wife, the Honorable Audrey Lawson.

□ 1615

She will be funeralized on Friday at 11 a.m.—that would be central standard time—in Houston, Texas, at the Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church. Pastor Lawson has worked very closely with the AJC and many other Jewish organizations. I would dare say that he has been a nexus between various communities and the Jewish community. I am saddened by his loss and want him to know that the AJC as well as my good offices send him our condolences.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we are here to present H. Res. 518. H. Res. 518 honors and praises the American Jewish Committee on the occasion of its 109th anniversary. I am proud to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that on the campus today here at the Capitol we have visitors from the AJC. We have Richard Foltin, who is the Director of National and Legislative Affairs in AJC's Office of Government and International Affairs, in Washington, D.C. He happens to be accompanied by an intelligent, beautiful lady, who works with the AJC. Her name is Daniela Erazo. They are here, and I am proud to let them know that we are most excited about their being here on the occasion of the introduction of this resolution.

This resolution has been cosigned by a good number of Members of Congress. I would like to, because this is very special to us, give their names so that the RECORD will be clear as to who the cosponsors are.

The original cosponsors are: the Honorable ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, Florida's 27th District; the Honorable EMANUEL CLEAVER, Missouri's Fifth District; the Honorable STEVE COHEN, Tennessee's Ninth District; the Honorable ALCEE HASTINGS, Florida's 20th District; the Honorable SANDER LEVIN, Minnesota's Ninth District; the Honorable JERROLD NADLER, New York's 10th District; the Honorable CHARLES RANGEL, New York's 13th District; the Honorable DAVID SCOTT, Georgia's 13th District; the Honorable FREDERICA WILSON, Florida's 24th District; the Honorable TOM MACARTHUR, New Jersey's Third District; and, of course, the Honorable DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Florida's 23rd District, whom I mentioned earlier.

This resolution is one that acknowledges the mission of the AJC, which is to enhance the well-being of the Jewish people and Israel, and to advocate and advance Jewish rights and Jewish values in the United States and around the world. The AJC is committed to combating racial prejudice, anti-Semitism, and sponsoring and supporting issues related to the State of Israel.

The AJC has a rich history. It was founded on November 11, 1906, in New York City, by a group of American Jews who wanted to raise awareness about some of the atrocities that were taking place against Jewish people in Russia as well as in other places. This leadership went on to add as its list of duties, I suppose, doing all that they could to help in the fight against racism here in this country.

I am proud to tell you that the local chapter of the AJC in Houston, Texas, currently has as its director, Randy Czarlinsky. He is a dear friend. The president is Marcia Nichols. She is a friend as well.

But I am also going to mention a friend who was there in 1989. His name is David Mincberg. David Mincberg and I worked together. I was the president of the Houston branch of the NAACP. At that time, we had an unfortunate circumstance occur in Houston, Texas. We had a city council person make a racial slur. The AJC and the NAACP worked very closely together.

David Mincberg was one of the leading citizens to stand up and denounce this racial slur that took place and call for the resignation of the city council person. It had been prognosticated by one of our local persons who was in the community associated with political science.

He went on to explain that this person probably could have won. I have not mentioned his name. I see no need to. He probably could have won his office because there still was some support for him—substantial support, I might add. But because David Mincberg and the AJC stood with the African American community, by and

through the NAACP and other organizations, this city council person decided to apologize and to resign from office.

This is but one example of how the AJC has made a difference in the lives of people who are not directly associated with the AJC. I think all people of goodwill are by virtue of the fact that the AJC is on a mission to do those things that will enhance the quality of life for people around the world, especially as they suffer from discrimination and other forms of atrocities that would cause them to have a quality of life that is unacceptable.

To this end, I would like to just mention some of the varied circumstances that the AJC has been involved with.

When Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, the AJC organized a delegation to travel to the Gulf to bring relief and aid to the victims. This was quite an effort that the AJC put together. It contributed about $1.9 million in relief funds to help these victims to make sure that they had housing and to make sure that places of worship were rebuilt.

I would also add that the AJC, in 2010, received a wonderful honor. Dillard University decided that they would dedicate their new Distance Learning Center in honor of the AJC, as the AJC donated about $200,000 to this university.

In 2005, the AJC's efforts with reference to the tsunami relief fund should be acknowledged. This tsunami relief fund consisted of about $900,000 that went to help persons who were the victims of the tsunami in the Indian Ocean. This was a major disaster. I am proud to know that the AJC played a role in helping persons to receive not only what we call relief, but actually an understanding that they were not alone, that there were people in distant places who were willing to stand with them to make sure that they received the help that human beings beset by tragedy richly deserve.

In 2004, with the Dominican Republic and Haiti when there were floods, the AJC made a contribution.

In 2001, there was an earthquake in El Salvador, and the AJC made a donation.

In 2000, with the Lebanese refugees in northern Israel, the AJC made a donation to assist them.

And in 1999, with the Muslim refugees in Kosovo, the AJC made a financial contribution.

The AJC has been there in most of the major disasters around the world to be a hand to those in times of need, as evidenced by the record that I am building.

I would also note that the AJC was there in 1954. In 1954, the NAACP was litigating Brown v. Board of Education. The AJC filed an amicus brief in this case supporting the efforts of the NAACP and the other organizations—there were many—but the AJC was one of the leading organizations helping us to fight the discrimination that was taking place in our schools, such that the schools would be open to all, that there would no longer be segregation in schools in the United States of America.

As a result of what the AJC and the NAACP were able to accomplish, the rest, of course, is history. Brown v. Board of Education was won by the NAACP, with the aid of other organizations, including the AJC. We now have integrated schools. I would dare say that, without the help of the AJC and donations and helping us with some of the test materials with reference to how people are impacted by segregation—the psychological evaluations and the materials related thereto—without these things, we may not have won that lawsuit. The AJC has been instrumental in helping us with this type of invidious discrimination.

In 1965, the AJC presented Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King with the American Liberties Medallion for his exceptional advancement of the principles of human liberty. Dr. King, as you know, was a freedom fighter for all. While he was doing this, he had the aid and comfort of the AJC. The AJC was there to help him with marches and with the protest movement, but also there to help him as he went through some of the difficult times. I can remember the Edmund Pettus Bridge, for example. There were members of the AJC who were on-site to march with Dr. King after what we call Bloody Sunday had taken place.

The AJC and its members also established the Transatlantic Institute to promote Transatlantic cooperation for global security, Middle East peace, and human rights. This was done in 2004.

The AJC is a champion not only of human rights for Israel, but also for Palestinians. The AJC supports a two-state solution. The AJC encourages peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian leadership. The AJC believes that a peaceful solution with the parties negotiating it is the best way to have a long and lasting peace in the Middle East.

I must tell you that I have been involved with the Houston AJC as they go through some of these difficult issues and talk through them and work through them, and I am honored to support the AJC in its efforts to bring peace to not only Israel and Palestine, but also to the entire Middle East. The AJC is very much concerned about the diaspora on the whole, but more specifically about their friends and neighbors in the Middle East and bringing peace.

The AJC, in 2007, joined me and other colleagues, especially Representative Laura Richardson, in a resolution that we had, H. Res. 826, a resolution condemning noose intimidation.

In 2006, we had, at that time, some persons who felt it necessary to hang nooses in various places to intimidate and to incite others to do dastardly deeds. The AJC joined with us to denounce this type of behavior. As a result, while I don't say that there are no nooses being placed in places for the purpose of intimidation, I can say that they are not as prevalent as they were back in 2006–2007. I am honored at the AJC was there to help us with this endeavor.

In 2008, the AJC visited South Sudan to study how Israel could assist in the preparation for South Sudanese independence. I had the honor of going to Sudan myself. I was not with the AJC at the time, but I did have an opportunity to see some of the needs of the people. They were great, they were many, they were varied, and the AJC was there to assist with the independence movement.

□ 1630

The AJC does things that go far beyond what, perhaps, many think it should be doing or has been doing.

In 2015, the AJC joined the chorus of civil rights groups in condemning bans on Muslims from entering the United States. This is one of their most recent activities. The AJC believes that religion should be respected and that, because a person happens to be of a given religion, it is no reason to conclude that a person can be banned or should be banned from the United States of America. The AJC respects all religions.

The AJC is an entity that established a full-time office in Israel. It did this for the first time such that it would have a means by which it could advocate for peace between the Israelis and their Arab neighbors; so they wanted to make sure that they had an office on the ground in Israel. While it appears to be a Jewish organization—and it is—it still wanted to make sure that its presence was immediately known in the State of Israel.

The AJC has long supported comprehensive immigration reform, and they want this type of reform done once the security of the Nation's borders has been put in place. Once the borders are secure, the AJC wants that comprehensive immigration reform. In fact, it would be great if it could all happen at the same time, and we push for this.

The AJC is an organization of goodwill, is an organization that has withstood the test of time, and is an organization that is diverse in every aspect of its existence as its membership is very diverse, and it preaches diversity.

In Houston, Texas, the AJC has, on many occasions, talked about the rich diversity of Houston, Texas. In fact, on an annual basis, an event is sponsored in Houston, Texas, wherein diversity is celebrated. We talk about this at what is called America's Table. We talk about all of the various ethnicities that are at America's Table, and we talk about how we all came to America's Table. We talk about the greatness of America. We talk about how there is but one race—the human race. We celebrate our rich diversity such that we can appreciate each other.

The AJC has made it possible for people who may not have had an opportunity to meet and to greet each other

in an informal setting to sit at the table of brotherhood and to get to know each other in such a way as to not only develop a relationship but as to develop a friendship. The AJC is a supporter of relationship building, but, more importantly, of establishing relationships that can lead to friendships.

So I am honored today, Mr. Speaker, to present H. Res. 518, a resolution to help us acknowledge the great work of the AJC, not only this year, but in each year to come, such that this House of Representatives will annually record and recognize the accomplishments of the AJC and its members.

I mentioned SANDER LEVIN, who is from Michigan. I may have said ''Minnesota'' earlier. I want to correct the RECORD. He is a dear friend and a great supporter of this resolution, and he is also a person who has been in the fight for human rights. That means human rights as they relate to all people, not just to some people.

I am honored to close with a very brief word about the AJC and what I see in the future.

I believe that the AJC, given its history, is going to help us write a future that will bring peace to Israel and its neighbors. I believe that the AJC has demonstrated that it not only wants to be of benefit to Israel, but also to its neighbors. I believe that, with its involvement here and in Israel, the AJC is going to make a difference.

I think that the AJC, because of its history, will help us through this immigration reform debate. The AJC does a lot of research, and it has a lot of intelligence on how this type of circumstance, with people living in the shadows, can impact the lives of people beyond their physical existence and also beyond their mental existence. I am proud that the AJC is providing this type of intelligence.

I believe that the AJC, in the future, will help us with issues related to police community relations. The AJC is always available to help us when we have these turbulent times, when there are circumstances that must be addressed by communities that are grieving. The AJC helps us to bring the communities together so that we can, at some point, come to a conclusion that is beneficial to the community as a whole and to the persons who have been injured or harmed.

In the future, I believe, as the AJC moves forward with its various programs, it will help us with the hopes and with the aspirations of people who are suffering in places around the world from various natural disasters. I think they will do even more to help persons who are suffering from natural disasters. They have done an awful lot in every circumstance that is mentionable to date, but I do think that they will do even more. They have a wide reach, and they make sure that they are present, in some way, in order to be of assistance.

The AJC has been there. My prediction is that it will be there and that it will make a difference when it is present. I am honored to have received this time, and I do trust that Members who have statements will place them in the RECORD.

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud original cosponsor of House Resolution 518, Honoring and Praising the American Jewish Committee on the Occasion of its 109th anniversary, and to more broadly commend and celebrate the work of AJC. Thank you to my colleague Representative AL GREEN for organizing this special order hour.

Originally founded to raise awareness about the targeting of Jewish communities in Russia, AJC has become a leading voice and advocate against racism and prejudice here in the United States and around the world. Rooted in the Jewish values of tikkun olam—repairing the world—and of being a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves, AJC has been a key actor in pivotal movements and legislative victories including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act, and for comprehensive immigration reform. As we continue to work to fulfill the complete visions of those movements, AJC will continue to be on the front lines.

AJC has partnered with governments all over the world to promote tolerance and understanding and successfully worked to restore and preserve Jewish historical and cultural centers from India to Morocco to Argentina. This work is critical not only for supporting Jewish communities and historical memory abroad, but also for the broader goal of promoting intercultural and interreligious understanding in the face of hatred and violence.

On a more personal level, as a young legislator in the Florida House, the American Jewish Committee took me on my first trip to Israel in 1995. That mission was nothing short of transformative. Although I felt a connection to the land of Israel as a Jew, that trip was the first of many that has deepened my connection to the land, to the history and reinforcing my steadfast commitment to supporting the state of Israel and the U.S.-Israel relationship. With threats coming from across and within her borders, our support for this relationship has perhaps never been more important.

So again, I commend the American Jewish Committee for its work on behalf of the Jewish community, on behalf of Israel, and on behalf of all the people its work impacts.

LIFTING THE CRUDE OIL EXPORT BAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HILL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) for 30 minutes.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk a little bit about one component of the omnibus tax extender package that is dominating the legislative agenda as we wrap up this year.

The one piece of the package that I want to talk about is the lifting of the crude oil export ban, which is an issue that has passed twice now in the House of Representatives—in fact, as a standalone bill. H.R. 702, the lifting of the crude oil export ban, passed with 62 percent of the vote.

As is often the case, good bills that are passed by the House often languish in the Senate for a number of reasons. Perhaps one of the main reasons bills languish in the Senate is that their rules are as antiquated as is this export ban on crude oil.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take some time to talk about this provision and why it is important that we lift the crude oil export ban. I want to talk a little bit about the history that led to the export ban in the first place, and I want to talk about a more optimistic future as we look at the oil renaissance—what it has created and what it can create.

As I said, the export ban really is an antiquated law. It was put in place 42 years ago, which was a very different time in our country. It was different for a number of reasons, not the least of which being that the ban on exporting crude oil came at a time when our country did not enjoy energy abundance as we do today. It, rather, suffered from a scarcity of energy resources—a scarcity of oil, a scarcity of all kinds of energy—and, certainly, from a scarcity of the products that are created by oil. It suffered even from a scarcity, frankly, of some of the technologies that make the development of fossil fuels and, yes, of new, cleaner—greener, if you will—energy sources.

We are nothing in this country but for our innovation. I think innovation is the key to much of our success. It is not that the United States really had a scarcity of resources, but that, rather, we had a scarcity of technology to develop those resources. As the technology developed to get more and more of our energy resources and to develop them, it also progressed to make it more and more efficient to develop them and to make it cleaner to develop them. I am happy to elaborate.

I represent the great State of North Dakota. I am the only Member of the people's House from the State of North Dakota. We have just over 700,000 people in my State. So, like my 434 colleagues, I represent, roughly, 700,000 citizens. It just so happens that they make up a State.

In just the past few years alone, we have lost 80,000 U.S. jobs, just in the last year, 80,000 U.S. jobs, because our oil producers have been forced to scale back their rigs by nearly 60 percent. That is the result of a collapse in price.

Why is there a collapse in price? There is a collapse in price largely because we are producing a lot more, and, of course, we cannot sell the product outside of the United States. Obviously, you can't produce more than your consumers can take in.

In North Dakota, we grow a lot of crops. We grow a lot of food to feed a hungry world. In fact, we are the number one producer of anywhere from 12 to 16 or 18 crops depending on the year. We produce a lot of wheat, but we can't begin to eat it all. We produce a lot of

cattle. We produce a lot of honey. We produce a lot of sunflowers. We produce a lot of beans. We produce a lot of products that we couldn't begin to consume in this country, but there are hungry people all over the world who would love to consume it.

So we are always innovating, creating new breeds and technologies and farming practices and chemicals and, yes, modifying the product. Why? It is because there is not more land on which to grow more food, but there are many more people who need to eat it throughout the world.

The same is true, in many respects, of energy. Yet now, as we have come upon this time with this renaissance that was created—again, not because God suddenly put more oil under the ground, but because of technology—the advancement of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing has unlocked billions of barrels of oil that were always there or were at least there for several years—decades, centuries, millennia. It has unlocked it because of technology.

We talk a lot about energy independence and about the goal to get there. Yes, that is a noble goal. I would submit, though, that more important than that is energy security. And I have heard the Chair, Mr. Speaker, talk about the topic of energy security with great eloquence. Energy security is like food security. It is the ability to develop and to produce what you need as well as to produce for the global marketplace, increasing our influence in the world. I am going to get into that in a little bit.

Let's not forget about the jobs. Let me talk for a minute about the jobs in my home State of North Dakota, which is now the second leading producing State of oil, second only to Texas.

I was an economic development director for our State at a time when we were beginning to diversify our economy, at a time when out-migration was just starting to plateau. Since that time, we have become the fastest growing economy in the country and have the fastest growing population in the country. We now have the second highest per capita personal income in the country and the lowest unemployment rate in the country. In fact, we still, even with this downturn, have more jobs than we have people looking for work in North Dakota.

I have seen people go from poverty to prosperity. There is nothing wrong with that. I have seen truck drivers become fleet owners. I have seen short order cooks become restauranteurs. I have seen carpenters become developers.

□ 1645

I have seen people who have a water well become entrepreneurs selling water for hydraulic fracturing.

I have seen the renaissance lift people up. While a rising tide lifts all boats, they don't necessarily all get lifted at the exact same time. So there is a little bit of massaging and intervention that goes on to help people even during the boom, if you will, to keep up.

According to an IHS Energy study, for every one job created in the oil and gas sector, there are six jobs created in the broader economy. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, from my experience in North Dakota, that is definitely true. It is not just the oil rig worker. It is not just the truck driver. It is not just the pipeline worker.

All of them, as important as they are and as good of jobs as they are, it is that restaurant owner. It is the hair dresser. It is the Main Street retailer, the person selling groceries. It is the entrepreneur who comes up with an idea no one else had thought of before. It is the entrepreneur that sees the problem that needs a fix, finds the fix, sells it and markets it and becomes an employer as well, rather than just an employee.

By the way, the American jobs created by the oil renaissance of recent years exists in all 50 States.

Speaker RYAN put out this chart today, this little graphic piece, identifying the opportunities that lifting the crude oil export ban would have that go beyond the renaissance that we have experienced in recent years. Lifting the oil export ban would create an estimated 1 million American jobs in nearly all 50 States. That is because the supply chain that it takes to produce the oil, to discover the oil, to move the oil, to refine the oil, to finance, to do the accounting, it is in every State.

In fact, the President's home State of Illinois is one of the greatest beneficiaries of the oil renaissance. Many of these 1 million jobs would be created right there within a matter of years. It would add, imagine now, $170 billion—with a B—to our gross domestic product every year.

At a time when we are looking for revenue to meet the priorities of our Nation, at a time while unemployment has come down, we still have a very, very low workforce participation rate, at a time when our education system doesn't always match the opportunities, we have the opportunity with these additional dollars and the additional job opportunities to meet the demands of a growing economy. All the while, we could, with lifting the crude oil export ban, meet the market demands around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I happen to think that history can be a great teacher. I said earlier that I want to address the history or the context of this export ban. How did this come to be?

You know, as I said, much has been written and said by me and my colleagues and others in the industry how lifting the export ban would be good for our economy, how it would be good for job creation, and how it would be good for the United States of America. The history of how it came to be, I think, is useful.

It was the Yom Kippur war in 1972 led by Syria—an attack by Syria backed up by, Mr. Speaker, none other than the Soviet Union—against our friends, Israel. It was the United States, as has been the rich tradition of our country, who came to the defense of our best friend and ally in democracy who shares our values in the Middle East, Israel. Syria and the Soviet Union pitted against Israel, backed by the United States.

The Yom Kippur war led to the oil embargoes of 1973, which caused a reaction, leading eventually to this crude oil export ban. You might recall in the seventies, Mr. Speaker—I do, barely, but I do—the gas shortages, the rationing of gas, sales limited to 10 gallons of gas per customer, as is illustrated in this poster, this real picture of the 1970s.

Now, while it might have been a well-meaning policy to put a ban on exporting crude oil with the idea that somehow we could produce enough oil in the United States or, at least, we ought to hoard what we have, it is not like the United States was a leading producer of oil. We weren't what we are today.

Today, we are the number one producer of oil and gas. Gas, as you know, can be exported. By the way, refined petroleum products can also be exported.

So that is what led to the ban. The problem is, as I said earlier, this isn't 1973 anymore. This is not 1979. This is not 1989. This is a time when we have energy abundance. We have oil abundance to the point where we have every storage facility, including pipelines, ships, and tanks, full of oil. We are still producing light, sweet crude, I might add. In a little bit, I will get to the difference between that and this heavy sour crude and the various market mixes that demand that.

Mr. Speaker, as I started out reminding the Chamber, we passed H.R. 702 with 62 percent of the vote, a large bipartisan vote. That was a bill introduced by my friend, Representative JOE BARTON of Texas. He is in the Chamber with us, and I would like to yield such time as he would like to explain why this is such an important piece of this week's omnibus and tax package.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON).

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, the first thing that I want to do is commend the gentleman from North Dakota for his hard work on this. He is an original cosponsor of H.R. 702. He is a valued member of the ad hoc whip team that we put together.

He and I have worked the floor. We have had dinners with undecided Members. We have helped coordinate action efforts with some of the outside groups that are supportive.

You have been unflagging in his help on this. I could say similar things about the Speaker in the chair. The gentleman from Arkansas has also been a valued member of our team.

What I want to focus on is to explain to the Members what this means strategically to the United States of America. The world produces and consumes about 95 million barrels of oil per day right now; 95 million. Three countries, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Russia, combined produce about 30 percent of that, a little over 30 million barrels a day between those three countries. Right now, Saudi Arabia would be number one, Russia would be number two, and the United States would be number three at about 9 million barrels a day production here in the United States.

Until this bill becomes law, which we hope will pass the House and the Senate and the President will sign it this weekend, if you want to change the world oil markets, it takes five or six phone calls. The chairman of OPEC, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, who have their headquarters in Vienna, would make four or five phone calls to the various oil ministers of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Libya, Nigeria.

If they all agree on a price and a production quota, they have a meeting, they get all the member states to ratify it, and they set the price. A handful of people set the world price. That is the way it has been done since the mid-1970s during the Arab oil embargo.

If we repeal the ban on U.S. crude oil exports, which I think we are going to do, and the President signs the bill next week, we have about 500 million barrels of oil in storage in Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Texas, up in the Midwest where the gentleman is from. Believe it or not, there is some in California and some even up on the East Coast. There is privately owned oil that is just sitting there.

The chairman of OPEC calls those same five oil ministers and says, Boys, we need to raise the price. We are going to cut production. Each of you guys, your nation, we agree to cut production to half a million barrels a day. We are going to tighten up the market, and we are going to raise the price. And they all agree to do it.

Well, that word is going to get out. Somebody in Houston is going to say, Well, I have got 10 million barrels right here. Somebody in Corpus Christi, somebody in New Orleans, somebody in Mobile, Alabama, somebody in New York City or Long Beach, California, there will be oil on the market to replace the production cutbacks of OPEC, if not in minutes, in hours.

What we are doing is taking the keys from OPEC and giving the keys to the American people, the free market. Who has the biggest oil reserves in the world, if you include our alternative shale reserves? The United States of America. Who has the best technology in the world? United States of America. Who has the best people, the best seismic engineers, the best production engineers, the best oil field workers, the best truck drivers, the best pipeliners? The United States of America.

So, by golly, within a week, we are going to unleash the free market competitive enterprise of the American people on the world oil market. These other countries—Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, and Libya—they can increase production a little bit, but there is only one country in the world that could literally double production within 4 or 5 years. Guess who that is? The United States of America

So what we are doing this week in the omnibus—there are lots of reasons to be for it. If you want to take control of energy policy away from a handful of oil ministers who are primarily in the Middle East, vote for this bill and put control in the market. Let the Americans compete with the Mexicans and the Canadians and the Saudis and the Iraqis and the Russians and anybody else who wants to sell oil.

We don't realize what we are about to do, but it has tremendous economic and strategic implications for freedom everywhere in the world. You, sir, from North Dakota have helped make that possible. The gentleman in the chair from Arkansas has helped make that possible. The 262 Members of this House, Republicans and Democrats—HENRY CUELLAR of Laredo, Texas—has helped make that possible.

Next week is going to be a great week, it is going to be a milestone week, and we are going to look back, this is when we took back control from OPEC and gave it to the free market and to the American entrepreneurial spirit.

I thank Congressman CRAMER for his hard work. I am proud to have him as one of the leaders in this effort.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman BARTON for his kind words and his tireless effort on behalf of the employees, the workers, the economy of our country, and for articulating so beautifully and so perfectly, without rehearsal, the next chapter of what I began to talk about when I talk about the historical context. We are reliving much of that history right now.

As we think about ISIS, as we think about Iran and a path to a nuclear weapon, when we think about what is going on with Russia's movement further and further into Europe and its growing influence, the bear is back. Here we have the opportunity to use the peaceful tools of energy development rather than the weapons of war.

□ 1700

Never has the world needed it more. You talked about the bipartisan effort and how proud we are to work hand in hand with our Democratic Member friends, what a blessing that has been. One of the best, a gentleman that I have grown to not just know and appreciate, but to love, is Representative DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, whose heart for the things that matter has in many ways changed mine, I have to admit. He has changed mine.

He has offered amendments to multiple bills, an amendment to multiple bills that I have now joined him in offering. It is not one on this bill, but I want to read the amendment because it is relevant to what we are doing. It is a simple amendment.

Representative SCOTT from Georgia offered this, and I join him in it, if not as an amendment, at least as an instruction. I quote now from his amendment:

> Knowing that young Black men in the United States ages 18 to 37 are the hardest hit, at a 38 percent unemployment rate, and as high as 50 percent in some of our States and cities, the U.S. Congress, through this act, strongly requests the labor unions and contractors who will participate in the development of our oil infrastructure to actively recruit qualified said young Black men ages 18 to 37 for employment with their existing apprenticeship programs.

His amendment goes on to say:

> These labor union apprenticeship programs will be conducted in conjunction with the National Electrical Contractors Association and the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada, under the auspices of the National Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee, which allows apprentices to ''Earn While You Learn.''

As I said earlier, if we, as capitalists, people who support the free enterprise system—and this is clearly support of free markets—if we believe that a rising tide can lift all boats, let's lend a hand. Let's prove it. Let's prove it by giving more opportunities to populations that have disadvantages in our marketplace and prove to them that we can, in fact, lift all boats.

I might add—and, Chairman BARTON, if you want to explain some of this and comment on this—there is another important provision that was in H.R. 702 that is also part of this bill, and that gets to the use of support for the maritime security program. Would you be willing to share a couple minutes about that, because that is an important part of what we are doing.

Mr. BARTON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. CRAMER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. BARTON. We have a fleet of privately owned ships that are normally in private commercial operation and that are owned by the companies that operate here in the ports of the United States. We pay a small fee each year from the Department of Defense so that, if these ships ever need to be used to transport military supplies overseas, they have to cease commercial operation and carry the military cargo.

They are only used when it is—I won't say an emergency, but a special situation. In this bill, we have some funding that increases the per-ship reimbursement rate slightly so that it makes it feasible for these ships to be on standby for our military to use. It was offered by the chairman of the full committee—I think Chairman FRED UPTON—when our bill was on the floor, and it was included in the manager's amendment. It was made part of the

bill then and is in the bill that is before us that we are going to vote on on Friday. It is a way to help in a cost-effective way our military when they need lift capacity to get military supplies overseas in a tense situation.

Mr. CRAMER. Making this vehicle another all-important appropriate vehicle for this amendment because the main piece of the omnibus package is, of course, increased spending for our defense. But you said cost effective. You are right, having these flagships available really saves the country the cost of about $52 billion worth of building the ships, so it is a tremendous tool.

Mr. BARTON. It is a good deal for the taxpayer and a good deal for our troops.

Mr. CRAMER. It definitely is. Thank you for that, and thank you again for your leadership.

Mr. BARTON. Thank you for your leadership. I am going to have to excuse myself, but thank you for this Special Order.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I am going to wrap up, as well, with another history lesson. It is so interesting. I love history. I am not one who looks back a lot. I do like to look in the rearview mirror once in a while to make sure I am still going straight as I move forward. I think we as a Congress and as a country need to do the same.

It was on this very day, December 16, 1773, that patriots at Boston Harbor expressed their displeasure with a foreign power's influence over what they felt was an essential commodity. Participants of the Boston Tea Party, many of whom were small-business owners, well versed in and practitioners of the teachings of Adam Smith and, yes, free market economics, never would have envisioned that one commodity should be arbitrarily discriminated against over another, especially by their own government. We have an opportunity with this commodity to make a difference.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is left? I see that Chairman SHIMKUS is here and might have a word or two for us.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 1 minute remaining.

Mr. CRAMER. I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS), my good friend.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I want to thank my colleague from North Dakota and just say a couple things.

First of all, what we have done on the omnibus is great public policy. Crude oil is a commodity like corn and beans that should be sold on the world market.

Secondly, more oil on the world market lowers the prices for crude oil for everybody.

Thirdly, on the international security arena, and by focus on Europe, and primarily the old captive nations of Eastern Europe, is that they are being held hostage by energy extortion by the Russians. The more we put more crude oil on the world market, the more that lowers the international price. That makes them have the opportunity to be free and independent from a totalitarian regime that is their neighbor to the east.

I appreciate my colleague offering me up an opportunity to address this.

Mr. CRAMER. That is the perfect wrap-up, Mr. SHIMKUS.

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

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 5 o'clock and 8 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1934

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of Georgia) at 7 o'clock and 34 minutes p.m.

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 16, 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 16, 2015 at 5:21 p.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 238.

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 3594.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

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 16, 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 16, 2015 at 6:04 p.m.:

That the Senate agreed to without amendment H.J. Res. 78.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 4 of rule I, the following enrolled bill was signed by the Speaker on Wednesday, December 16, 2015:

H.J. Res. 78, making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2016, and for other purposes.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 2029, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016; PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 19, 2015, THROUGH JANUARY 4, 2016; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. COLE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114–382) on the resolution (H. Res. 566) providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 2029) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; providing for proceedings during the period from December 19, 2015, through January 4, 2016; and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CUELLAR (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and the balance of the week on account of death in family.

SENATE BILLS REFERRED

Bills of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 238. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to authorize the Director of the Bureau of Prisons to issue oleoresin capsicum spray to officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons, to the Committee on the Judiciary.

S. 571. An act 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; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

ENROLLED BILL AND JOINT RESOLUTION SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill and a joint resolution of the House of the following title, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 2270. An act to redesignate the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, located

in the State of Washington, as the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, to establish the Medicine Creek Treaty National Memorial with the wildlife refuge, and for other purposes.

H.J. Res. 35. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2016, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 37 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, December 17, 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:

3772. A letter from the Deputy Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's Semiannual Report to the Congress for the period April 1 through 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 Armed Services.

3773. A letter from the Senior Counsel, Legal Division, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting the Bureau's final rule — Truth in Lending (Regulation Z) Annual Threshold Adjustments (CARD ACT, HOEPA and ATR/QM) received December 15, 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 Financial Services.

3774. A letter from the Senior Counsel, Legal Division, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting the Bureau's final rule — Appraisals for Higher-Priced Mortgage Loans Exemption Threshold (RIN: 3170-AA11) received December 15, 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 Financial Services.

3775. A letter from the Senior Counsel, Legal Division, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting the Bureau's final rules — Truth in Lending (Regulation Z) received December 15, 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 Financial Services.

3776. A letter from the Senior Counsel, Legal Division, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting the Bureau's final rules — Consumer Leasing (Regulation M) (RIN: 3170-AA06) received December 15, 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 Financial Services.

3777. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting two reports on the Progress of the Federal Government in Meeting the Renewable Energy Goals of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 for fiscal years 2009-2010 and 2011-2012, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 15852(d); Public Law 109-58, Sec. 203(d); (119 Stat. 653); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3778. A letter from the Administrator, Energy Information Administration, Department of Energy, transmitting the report entitled ''The Availability and Price of Petroleum and Petroleum Products Produced in Countries Other Than Iran'', pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 8513a(d)(4); Public Law 112-81, Sec. 1245(d)(4) (as amended by Public Law 112-158, Sec. 503(b)(1)); (126 Stat. 1261); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3779. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Commerce, transmitting a report certifying that the export of the listed items to the People's Republic of China is not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2778 note; Public Law 105-261, Sec. 1512 (as amended by Public Law 105-277, Sec. 146); (112 Stat. 2174); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3780. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting agreements prepared by the Department of State concerning international agreements other than treaties entered into by the United States, to be transmitted to the Congress within the sixty-day period specified in the Case-Zablocki Act, pursuant to 1 U.S.C. 112b(d) Public Law 92-403, Sec. 1; (86 Stat. 619); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3781. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting a detailed report justifying the reasons for the extension of locality-based comparability payments to non-General Schedule categories of positions that are in more than one executive agency, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 5304(h)(2)(C); Public Law 89-554, Sec. 5304(h) (as added by Public Law 102-378, Sec. 2(26)(E)(ii)); (106 Stat. 1349); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3782. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's Semiannual Report to Congress for the period of April 1, through 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.

3783. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, 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.

3784. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's Semiannual Report to Congress for the period of April 1, 2015, through 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.

3785. A letter from the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's Semiannual Report to Congress for the period ending 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.

3786. A letter from the Chief Financial Officer, National Labor Relations Board, transmitting the Board's 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.

3787. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting a report regarding the National Security Professional Development Interagency Personnel Rotations 2nd Fiscal Year End Report on Performance Measures, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. prec. 101 note; Public Law 112-239, Sec. 1107(g); (126 Stat. 1976); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3788. A letter from the Chief Administrative Officer, transmitting a quarterly report of receipts and expenditures of appropriations and other funds for the period October 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015, pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 104a (H. Doc. No. 114—82); to the Committee on House Administration and ordered to be printed.

3789. A letter from the Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the Annual Report to Congress on Investigation, Enforcement and Implementation of Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act Requirements, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 16991; Public Law 109-248, Sec. 635; (120 Stat. 644); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

3790. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting a draft bill to authorize major medical facility projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2016, and other purposes, pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 8104(a)(2); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

3791. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Update for Weighted Average Interest Rates, Yield Curves, and Segment Rates [Notice 2015-85] received December 15, 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 Ways and Means.

3792. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Tribal Economic Development Bonds: Use of Volume Cap for Draw-down Loans [Notice 2015-83] received December 15, 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 Ways and Means.

3793. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only (I.R.B. 2015-49) — Revenue Ruling: 2015 Base Period T-Bill Rate (Rev. Rul. 2015-26) received December 15, 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 Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. COLE: Committee on Rules. H. Res. 566. A resolution providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 2029) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; providing for proceedings during the period from December 19, 2015, through January 4, 2016; and for other purposes (Rept. 114–382). Referred to the House Calendar.

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. ALLEN:

H.R. 4262. A bill to amend title I of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to require that a State awarded a Federal grant to establish an Exchange and that terminates the State operation of such an Exchange provide for an audit of the use of grant funds and return funds to the Federal Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia (for himself, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. BERA, Mr. BLUM, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. POLIQUIN, Mr. AGUILAR, and Mr. MACARTHUR):

H.R. 4263. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for the preparation of career and technical education teachers; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey:

H.R. 4264. A bill to promote United States national security and foreign policy objectives through consolidation and strengthening of the rule of law and respect for human rights in the Republic of Azerbaijan; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. OLSON (for himself, Mr. LATTA, Mr. CUELLAR, and Mrs. KIRKPATRICK):

H.R. 4265. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act with respect to national ambient air quality standards, including the 2015 ozone standards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CONYERS (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. CLAY, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. BEATTY, and Ms. GRAHAM):

H.R. 4266. A bill to direct the Secretary of Labor to issue an occupational safety and health standard to reduce injuries to patients, nurses, and all other health care workers by establishing a safe patient handling, mobility, and injury prevention standard, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. COLLINS of New York (for himself, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. BUCSHON, and Mr. LATTA):

H.R. 4267. A bill to provide that no penalty may be imposed on a State for refusing to expend refugee resettlement assistance funds on certain refugees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. O'ROURKE:

H.R. 4268. A bill to designate the Castner Range in the State of Texas, to establish the Castner Range National Monument, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Armed 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. CICILLINE (for himself, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. AGUILAR, Ms. BASS, Mr. BECERRA, Mr. BEYER, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. ESTY, Mr. FARR, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. HAHN, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. HIMES, Mr. HONDA, Mr. HOYER, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. ISRAEL, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. KEATING, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mrs. LOWEY, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. MENG, Ms. MOORE, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. NEAL, Mr. NORCROSS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PASCRELL, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. POCAN, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. RANGEL, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. RUSH, Mr. SARBANES, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. SIRES, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. TONKO, Mrs. TORRES, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. WILSON of Florida, and Mr. YARMUTH):

H.R. 4269. A bill to regulate assault weapons, to ensure that the right to keep and bear arms is not unlimited, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. POMPEO:

H.R. 4270. A bill to provide authority for access to certain business records collected under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 prior to November 29, 2015, to make the authority for roving surveillance, the authority to treat individual terrorists as agents of foreign powers, and title VII of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 permanent, and to modify the certification requirements for access to telephone toll and transactional records by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select), for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SMITH of Missouri:

H.R. 4271. A bill to prohibit the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from awarding contracts for public relations, market research, or other similar activities; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Agriculture, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Science, Space, and Technology, 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. ESTY (for herself, Mrs. WALORSKI, and Mr. COFFMAN):

H.R. 4272. A bill to provide for the issuance of a Families of Fallen Heroes Semipostal Stamp; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Armed 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. GENE GREEN of Texas (for himself and Mr. MCDERMOTT):

H.R. 4273. A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to improve payments for hospital outpatient department services and complex rehabilitation technology and to improve program integrity, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas:

H.R. 4274. A bill to prohibit the admission of K-1 nonimmigrants and to prohibit the issuance of K-1 visas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania (for himself, Mr. KIND, Mr. GUTHRIE, and Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 4275. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to eliminate a provision under the Medicare Advantage program that inadvertently penalizes Medicare Advantage plans for providing high quality care to Medicare beneficiaries; 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. KENNEDY (for himself, Mr. TONKO, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. CLARKE of New York, and Ms. CASTOR of Florida):

H.R. 4276. A bill to strengthen parity in mental health and substance use disorder benefits; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Education and the Workforce, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. NOEM (for herself and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY):

H.R. 4277. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for treatment of clinical psychologists as physicians for purposes of furnishing clinical psychologist services under the Medicare program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PAYNE (for himself, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. NORTON, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. SIRES, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. COHEN, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. QUIGLEY, Ms. SPEIER, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Mr. TAKANO):

H.R. 4278. A bill to authorize the Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance to make grants to States, units of local government, and gun dealers to conduct gun buyback programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. WALORSKI (for herself and Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana):

H.R. 4279. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to disclose certain information to State controlled substance monitoring programs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky:

H.J. Res. 78. A joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for fiscal

year 2016, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations. considered and passed.

By Mr. HARDY:

H.J. Res. 79. A joint resolution proposing a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. LOWEY (for herself, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. ROYCE):

H. Res. 567. A resolution expressing opposition to the European Commission interpretive notice regarding labeling Israeli products and goods manufactured in the West Bank and other areas, as such actions undermine efforts to achieve a negotiated Israeli-Palestinian peace process; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

PRIVATE BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

Mrs. CAPPS introduced a bill (H.R. 4280) to authorize the President to award the Medal of Honor to Colonel Philip Conran of the United States Air Force for acts of valor during the Vietnam War; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

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. ALLEN:

H.R. 4262.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Consistent with the original understanding of the commerce clause, the authority to enact this legislation is found in Clause 3 of Section 8, Article 1 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia:

H.R. 4263.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution states that ''The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States.''

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey:

H.R. 4264.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 4

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. OLSON:

H.R. 4265.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution: The Congress shall have power to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. CONYERS:

H.R. 4266.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Art. 1; Sec. 8

By Mr. COLLINS of New York:

H.R. 4267.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. O'ROURKE:

H.R. 4268.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 18 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution:

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Office thereof.

By Mr. CICILLINE:

H.R. 4269.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. POMPEO:

H.R. 4270.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. SMITH of Missouri:

H.R. 4271.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8 Clause 14 states Congress shall have the power to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces.

By Ms. ESTY:

H.R. 4272.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clause 7 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas:

H.R. 4273.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas:

H.R. 4274.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 United States Constitution

By Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 4275.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Article I Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. KENNEDY:

H.R. 4276.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8—to provide for the general welfare and to regulate commerce among the states.

By Mrs. NOEM:

H.R. 4277.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States

By Mr. PAYNE:

H.R. 4278.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8 Clause 3—Congress has the ability to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mrs. WALORSKI:

H.R. 4279.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 18 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution

By Mrs. CAPPS:

H.R. 4280.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 14

By Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky:

H.J. Res. 78.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The principal constitutional authority for this legislation is clause 7 of section 9 of article I of the Constitution of the United States (the appropriation power), which states: ''No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law. . . .'' In addition, clause 1 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution (the spending power) provides: ''The Congress shall have the Power . . . to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States. . . .'' Together, these specific constitutional provisions establish the congressional power of the purse, granting Congress the authority to appropriate funds, to determine their purpose, amount, and period of availability, and to set forth terms and conditions governing their use.

By Mr. HARDY:

H.J. Res. 79.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article V of the Constitution

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 178: Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 201: Mr. TURNER.

H.R. 307: Mr. CÁRDENAS.

H.R. 347: Mr. PITTENGER.

H.R. 391: Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 393: Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 546: Mr. TIPTON.

H.R. 592: Mr. ENGEL.

H.R. 676: Mr. MCNERNEY and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.

H.R. 721: Mrs. TORRES.

H.R. 752: Mr. CÁRDENAS.

H.R. 793: Mr. ENGEL.

H.R. 815: Mr. TURNER.

H.R. 841: Mr. FLEMING.

H.R. 863: Mr. ROHRABACHER.

H.R. 921: Mr. FORBES.

H.R. 973: Mrs. KIRKPATRICK.

H.R. 986: Mr. WALBERG and Mrs. ROBY.

H.R. 1116: Mr. HUDSON, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. FLORES, and Mr. DOLD.

H.R. 1117: Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 1130: Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. KIND, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Ms. JACKSON LEE, and Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 1192: Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. FATTAH, and Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H.R. 1197: Mr. ROONEY of Florida.

H.R. 1220: Ms. BONAMICI.

H.R. 1258: Ms. KELLY of Illinois.

H.R. 1274: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 1288: Ms. KUSTER, Mr. QUIGLEY, and Ms. MENG.

H.R. 1343: Mr. VEASEY.

H.R. 1431: Mrs. BLACKBURN and Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.

H.R. 1432: Mrs. BLACKBURN and Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.

H.R. 1475: Ms. MENG.

H.R. 1567: Ms. GRAHAM.

H.R. 1594: Mr. LATTA.

H.R. 1608: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1671: Mr. HOLDING, Mr. WENSTRUP, and Mr. PEARCE.

H.R. 1726: Mr. VEASEY.

H.R. 1763: Mr. VISCLOSKY.

H.R. 1769: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, and Mr. HILL.

H.R. 1784: Mr. ENGEL.

H.R. 1877: Mr. ENGEL.

H.R. 1923: Mrs. BEATTY and Mr. COLLINS of New York.

H.R. 2043: Mr. ENGEL.

H.R. 2216: Mr. CÁRDENAS.
H.R. 2257: Mr. LOEBSACK and Mr. KENNEDY.
H.R. 2302: Ms. JACKSON LEE.
H.R. 2304: Mr. MCCAUL.
H.R. 2411: Ms. ESHOO, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. LEE, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mr. MCDERMOTT.
H.R. 2442: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 2536: Ms. ESTY.
H.R. 2597: Mr. BERA.
H.R. 2649: Mr. GUTHRIE.
H.R. 2713: Ms. GRAHAM.
H.R. 2716: Mr. YODER.
H.R. 2799: Mr. HARRIS and Ms. MATSUI.
H.R. 2817: Mr. POCAN, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. COOK, and Mr. ZINKE.
H.R. 2847: Mr. KEATING and Mr. CÁRDENAS.
H.R. 2965: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri.
H.R. 2984: Mr. BOST.
H.R. 3099: Mr. HASTINGS, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, and Ms. KUSTER.
H.R. 3180: Mr. HURD of Texas, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. ENGEL, and Ms. CLARKE of New York.
H.R. 3222: Mr. OLSON.
H.R. 3229: Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. DELBENE, and Mr. RIGELL.
H.R. 3235: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 3323: Mr. SIMPSON and Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 3326: Mr. BOUSTANY and Mrs. HARTZLER.
H.R. 3375: Mr. TAKAI.
H.R. 3381: Ms. MCCOLLUM and Ms. KUSTER.
H.R. 3393: Ms. MCSALLY.
H.R. 3477: Mr. AMODEI.
H.R. 3556: Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. O'ROURKE, and Mr. ISRAEL.
H.R. 3579: Mr. HUFFMAN.
H.R. 3662: Mr. PALMER, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mr. BOST, Mr. BUCSHON, and Mr. NUNES.
H.R. 3698: Mr. VEASEY.
H.R. 3706: Ms. ESTY and Mr. WOODALL.
H.R. 3722: Mr. HUDSON.
H.R. 3734: Ms. MCSALLY and Mr. GRIFFITH.
H.R. 3782: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 3783: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 3785: Mr. KEATING, Mr. ISRAEL, and Ms. DUCKWORTH.
H.R. 3805: Mr. MEEKS, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. SCHIFF, and Mr. KLINE.
H.R. 3852: Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 3856: Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. AMODEI, and Mr. BARLETTA.
H.R. 3858: Mr. BUCSHON and Mr. JONES.
H.R. 3888: Mr. RANGEL.
H.R. 3940: Mr. TURNER.
H.R. 3990: Mr. FOSTER, Mr. VEASEY, and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 4019: Mr. SERRANO and Mr. POLIS.
H.R. 4039: Ms. MENG.
H.R. 4058: Mr. TURNER.
H.R. 4062: Mrs. BLACKBURN.
H.R. 4087: Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H.R. 4101: Mr. HONDA.
H.R. 4121: Mr. RANGEL.
H.R. 4137: Mr. MEEKS and Mr. RANGEL.
H.R. 4152: Mr. BILIRAKIS and Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.
H.R. 4153: Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 4162: Ms. TSONGAS.
H.R. 4185: Mrs. BLACK, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. BUCK, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. OLSON, and Mr. FORBES.
H.R. 4186: Mr. ROUZER.
H.R. 4211: Mr. PITTENGER.
H.R. 4226: Mr. MURPHY of Florida.
H.R. 4237: Mr. KATKO.
H.R. 4238: Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H.R. 4240: Mr. VELA, Mr. LABRADOR, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.
H.R. 4247: Mr. SIRES.
H.R. 4257: Mr. RUSSELL, Mr. STIVERS, and Mr. BOUSTANY.
H.J. Res. 9: Mr. SESSIONS.
H.J. Res. 74: Mr. TURNER.
H. Con. Res. 17: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.
H. Con. Res. 19: Mr. ROKITA.
H. Con. Res. 75: Mr. MCCAUL and Mr. BOUSTANY.
H. Con. Res. 88: Mr. BURGESS.
H. Con. Res. 97: Mr. ISSA.
H. Con. Res. 100: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. MACARTHUR, Mr. ALLEN, and Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia.
H. Res. 265: Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H. Res. 290: Mrs. HARTZLER.
H. Res. 318: Mr. SESSIONS.
H. Res. 428: Mr. KEATING and Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.
H. Res. 467: Mr. CÁRDENAS.
H. Res. 510: Mr. ROSKAM.
H. Res. 523: Ms. WILSON of Florida and Mr. HIGGINS.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

OFFERED BY MR. ROGERS OF KENTUCKY

H.J. Res. 78, a resolution making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2016, and for other purposes, does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2015 No. 183

Senate

The Senate met at 11:01 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's opening prayer will be offered by RDML Brent W. Scott, Deputy Chief of Chaplains for the U.S. Navy and Chaplain of the Marine Corps in Washington, DC.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Please join me in prayer.

Heavenly Father, we begin this day in the privilege of prayer, thanking You for this great Nation, a people gathered from every tongue and tribe, bound together through the more noble ideals of liberty and justice and equality, formed and favored as one Nation under God. We ask Your help as You continue to make us as one.

We pray for our Senate in this session and ask You to bless them with wisdom and discernment to lead our people toward reconciliation, to rebuild our Nation's confidence in justice, to restore our sense of equality. Free each one from the divisive distractions of any lesser ideals that they may more powerfully serve the people as a body of, by, and for the people, making every effort to keep and protect a more perfect union.

We pray blessing for the men and women who wear our Nation's cloth, standing watch in every corner and clime of the globe. Give them peace as they bring peace to this troubled world.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

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.*

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Printed on recycled paper.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The majority leader is recognized.

APPROPRIATIONS AND TAX RELIEF AGREEMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I said yesterday that committees and Members from both sides were making important progress in the appropriations and tax relief negotiations.

As colleagues now know, last night the committees and Members reached agreement and filed legislation over in the House. I just participated in a productive meeting where the committees walked our conference through details of this legislation. I know our colleagues across the aisle are discussing the matter as well. I will have more to say on this soon. Now is the time for Members to review the legislation for themselves. I would encourage them to do so. I would also encourage Members to debate it.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

OMNIBUS AND TAX EXTENDERS AGREEMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as the Republican leader mentioned, last night the Senate and House leaders finalized a bipartisan compromise that keeps our government open and funded and extends important tax policies for American families and businesses.

I said last night—define ''last night.'' The last email I got was 2:45 this morning from my chief of staff, who was one of the negotiators. Sometime in the darkness, the bill was finalized. When I say ''the bill,'' it is really two bills—a bipartisan compromise keeps our doors opened and funded and extends important tax policies for American businesses.

This was not an easy process. Members and our staffs worked intensely for weeks to craft this agreement. As I mentioned yesterday and I say again today, I appreciate the cooperation, expertise, and all the good work done by Speaker RYAN, Leader PELOSI, Senator MCCONNELL, and their staffs. They were, I am told—and in all my dealings with them, I underscore and underline what my chief of staff Drew Willison, chief negotiator, said of the staff. They were a pleasure to work with. They were professional and did exceptional work on the agreement that we reached.

It is a good compromise. The Presiding Officer, not being a longtime Member of Congress but a longtime legislator, knows that no legislation is perfect, but this is good legislation. This is truly a fine definition of legislation—the art of compromise. When we say ''compromise,'' it doesn't mean anyone is doing away with their principles; what it simply means is that people can't be bullheaded and unreasonable in what they are doing to accomplish their goals.

In spite of Republican majorities in the Senate and the House, we Democrats were able to ensure that this legislation creates and saves middle-class jobs, protects the environment, and invests in renewable energy sources. For example, by extending tax incentives for wind, solar, geothermal, and other technologies, the omnibus spending bill will create and protect over 100,000 jobs in the clean energy sector. A 5-year extension of wind and solar credits will promote growth and help curb carbon emission by roughly 25 percent by the year 2020. And to those who will argue that lifting the oil export ban will counteract these important steps to limit pollution, that is simply not the case. It is not true. Extending the wind and solar tax incentives will eliminate over 10 times more carbon emissions than lifting the oil export ban will create.

The omnibus spending bill is good for jobs, and good for clean energy and the environment. It also helps American families by including a provision that will lower health insurance premiums.

To fully appreciate the compromise, we can't simply tick off the many beneficial policies the agreement includes. We must also consider that many troublesome provisions the Democrats fought to exclude didn't wind up in the legislation. When this matter came from the House, there were more than 200 so-called riders, and they didn't wind up in the bill. Many of these riders represented the worst of legislative priorities: weaken Dodd-Frank banking regulations; undermine the Department of Labor's fiduciary rule; roll back the National Labor Relations Board's joint employer standard; eliminate protections for clean air, water, land, and climate; weaken the consumer protection bureau's ability to protect consumers; curb the President's powers under the Antiquities Act to create national monuments; and destroy the candidate contribution limits. These are only a few of the many special riders that were sent to us from the House, and we did not allow 99 percent of these to be included because they are harmful policies.

I say again, this compromise isn't perfect, but it is good. It is good for the American people. And if it weren't for Democratic efforts, it would have been a lot worse.

I also extend my appreciation to the great staff of the White House—first of all, the President's Chief of Staff, Denis McDonough. He is a former college football player, he is a strong man emotionally and physically, and he is very forthright, which I appreciate in the positions that he takes with everybody. He helped guide this legislation through.

We have a number of people who work at the White House with whom we worked intensely. All the Cabinet officers—we had a very good relationship with Brian Deese, who is a jack-of-all-trades at the White House and does so much in many different areas. I appreciate very much his involvement in many different ways.

Longtime Senate employee Katie Beirne Fallon has been available anytime we needed her, and this has been very difficult for her because she is a new mom to two little twins. She was always available. We were disappointed when she went to the White House from the Senate, but her knowledge of the Senate has been helpful in our being able to move this bill as far as it has been.

A longtime staffer who operated on the floor here for many, many years was Marty Paone, who was available whenever we needed him. He is a fine man. We still miss him here in the Senate. He does such a great job for the country and the Senate.

We must pass the legislation, as the Republican leader said, as quickly as we can. Christmas is fast approaching. I hope Republicans in the House and the Senate will move quickly to move this legislation to the floor so we can vote on it and give the American people every confidence their government will remain open.

Would the Presiding Officer state what the Senate will be doing the rest of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 6 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

THE BUDGET AND TAX EXTENDERS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today to call attention to the significant contributions public servants

make to our Nation each day. It appears that we are close to the final conclusion to the budget and tax extenders debate, and hopefully we will soon all be able to go home to see our families. I have a little easier opportunity with that than the Presiding Officer.

It does appear that this year we may be able to put together a 2-year budget process, which is a step in the right direction. Too often Congress punts on its public responsibilities with stopgap solutions to our country's problems. Through all these challenges, though, our public servants, particularly our Federal employees, with little recognition and less fanfare work through these ups and downs to improve Americans' lives.

TRIBUTE TO FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

KEVIN STRICKLIN

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, since 2010, I have come to the Senate floor on an occasional basis to honor exemplary Federal employees, a tradition started by my friend, the former Senator from Delaware Ted Kaufman. Today I am going to continue that tradition as we get to the close of this year.

I am pleased to honor a great Federal employee, Kevin Stricklin, who also happens to be a Virginian. As the administrator for coal at the Mine Safety and Health Administration, Mr. Stricklin leads a team that enforces safety rules, improves industry compliance, and executes rescue and recovery operations.

On his watch, the number of coal miners who died in accidents last year, 16, while still too high, was the lowest ever recorded in the history of the United States. In addition, the number of mines with chronic violations dropped from 51 in 2010 to 12 in 2014, and the number of citations against mines fell from more than 96,000 in 2010 to less than 63,000 in 2014, even as inspections increased.

After the Upper Big Branch Mine disaster in 2010, Mr. Stricklin was at the frontlines of implementing reforms to improve mine safety, including quarterly inspections, surprise inspections for repeat violators, and a program that identifies habitual safety lapses.

When accidents have occurred, Mr. Stricklin's creativity and calm under pressure have saved countless lives. In a 2002 accident, a Pennsylvania coal mine flooded, trapping nine miners. Mr. Stricklin and his team devised a plan to drill a 6½-inch hole and inject compressed air into it. Their plan provided oxygen to the miners and prevented the water level from rising any further. The miners survived and were hoisted to the surface using a capsule the team helped design.

Following a 2006 accident in West Virginia, rescuers' efforts were impeded by limitations in communicating over long distances. The protocol at that time was 1,000 feet. The team's solution was to develop a wireless fiber-optic system that extended communication up to 5 miles. Mr. Stricklin and his team improved the standard by more than 26 times.

Like so many other Federal employees, they went above and beyond because it was in the country's best interest, not because they expected praise or recognition. Mr. Stricklin, whose two grandfathers and father were all coal miners, describes his objective as being ''for each miner to go home as safe and as healthy at the end of the day as they started at the beginning of the day.''

I am proud to rise today to recognize Mr. Stricklin's dedication to public safety and commitment to public service. I hope my colleagues will join me in thanking him, his team, and, frankly, during the holiday season, all Federal Government employees at all levels of service to our country for their contributions and hard work.

As we go through these final days of debate—and hopefully, as I said at the outset, we will get a chance to spend time with our families over the holidays—I do think it is important that we also take a moment to reflect on the close to 2 million civilian Federal employees who serve our Nation in so many ways each and every day without fanfare.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to complete two sets of remarks.

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

PROTECTING AMERICANS FROM TAX HIKES ACT

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, last night after months of discussion and several weeks of intense negotiations, bipartisan leaders from both the House and the Senate reached an agreement on both the substance and a procedural path forward for legislation that will provide millions of American families and businesses with much needed tax relief and set the stage for comprehensive tax reform in the future.

The bill, which we are calling the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act—or PATH Act—of 2015, would make a number of temporary tax provisions permanent, putting an end to the repeated tax extenders exercise that has plagued Congress for decades and giving greater certainty to U.S. taxpayers across the board.

There are no two ways about it; this is a historic bill. It is actually the latest in a long line of historic bills we have considered in the Senate this year, and it has quite a bit in common with some of the other efforts we have tackled in 2015.

For example, for many years now, much of what we have done in Congress has been dictated by the next deadline, cliff or crisis around the corner. More often than not, the tendency has been to simply kick every can down the road and then give speeches about why we shouldn't do that anymore. This year the Senate has worked to end the practice of governing by crisis.

Among other things, we have passed bipartisan legislation to repeal and replace the Medicare sustainable growth rate, or SGR, formula and to provide long-term funding for highway and infrastructure projects. Both of these issues had plagued Congress for decades, with permanent or long-term fixes seemingly always out of reach, regularly demonstrating that Congress was too divided and too ineffective to reach any meaningful solutions.

The same could be said for tax extenders, which has been an almost yearly exercise in relative futility, characterized by partisan bickering as the deadlines approach, with short-term extensions enacted at the last minute, leaving no one—certainly not American taxpayers—feeling better in the end. Yet, with the PATH Act, as with the SGR and highway funding bills, we have been able to reach a bipartisan agreement that would effectively end this cycle.

We have to pass it. According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, 52 separate tax provisions—what we typically refer to as extenders—expired at the end of 2014. That is 52 separate provisions that, on a relatively frequent basis, face expiration and require us to reach agreements on further extensions. Our bill would reduce that number down to 33 provisions—still far too many—but a significant relief in terms of ongoing extenders pressure.

Most importantly, the bill makes permanent many of the most consequential extenders provisions, the ones that tend to drive the crisis-and-cliff mentality when it comes to tax extenders, further relieving the pressure and allowing Congress to function more effectively.

By adding more permanence to the Tax Code, we will allow families and businesses to better plan for the future. In addition, we will adjust the tax and revenue baseline to make conditions vastly more favorable for comprehensive tax reform in the future, a major priority for members of both parties.

Most importantly, passing this legislation and making more tax policies permanent will provide significant tax relief for hardworking taxpayers in every walk of American life, from the middle class to military families to the working poor. It will do the same for businesses and job creators throughout our country, resulting in a healthier U.S. economy, increased growth, and more American jobs.

Put simply, more permanence in the Tax Code will be a good thing for our

country, and the PATH Act will provide just the kind of permanence we need.

Let's take a few minutes to look at some of the key provisions of this legislation. I will start by talking about some of the biggest priorities that my friends on the other side of the aisle brought into the recent negotiations.

As we all remember, President Obama's so-called stimulus included provisions that made some of the biggest refundable tax credits in the Tax Code even more refundable, including the earned-income tax credit, or EITC, and the child tax credit, or CTC. These increased credits—which, when boiled down, are essentially additional cash payments made directly from the government to an individual filing a tax return—were originally designed to be temporary and have had to be extended a number of times over the years.

Going into these negotiations, Democrats essentially demanded that the enhancements for the EITC and CTC, along with a partially refundable college tax credit that was also created in the stimulus, be made permanent.

As you might expect, Republicans were reluctant to go down that road, not because we don't want to help families who benefit from these credits but because we know refundable credits are particularly susceptible to error, fraud, and overpayment. These types of improper payments are well documented, particularly with regard to the EITC, where every year we lose tens of billions of dollars to either deception or bureaucratic mistakes. However, we opted to accept making these credits permanent because doing so allowed the negotiations to move forward. But we did demand—and the Democrats agreed—to include significant provisions to improve the program's integrity with regard to these credits in order to reduce improper payments going forward. In fact, if enacted, the program integrity provisions in this bill will be the most robust improvements to address waste, fraud, and abuse of the Tax Code in nearly 20 years. Essentially, this compromise of refundable credits was the very definition of a win-win situation, particularly when you consider the other provisions that have been included in this legislation as a result, and we really never did this before. We all knew there was fraud.

With this bill, we will be able to secure key incentives for economic growth. For example, the bill makes permanent section 179, small business expensing, which allows small businesses—the drivers of American job creation—to grow and invest with more immediate tax benefits. This has been a top priority for many Members of Congress, not to mention virtually everyone in the business community.

The PATH Act will also improve and make permanent the research and development tax credit, the vital tax provision for companies and industries that thrive on innovation and research—areas where the United States continues to lead the world. This has been something I have fought for every year—year after year after year. We have always gotten it, but it has never really worked as well as it should because there was no permanence to it. Now it will be permanent, and that is a great step forward.

Our bill also extends the term for bonus depreciation, giving more companies greater incentives to invest in assets that will help their businesses grow and expand. This, too, has been a longtime priority for the business community and many Members of Congress. While we were not able to make it permanent, we did improve and extend this important tax incentive.

The bill will also make key improvements to make America more competitive on the world stage. For example, it permanently extends the active financing exception, or AFE, from subpart F income, and it provides a 5-year extension for the controlled foreign corporation, or CFC, look-through provision. Both of these tax provisions give American companies owned by American stockholders and employing American workers a greater ability to compete internationally. This is important if, like me, you want to see U.S. companies remain U.S. companies.

In addition to these top priorities for businesses and job creators in the United States, the PATH Act would provide significant tax relief for families. The bill makes permanent the deduction for State and local sales taxes. It makes permanent the low-income military housing credit and the employer wage credit for Active-Duty military employees. It provides a long-term extension and an expansion of eligibility for work opportunity tax credits. All of these provisions benefit American families in various regions under a number of different circumstances. Our legislation will ensure that millions of Americans who benefit from these tax provisions will be able to rely on and plan around them well into the future—not a bad result, if you can ask me.

I am not done yet. In addition to the many benefits we will provide to families and businesses, the PATH Act will also give significant tax relief to charities. It would, for example, make sure that charitable distributions from IRAs remain tax-free on a permanent basis, and the charitable deduction for contributions of food inventory would also be made permanent under the bill, as would the provision that incentivizes S corporations to make charitable contributions of property.

I have covered quite a bit of ground here, and I am really only going through the highlights. I haven't even gotten to the ObamaCare provisions yet.

As we negotiated this legislation, the most difficult part was probably dealing with the rumor mill, which I suppose was not unexpected. Most of the really outrageous rumors we heard during this process dealt with provisions of the so-called Affordable Care Act. People were claiming that Senate Republicans had agreed to bail out the ObamaCare Risk Corridor Program in order to get a deal. We heard that there was an agreement to provide tax relief to prop up the failing ObamaCare exchanges. But, of course, none of these rumors were true. This exercise in tax permanence was never going to be used to solidify ObamaCare, and Republicans never for a second considered allowing that to happen.

However, because many Democrats have begun to recognize some of the more problematic elements of the President's health law, we agreed on the need to suspend one of the more harmful taxes imposed under ObamaCare. The bill includes a 2-year moratorium on the medical device tax—one of the more unpopular and poorly drafted taxes included in the health law that has in recent years drawn the ire of Republicans and Democrats alike. This moratorium is important not only because it demonstrates the bipartisan opposition to the tax, but because it will help patients and consumers throughout the country who have seen their health care costs go up because of the medical device tax. I have been a particular advocate to get rid of that lousy tax, and we are ultimately going to get rid of it, but at least we are rid of it for the next 2 years. We will see what happens in those 2 years.

When all is said and done, this legislation provides roughly $650 billion in tax relief over the next 10 years for families, job creators, and others. That is real money that will help millions of people and provide real growth for our economy. That is the real value of greater permanence in our Tax Code and is the biggest reason we need to pass this legislation.

Don't get me wrong: I don't believe this is a perfect bill by any means. It is not even close to perfect. As I have grown fond of saying, if we were living in the United States of ORRIN HATCH, this legislation would look a lot different. Although it pains me to admit sometimes, that is not where we live. Here in the real world, any undertaking worth the effort is going to require compromise. I know I say that a lot. In fact, I probably said something about the importance of compromise and learning the art of the doable every time we have considered a high-profile piece of legislation this year, but that does not make my arguments any less true.

This is a good bill, period. Anyone, if they are so inclined, could cling to the parts they don't like and make excuses to vote no. Taken as a whole, both parties should be able to support the overall package we put together, and without question, every one of us should welcome the positive impact this bill will have on our economy and our future legislative efforts here in the Congress.

I urge all of my colleagues to support the PATH Act and provide real tax relief at this critical time.

Before I close, I just have to note that a lot of work has gone into this legislation. Every provision of this bill has had a number of champions in the Congress who have worked for years to preserve and enhance these provisions in the hopes of eventually making them permanent. I want to acknowledge some of those efforts here today, particularly those of my colleagues on the Senate Finance Committee. For example, the deduction for State and local sales taxes, which this bill makes permanent, has had a number of champions on both sides of the aisle. In our committee, Senators ENZI, CORNYN, THUNE, and HELLER have all made this issue a priority, and our legislation will ensure that their work pays off.

Another one of the more significant tax provisions this bill would make permanent is the research and development tax credit. This has been a top priority of mine for many years, and Senators CORNYN, CRAPO, and ROBERTS have also played leading rolls in this effort over the years.

Section 179, small business expensing, will also be made permanent under this bill, and Senators TOOMEY, ROBERTS, THUNE, PORTMAN, and ISAKSON have all been leaders on this issue for many years.

The bill would also make permanent the accelerated 15-year depreciation for restaurants and retail, a provision that Senators BURR, CORNYN, CRAPO, HELLER, ISAKSON, ROBERTS, and PORTMAN have all worked long and hard to keep in place. Of course, I could always add my own name to every one of these.

In addition, Senator ENZI has been a big supporter of making the active financing exception, or AFE, permanent. Our bill, once again, accomplishes this goal.

On the charitable side, Senator ROBERTS has been a strong supporter of the S corporation basis adjustment for charitable contributions and the charitable deduction for food inventory contributions, both of which will be made permanent by passing this bill.

Senator THUNE has also been a leader with regard to the food inventory deduction, and he has also worked to ensure that charitable distributions from IRAs remain tax-free—another permanent provision in the PATH Act and something all Republicans support.

Senator HELLER has championed the special rules for real property contributions made for conservation purposes—yet another item our bill makes permanent.

The deduction for teacher classroom expenses is also made permanent in this bill. Senator BURR has been a strong supporter of that provision and deserves a lot of credit for it.

In addition, the PATH Act will make the low-income housing tax credit permanent—something both Senator ROBERTS and Senator CRAPO have worked on for some time.

All of the people I have mentioned have been very active Members on the Republican side.

Senator PORTMAN has pushed to extend the work opportunity tax credit and to expand it to include the long-term unemployed. His proposed modification is included in our bill, as is an unprecedented 5-year extension for this credit.

Thanks, Senator PORTMAN. We appreciate your work on this.

We have seen him work so hard on so many of these issues. We are grateful for him, and I am really grateful to have all of these people on my committee helping out.

Of course, this is not an exhaustive list. Right now I am focusing mainly on temporary provisions that we will make permanent by passing the PATH Act. If I start talking about my various colleagues' efforts on shorter term extensions in the bill, we would be here all day.

I do, however, also want to give credit where it is due on the ObamaCare provisions. For years now, opposition to the misguided medical device tax—that is the most charitable description of that tax you will ever hear from me—has been gaining momentum. Throughout that time, Senators TOOMEY, BURR, and COATS have worked very hard on the Finance Committee to push for a repeal. As I noted earlier, our bill would take a significant step forward in this effort by imposing a 2-year moratorium on this job-killing tax.

I might add that I haven't mentioned my colleagues on the other side, but certainly AMY KLOBUCHAR has stood right with me, as have so many on the other side of the aisle as well, in getting rid of that tax. It is only for 2 years, but ultimately we are going to get rid of it completely, and we have to do that.

Let me just say that it is a pleasure for me to work with Senator WYDEN, the ranking member. He has worked with us on many of these issues, and so have others on the Democratic side of the aisle, but the leadership on many of these issues has come from these people I have mentioned, and I want to make sure the people who are listening will understand this.

As one can see, the PATH Act reflects the efforts and priorities of many Members of the Senate—not just members of the Finance Committee but Members on both sides on some of these very important issues, as they would have to be. I thank my Democratic friends for helping.

As the debate on this important bill begins in earnest, I am particularly grateful for the work my colleagues on the Finance Committee have put in to advance the interests of their constituents. Each of our Members has put a huge stamp on this legislation, and with a little luck and a handful more votes, their work will be permanently enshrined in the Tax Code, and that is no small achievement after all of these years of trying to make some of these provisions permanent.

There are, of course, others who have also worked hard on various parts of this bill. Virtually every Senator—or at the very least every Senator's constituents—has high-priority items included in this bill. That is a big reason why it is important that we get this done for the American people.

Again, I am happy to bring together both Democrats and Republicans on this important set of tax changes that is long overdue. I am very pleased to work with my Democratic colleagues as well, many of whom deserve credit. Being in the majority, we had to have the efforts of these Republican people whom I have been praising here today.

REMEMBERING NATHAN GRAHAM

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to a beloved Utahn who was taken years before his time—Nathan Graham. Nate was not only a celebrated member of the tightly knit community of Utahns here in Washington but was also a well-respected former staffer of the U.S. Senate.

Tragically, at the young age of 37, Nate was struck by a random infection and passed away unexpectedly while on a business trip to China last week. Although he is no longer with us, the great love he shared with others remains in our hearts.

Born in Layton, UT, Nate graduated from Northridge High School before studying political science at Weber State University and moving to Washington, DC. From 2003 to 2009, he served as a legislative assistant for my friend and former colleague Senator Robert F. Bennett. Nate was Senator Bennett's key staffer on the Transatlantic Policy Network—a group that includes U.S. and European elected officials as well as business, policy, and academic leaders in Europe and the United States.

As a military legislative assistant, Nate also worked closely with combat leaders at Utah's military installations, including Hill Air Force Base, the Dugway Proving Ground, and the Utah Test and Training Range. In this capacity, he also advanced Senator Bennett's priorities on the Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs. The Senator's agenda included increasing funding for microfinance programs, strengthening the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and working to acquire the F–35 aircraft at Hill Air Force Base. As Senator Bennett's trusted adviser, he accompanied the Senator to Europe several times for TPN business and meetings. He also traveled to Egypt, Taiwan, and China in support of Senator Bennett's work on foreign policy.

Nate's trademark humility endeared him to all. He never thought himself above anyone else, and he was always helpful and kind to everyone, regardless of status or position. Nate even

had a special reputation as a mentor to Senator Bennett's junior staff. He looked out for young staffers just starting their careers and actively searched out new experiences for their professional development.

Following his time in the Senate, Nate entered the private sector, accepting a position with Procter & Gamble as their senior manager for global government relations and public policy.

Although Nate never worked for me directly, he was a gifted public servant whose contributions were highly regarded across the entire Utah delegation and by me personally. Speaking to Nate's character, Senator Bennett—who is going through his own personal battle with cancer right now—sent me the following note over the weekend:

> Nate Graham was a valued and much-loved member of my staff who was on track for great success in life, both professionally and with his beautiful family. This is a terrible tragedy. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family. We will miss him terribly.

While Nate was working for Senator Bennett, he met and fell in love with his sweetheart and eternal companion, Melanie Mickelson. I know Bob was delighted when he could be a matchmaker for some of his staffers.

In addition to Melanie, Nate is survived by their four sons: Rowen, James, Lincoln, and Griffin—who was born just 2 months ago. Nate was an active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, having served an LDS mission in Honduras and Belize. Just 6 weeks before he passed away, he was released as the bishop of a local congregation in Arlington, VA, where he built a reputation for fostering a community of love and friendship.

A tidal wave of support has washed over the Graham family in the wake of Nate's passing. In just a few days, friends and neighbors have already raised nearly $100,000 in a crowdfunding effort to support this family.

I wish to close with the words of the Scottish poet Henry Francis Lyte, from his hymn, ''Abide With Me,'' which he wrote on his deathbed in 1847. This song is well beloved across the LDS community. It offers comfort and peace amid the sadness of loss:

> I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
> Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
> Where is death's sting?
> Where, grave, thy victory?
> I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

We believe Nate now abides in a holier place. His family is in our thoughts just as they are in our prayers. May God comfort them, and may He comfort all of us as we mourn the loss of an exceptional friend, father, and husband.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Arizona.

RUSSIAN ROCKET ENGINES POLICY PROVISION

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I rise to call attention, sadly, to the triumph of pork-barrel parochialism in this year's Omnibus appropriations bill—in particular, a policy provision that was airdropped into this bill, in direct contravention to the National Defense Authorization Act, which will have U.S. taxpayers subsidize Russian aggression and ''comrade'' capitalism.

Nearly 2 years ago, Russian President Vladimir Putin, furious that the Ukrainian people had ousted a pro-Moscow stooge, invaded Ukraine and annexed Crimea. It is the first time since the days of Hitler and Stalin that brute force has been projected across an internationally recognized border to dismember a sovereign state on the European Continent. More than 8,000 people have died in this conflict, including 298 innocent people aboard Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 who were murdered by Vladimir Putin's loyal supporters with weapons that Vladimir Putin had supplied them.

Putin's imperialist campaign in Eastern Europe forced a recognition, for anyone who was not yet convinced, that we are confronting a challenge that many had assumed was resigned to the history books: a strong, militarily capable Russian Government that is hostile to our interests and our values and seeks to challenge the international order that American leaders of both parties have sought to maintain since the end of World War II.

That is why the Congress imposed tough sanctions against Russia, especially against Putin's cronies and their enormously corrupt business empire. As part of that effort, Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2015, which restricted the Air Force from using Russian-made RD–180 rocket engines for national security space launches—engines that are manufactured by a Russian company controlled by some of Putin's top cronies. We did so not only because our Nation should not rely on Russia to access space but because it is simply immoral to help subsidize Russia's intervention in Ukraine and line the pockets of Putin's gang of thugs who profit from the sale of Russian rocket engines.

Last year the Defense authorization bill exempted five of the engines that United Launch Alliance purchased before the invasion of Ukraine. This allowed ULA, the space launch company that for years has enjoyed a monopoly on launching military satellites, to use those Russian rocket engines if the Secretary of Defense determined it was necessitated by national security.

Since the passage of the act in the Senate 89 to 11, Russia has continued—as we all know—to destabilize Ukraine and menace our NATO allies in Europe with aggressive military behavior. Putin has sent advanced weapons to Iran, violated the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force Treaty. In a profound echo of the Cold War, Russia has intervened militarily in Syria on behalf of the murderous regime of Bashar Assad. Clearly, Russian behavior has only gotten worse.

That is why a few weeks ago Congress acted again and passed the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2016. The NDAA authorized $300 million in security assistance and intelligence support for Ukraine to resist Russian aggression. At the same time, the bill recognized that a small number of Russian engines could be needed—could be needed to maintain competition in the National Security Space Launch Program and facilitate a smooth transition to rockets with engines made in the United States. Therefore, the legislation allowed ULA to use a total of nine Russian engines. The fiscal year 2016 Defense authorization bill, including its provision limiting the use of Russian rocket engines, was debated for months. For months the issue was debated. The Committee on Armed Services had a vigorous debate on this important issue. An amendment was offered to maintain the restriction on the Air Force's use of Russian rocket engines. In a positive vote of the committee, the amendment was adopted.

We then considered hundreds of amendments to this bill on the Senate floor over a period of 2 weeks. For 2 weeks we literally considered hundreds of amendments, and we did so transparently, with an open process which was a credit, frankly, to both sides. There was not one amendment that was called up to change the provision of that authorization bill concerning the RD–180 rocket engines. The legislation passed with 71 votes.

Then, because of a misguided Presidential veto, this defense legislation was actually considered a second time on the floor and it passed 91 to 3. I want to reemphasize, one of the things I was proud of for years is that we do debate the Senate Armed Services national defense authorization bill. We have done so every year for some 43 years, and passed it, and had the President sign it. We open it to all amendments, but there was no amendment on rocket engines proposed on the floor of the Senate. Why wasn't it? If there were Members of the Senate who did not like the provisions in the bill, we had an open process to amend it, but they didn't. They didn't because they knew they could not pass an amendment that would remove that provision in the Defense Authorization Act. So now in the dead of night we just found out, hours before we are supposed to vote, that they put in a restriction which dramatically changes that provision that was done in an open and transparent process. To their everlasting shame, in the dark of night, not

a vote—not a vote—no one consulted on the Armed Services Committee.

The fiscal year 2016 bill, including its provision limiting the use of Russian rocket engines, was debated for months. The committee had a vigorous debate, as I mentioned. Here is my point. The Senate had this debate. We had ample time and opportunity to have this debate. Through months of this fulsome debate, no Senator came to the Senate floor to make the case that we needed to buy more Russian rocket engines, no Senator introduced an amendment on the floor to lift the restriction on buying more Russian rocket engines. To the contrary, the Senate and the full Congress, including the House of Representatives, voted overwhelmingly and repeatedly to maintain this restriction. This is a policy issue, not a money issue—nowhere in the realm of the Appropriations Committee. It was resolved, as it should have been, on the defense policy bill.

Here we stand with a 2,000-page Omnibus appropriations bill crafted in secret. Members outside of the Appropriations Committee were not brought into the formulation of this legislation. There was no debate. Most of us are seeing this bill for the first time this morning, and buried within it is a policy provision that would effectively allow unlimited purchases and use of—guess what—Russian rocket engines.

What is going on here? ULA wants more Russian engines, plain and simple. That is why ULA recently asked the Defense Department to waive the NDAA's previous restriction on the basis of national security and let it use a Russian engine for the first competitive national security space launch. The Defense Department declined.

So what did ULA do when it couldn't get its way? It manufactured a crisis. Though the Department of Defense is restricted in using these Russian rocket engines, there is no similar restriction on NASA or commercial space launches. So ULA rushed to assign the RD–180s—the rocket engines—that it had in its inventory to these nonnational security launches, despite the fact that there is no restriction on the use of Russian engines for those launches. This artificial crisis has now been seized on by ULA's Capitol Hill leading sponsors; namely, the senior Senator from Alabama, Senator SHELBY, and the senior Senator from Illinois, Senator DURBIN, to overturn the NDAA's restriction, and that is exactly what they have done—again, secretly, nontransparently, as part of this massive 2,000-page Omnibus appropriations bill.

As I said, neither Senator SHELBY nor Senator DURBIN, nor any other Senator, raised objections to the provisions of the bill or offered any alternative during the authorization process on the Senate floor. That is a repudiation of the rights of every single Senator in this body who is not a Member of the Appropriations Committee.

In fact, as I have said, when this issue was debated and voted on in the Committee on Armed Services, the authorizing committee of jurisdiction voted in favor of maintaining the restriction. Instead, my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee crafted a provision in secret, with no debate, to overturn the will of the Senate as expressed in two National Defense Authorization Acts. The result will enable a monopolistic corporation to send potentially hundreds of millions of dollars to Vladimir Putin and his corrupt cronies and deepen America's reliance on these thugs for our military's access to space.

This is outrageous and it is shameful. It is the height of hypocrisy, especially from my colleagues who claim to care about the plight of Ukraine and the need to punish Russia for its aggression.

How can our government tell European countries and governments that they need to hold the line on maintaining sanctions on Russia, which is far harder for them to do than for us, when we are getting our own policy in this way? We are gutting our own policy. How can we tell our French allies, in particular, that they should not sell Vladimir Putin amphibious assault ships, as we have, and then turn around and try to buy rocket engines from Putin's cronies? Again, this is the height of hypocrisy. Since March of 2014, my colleagues in the Senate have tried to do everything we can to give our friends in Ukraine the tools they need to defend themselves and their country from Russian aggression. Rather than furthering that noble cause, Senator SHELBY and Senator DURBIN have chosen to reward Vladimir Putin and his cronies with a windfall of hundreds of millions of dollars.

A rocket factory in Alabama may benefit from this provision. Boeing, headquartered in Illinois, may benefit from this decision. But have no doubt, the real winners today are Vladimir Putin and his gang of thugs running the Russian military industrial complex. I wish that Senator SHELBY and Senator DURBIN would explain to the American taxpayer exactly whom we are doing business with. They will not. But my colleagues need to know.

Let me explain. At least one news organization has investigated how much the Air Force pays for these RD–180 rocket engines, how much the Russians receive, and whether members of the elite in Putin's Russia have secretly profited by inflating the price. In an investigative series entitled ''Comrade Capitalism,'' Reuters exposed the role that senior Russian politicians and Putin's close friends, including persons sanctioned over Ukraine, have played in the company called NPO Energomash, which manufactures the RD–180. According to Reuters, a Russian audit of that company found that it had been operating at a loss because funds were, ''being captured by unnamed offshore intermediary companies.''

In addition, the Reuters investigation also reported that NPO Energomash sells its rocket engines to ULA through another company called RD Amross, a tiny five-person outfit that stood to collect about $93 million in cost markups under a multiyear deal to supply these engines. The Defense Contract Management Agency found that in one contract alone, RD Amross did ''no or negligible'' work but still collected $80 million in ''unallowable excessive pass-through charges.''

Now, remember my friends, that is a five-person outfit—five persons. The Defense Contract Management Agency found that in one contract they collected $80 million in unallowable, excessive passthrough charges. My friends, thanks to this amendment, that is who is going to continue to receive this money.

According to University of Baltimore School of Law professor Charles Tiefer, who reviewed Reuters documents, ''The bottom line is that the joint venture between the Russians and Americans is taking us to the cleaners.'' He said that he had reviewed Pentagon audits critical of Iraq war contracts, but those ''didn't come anywhere near to how strongly negative'' the RD Amross audit was.

My colleagues, we have to do better. We have to do better than this. Some may say that we need to buy rocket engines from Putin's cronies in Russia. In particular, they will cite a letter from the Department of Defense, in response to a list of leading questions from the Appropriations Committee just a few days ago, which they will claim as confirmation that the Department believes the United States will not have a domestically manufactured replacement engine for defense space launches before 2022.

Of course, that is nonsense. When the Department of Defense starts making predictions beyond its 5-year budget plan, what I hear is ''This isn't a priority'' or ''We don't really know.'' Either way, this is unacceptable. Both the authorizers and the appropriators have ramped up funding for the development of a new domestically manufactured engine. The Pentagon needs to do what it has failed to do for 8 years: Make this a priority.

Indeed, American companies have already said that they could have a replacement engine ready before 2022. Our money and attention should be focused on meeting this goal, not on subsidizing Putin's defense industry. Proponents of more Russian rocket engines will also cite claims by the Air Force that ULA needs at least 18 RD–180 engines to create a bridge between now and 2022 when a domestically manufactured engine becomes available. This, too, is false.

Today, we have two space launch providers—ULA and SpaceX—that, no matter what happens with the Russian RD–180, will be able to provide fully redundant capabilities with ULA's Delta IV and SpaceX's Falcon 9 and, eventually, the Falcon Heavy space launch

vehicles. There will be no capability gap. The Atlas V is not going anywhere anytime soon. ULA has enough Atlas Vs to get them through at least 2019, if not later. As I alluded a moment ago, the Pentagon agrees that no action is required today to address a risk for assured access to space.

In declining ULA's recent request for a waiver from the Defense authorization bill's restriction, the Deputy Secretary of Defense concluded that they ''do not believe any immediate action is required to address the further risk of having only one source of space launch services.'' Indeed, in its recent letter, the Department of Defense even confirmed that ULA has enough engines to compete for each of the nine upcoming competitions and that the number they will pursue is ''dependent upon ULA's business management strategy.''

So I ask Senator SHELBY and Senator DURBIN: What are your priorities? As we speak, Ukrainians are resisting Russian aggression and fighting to keep their country whole and free. Yet this Omnibus appropriations bill sends hundreds of millions of dollars to Vladimir Putin, his cronies, and Russia's military industrial base as Russia continues to occupy Crimea and to destabilize Ukraine and their neighbors in the region. What kind of message does that send to Ukrainians who have been fighting and dying to protect their country? How can we do this when Putin is menacing our NATO allies in Europe? How can we do this when Russia continues to send weapons to Iran? How can we do this when Putin continues to violate the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty? How can we do this when Putin is bombing U.S.-backed forces in Syria fighting the murderous Assad regime?

I understand that some constituents of Senator SHELBY and Senator DURBIN believe they would benefit from this provision, but as the New York Times editorial board stated earlier this year:

> When sanctions are necessary, the countries that impose them must be willing to pay a cost, too. After leaning on France to cancel the sale of two ships to Russia because of the invasion of Ukraine, the United States can hardly insist on continuing to buy national security hardware from one of Mr. Putin's cronies.

I repeat; that is from the New York Times, an editorial dated June 5, 2015, titled ''Don't Back Down on Russian Sanctions.'' I also refer to an article from Reuters, dated November 18, 2014, titled ''In murky Pentagon deal with Russia, big profit for a tiny Florida firm.''

On the record, I make this promise: If this language undermining the National Defense Authorization Act is not removed from the omnibus, I assure my colleagues that this issue will not go unaddressed in the fiscal year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. Up to this point, we have sought to manage this issue on an annual basis. We have always maintained that if a genuine crisis emerged, we would not compromise our national security interests in space. We have sought to be flexible and open to new information. But if this is how our efforts are repaid, then perhaps we need to look at a complete and indefinite restriction on Putin's rocket engine.

I take no pleasure in saying that. I believe that avoiding the year-over-year conflict over this matter between our authorizing and Appropriations Committees is in our Nation's best interests. Such back-and-forth only delays our shared desire to end our reliance on Russian technology from our space launch supply chain, while injecting instability into our national security space launch program.

That instability threatens the reliable launch of our most sensitive national security satellites and the stability of the fragile industrial base that supports them. But I cannot allow—I cannot allow the Appropriations Committee or any other Member of this body to craft a ''take it or leave it'' omnibus spending bill that allows a monopolistic corporation to do business with Russia's oligarchs to buy overpriced rocket engines that fund Russia's belligerence in Crimea and Ukraine, its support for Assad in Syria, and its neoimperial ambitions.

I would like to address this issue in a larger context. The way the Congress is supposed to work is that authorizing committees authorize, whether it be in domestic or international or, in this case, defense programs. The responsibility of the authorizing committee is to make sure, in the case of defense—the training, equipping, the authorizing, the funding, the policies—that all falls under the Armed Services Committee.

The Appropriations Committee is required in their responsibilities to decide the funding for these programs. It is within their authority to zero out a program if they do not think the funding is called for or necessary. They can add funding if they want to for various programs. But this—this is a complete violation, a complete and total violation.

This issue was raised in the subcommittee and addressed in the subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee. It was in the full committee. It was addressed on the floor where there were hundreds of amendments that were proposed. Yet what was decided by the Armed Services Committee remained intact until, in the dark of the night, until 10 or 11 or 12 or whatever time it was this morning, up pops a direct contradiction, a direct dismembering, a direct cancellation of a provision in the law where we are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars that have no bearing whatsoever on the authority and responsibility of the Appropriations Committee.

So there are two problems here: One, it was done in the dark of night—in the middle of the night. No one knew. Second of all, it is in direct violation of the relationship between the authorizing committees and the Appropriations Committee. So I say to my colleagues who are not on the Appropriations Committee: If you let this go, then maybe you are next. Maybe it is an amendment or a program that you have supported through debate and discussion and authorizing the committee and votes on amendments on the floor of the Senate. Then in the middle of the night, in December, when we are going out of session in 48 hours or so—or 72 hours—then up pops a provision that negates the entire work of the authorizing committee over days and weeks and months.

I say to my colleagues: You could be next. You could be next. That is why this in itself—subsidizing Vladimir Putin—is outrageous enough. But if we are going to allow this kind of middle-of-the-night airdropping, fundamental changes in programs and proposals and policies that have been debated in the open, that have been voted on in the open, completely negated, then we are destroying the very fundamental structure of how the Senate and the Congress are supposed to work.

I ask unanimous consent that a letter I sent to the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, dated November 19, 2015, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, November 19, 2015.

Hon. THAD COCHRAN,
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN COCHRAN: As you finalize the appropriations bills for fiscal year 2016, I am concerned to hear that your Committee may be considering authorization language that would undermine sanctions on Russian rocket engines in connection with the Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV) program, as approved in the recently enacted Fiscal Year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) on November 10, 2015, by a vote of 91–3. That provision, which was reviewed at length by the Armed Services Committee and subject to a fulsome amendment process on the Senate Floor, achieves a delicate balance that facilitates competition by allowing for nine Russian rocket engines to be used as the incumbent space launch provider transitions its launch vehicles to non-Russian propulsion systems.

I know you share my concerns about our continued use of Russian rocket engines in connection with military space launch and I ask you to respect the well-informed work my Committee took in crafting our legislation. Recent attempts by the incumbent contractor to manufacture a crisis by prematurely diminishing its stockpile of engines purchased prior to the Russian invasion of Crimea should be viewed with skepticism and scrutinized heavily. Such efforts should not be misconstrued as a compelling reason to undermine any sanctions on Russia while they occupy Crimea, destabilize Ukraine, bolster Assad in Syria, send weapons to Iran, and violate the 1987 Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

We welcome your Committee's views and look forward to working with your Committee on ensuring that Department of Defense resources are not unwisely allocated to

benefit the Russian military industrial base or its beneficiaries. I believe avoiding the year-over-year re-litigation of this matter between our authorizing and appropriations committees is in our best interest, inasmuch as such back-and-forth only delay our shared desire to eliminate Russian technology from our space launch supply chain and injects instability into the EELV program—not conducive to its success in ensuring the reliable launch of our most sensitive national security satellites or the stability of the fragile industrial base that supports them.

Thank you for consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

JOHN MCCAIN,
Chairman.

Mr. MCCAIN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE AGREEMENT

Mr. FRANKEN. Madam President, I rise today to celebrate the successful climate negotiations that were just wrapped up in Paris.

This past Saturday, 196 countries came together to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions, taking a very important step in the fight against climate change. This historic agreement is a recognition that we cannot afford to ignore the negative impacts of climate change and that we must work together globally to put the planet on a safer path forward.

The agreement does not simply take countries at their word, but it requires transparent measurement and verification to ensure that they live up to their promises. Crucially, the deal requires countries to revisit their emission reduction targets every 5 years. That way countries can factor in new technologies and new policies in order to keep global warming under 2 degrees Celsius.

This truly historic deal has been nearly 25 years in the making. International climate efforts date back to 1992, when governments around the world met in Rio de Janeiro with the objective of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations. Nations have met every year since to further the goal. While some meetings have been more successful than others, most have been met with disappointment and lack of action. After all, climate change is a complex issue, and bringing about a consensus action for any international issue is no small feat. That is why this agreement is truly, truly impressive.

Two weeks ago I traveled to Paris with nine of my colleagues. We met with U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, with U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz, and with our top U.S. climate change negotiator, Todd Stern. I congratulate all of them for their fine work.

Part of the purpose of our trip was to demonstrate to the world that there is a strong coalition in the U.S. Congress that supports the President's efforts on climate change, a message we conveyed to other nations, including Bangladesh. It is a country that has contributed little to industrial air pollution, but it is one of the most vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change. It is estimated that unless we act, rising sea level will inundate some 17 percent of Bangladesh, displacing about 18 million people in this low-lying nation. They will be uprooted and turned into climate refugees without a home.

But, of course, climate change isn't something that will just impact Bangladesh and other low-lying nations. It is already impacting us right here at home.

While we cannot attribute any single extreme weather event to climate change, we do know that climate change impacts the frequency, duration, and severity of extreme weather events. Just look at the damage caused by Superstorm Sandy. The storm surges caused by Sandy along the eastern seaboard were far more damaging because of climate-induced sea level rise. May I remind you that the damage caused by Sandy cost taxpayers $60 billion.

We are also seeing climate impacts to our forests. When Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell testified before the Senate energy committee a few years ago, he told us that throughout the country we are seeing far longer fire seasons and that wildfires are also larger and more intense. I asked Chief Tidwell whether scientists at the Forest Service have concluded that climate change has been exacerbating the intensity, the size, and duration of wildfires in the wildfire season. Without hesitation, he said yes. As a result, the Forest Service is spending more and more of their budget fighting fires—now more than half of their entire budget.

We are seeing more intense droughts. Unless we act, these droughts will have a major impact on food security around the world. That is why I recently penned an op-ed in the Minneapolis StarTribune with Dave MacLennan, the CEO of Cargill, the Nation's largest privately held corporation.

As the CEO of a company focused on agriculture, Dave is concerned about what climate change is going to do to our food supply in a world that is expected to go from 7 billion to 9.5 billion inhabitants by midcentury. That is why Cargill called for a strong outcome at the global climate negotiations.

So you can see that Cargill has a strong business case to make on why we have to deal with climate change. But, of course, that business case isn't just confined to the agriculture sector. Addressing climate change presents a tremendous opportunity to transform the energy sector.

For the very first time just this last week, Beijing issued its most severe warning to alert citizens of intense smog and local air pollution levels. Officials ordered half of the city's private vehicles to stay off the road, halted all operation at outdoor construction sites, and advised schools to temporarily close their doors. Citizens were encouraged to limit outdoor activities and recommended to wear a mask when outside.

China is choking on its own fumes from fossil fuels. As China and others recognize that they have to race toward clean energy, I want to make sure that our nation leads that race. I want to make sure that our startups are innovating tomorrow's solutions, that our companies are the ones that are developing and deploying clean energy technologies here and around the world. Again, I want to reiterate that. Addressing climate change head on would not only mitigate unprecedented damage to our economy but spur growth and innovation in a world that is hungry for advancements in clean energy.

My State of Minnesota recognized this opportunity in 2007 when it established a renewable energy standard and an energy efficiency standard. These kinds of policies send a strong signal to the private sector to develop and deploy clean energy solutions, and major investors are catching on to the opportunities. Just this month, Bill Gates launched the Breakthrough Energy Coalition to develop transformative energy solutions. The Coalition of nearly 30 billionaires from 10 different countries will invest in early stage energy companies to help them bridge the gap between government-funded lab research and the marketplace. According to Gates, the ''primary goal with the Coalition is as much to accelerate progress on clean energy as it is to make a profit.'' To back up this statement, Gates alone plans to invest $1 billion in clean energy in the next 5 years.

So you can see that the very serious threat of climate change presents a ''Sputnik moment'' for our Nation, an opportunity to rise to the challenge and defeat that threat. In response to Sputnik, we ended up not just winning the space race and sending a man to the Moon, but we did all sorts of great things for the American economy and for our society. We did it once, and we can do it again. By rising to the challenge of climate change, we will not just clean up our air but also drive innovation and create jobs—and not only in the clean energy sector—just as the space program created economic growth in so many economic sectors.

The Obama administration deserves a lot of credit for its leadership on climate change. Our domestic commitment through the Clean Power Plan, which builds on the work of my State and others, has established a Federal plan for reducing emissions. This important policy has provided American innovators and businesses the confidence to take on new risks and to drive new technologies forward.

After dragging our feet for so many years, I am proud that the United States is acting domestically and leading internationally.

But our job is not done. The agreement in Paris puts the planet on a safer trajectory than the one we have been on, but we have to remain vigilant and build upon that success. Internationally, we have to hold other nations accountable, ensure that they commit to stronger emission reduction targets over time, and make sure that those reductions are transparent and verifiable. Domestically, we have to build on the success of our cities and our States, and we have to work to make sure that the Clean Power Plan and other emissions reduction policies are effective. As a member of the Senate energy committee, I intend to do just that.

Two years ago, my first grandchild was born, and I am expecting my second grandchild in January. God willing, they will live through this century and into the next. I want them to know that when we had the opportunity to put Earth on a safer path, we seized the moment.

So let's celebrate this agreement because it is an important milestone, and then let's build on it to make the planet a safer and more habitable place for our grandchildren and their children.

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

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

OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I am here today to talk a little about the bill we saw posted late last night—a bill that I think has better results than the process itself would have suggested we might have.

There is no question that we have to get back to the process of bringing these bills to the floor. Bring them to the floor one at a time and let everybody challenge every penny of spending, to spend it in a different way or don't spend it at all. I am disappointed, as every citizen in the country should be, that we didn't do it that way. I hope we have the opportunity next year to get back to where these bills are dealt with one at a time.

The other area I am disappointed in is the inability to use this bill to have the kinds of policy victories I would like to see. The rule on the waters of the United States—the courts consistently appear to be saying the EPA absolutely doesn't have the authority to do what they are trying to do. In my State, the fourth most dependent State on coal-powered utilities, the rule on electricity will double our utility bill sometime between now and 2030, and for some Missourians, their utility bill will more than double. There is the rule that makes it difficult for financial advisers to give advice to small investors and people with small savings, small retirement accounts. If this financial adviser's rule—the so-called fiduciary rule—is allowed to go into effect, it will have dramatic impact. The joint employer rule upends the franchise model of doing business—a model of doing business which is around the world now but is uniquely American in its capacity to bring people into the middle class and allow them to rise into the middle class.

So I am disappointed about all of those things. But when we look at the bill as a spending bill, when we look at the bill as a bill that is supposed to do what this bill does, which is to decide how to spend the country's money, there is a significant reprioritization here.

One of the things I have seen even more in recent years than I think used to be the case is that when so many of our friends in the House and the Senate—and maybe even more so in the Senate—talk about how important it is to fund our priorities, what they are really staying is that it is important to fund anything any of us are for. That is not the way to set priorities. The way to set priorities is to decide what is important for the government to do, decide what the government can do better than people can do for themselves or maybe couldn't possibly do for themselves, and then set those priorities. In that case, I think this bill makes significant steps in the right direction, with dramatic changes in areas that had been a problem for several years now, at least the last 5 or 6 years, and in the case I want to talk about first, the last dozen years, but nobody has been able to do anything about it. Nobody has ever said those aren't our priorities; they just said: Well, we have all of these priorities—which meant every line in the appropriations bill, the best I can tell.

Let's talk about the Labor-HHS bill. It is about 32 percent of all the money after defense. If I have any time, I might talk about the Defense bill because it does great things for veterans, great things for cyber security, great things that support those who serve, and one of those things is encouraging our allies on the frontlines in the War on Terror.

In Labor and Education and particularly in Health and Human Services, the National Institutes of Health, where so much of our health care research is generated—a little of it is done in every State. Some States have great institutions. Certainly Missouri does—the University of Missouri, Columbia, Washington University, Children's Hospital. Hospitals all over our State have unique opportunities to do research. Health care research is something that, frankly, just isn't going to happen the way it should happen unless the government steps forward and says: We are going to be a leader here.

From about 1996 until 2003, the Federal Government doubled NIH research—in less than a decade, doubled NIH research. Since 2003, there has been no increase. There has been no increase in over a decade. As that money didn't increase, the buying power of the money decreased. We can certainly argue there is somewhere in the neighborhood of 20 to 25 percent less buying power, so really in terms of what they are getting for research, there is less buying power by about 20 percent to 25 percent. Young researchers are frustrated at never getting that first grant, never getting the truly experimental grant to see if something will work that nobody may have thought of before.

This bill increases NIH research by almost 7 percent. It takes that $30 billion Federal commitment to research and makes it a $32 billion commitment. It begins the process of catching up. Why do we need to do that? What are the reasons we need to do that besides the fact that the government has done research of all kinds for a long time, from ag research, which I support, to health research, which I support? I can think right offhand of about three critical reasons we should be concerned about health research.

One is the individual impact that the failure to do this has had. As people live longer, more and more people die from Alzheimer's and its complications or cancer and its complications. Fewer people die from a heart attack because we have done great things there and can still do more through treatment and prevention to make heart attacks even less likely. But as people survive heart attack and stroke, they are more likely to die from Alzheimer's or cancer. This creates great stress for families, particularly Alzheimer's, which can create years and maybe decades of stress for families. So to try to prevent or postpone that, to work with families—I would say that is priority reason No. 1.

To save money for taxpayers would be priority reason No. 2. The projection is that by 2050, through Medicare, the Federal Government will be spending $1 trillion a year on Alzheimer's and Alzheimer's-related health care. That is about as big as this discretionary budget. I think this budget is about $1.15 trillion. So take all the money we are spending today on discretionary spending, and suddenly, in just a few decades, that is the same amount of money we will be spending because of Alzheimer's. So that is a good second reason.

A third reason is that health care is about to revolutionize everything from smart phone technology to the individual health care that is possible now that we know what we know about the human genome, the things we know about that make me as an individual different from everybody else and everybody else who is hearing this different from everybody else. What kind

of unique cure can we find? What kind of designer medicine cure can we find to solve a problem for you, and then how do we make that scalable so that, with minor variations, we can make the same thing possible and affordable for other people as well? And where that research is done—the smart phone technology applications, the focus on the brain, the focus on designer medicines—where that is done is likely to be where many of those jobs turn out to be. So certainly health care is and will continue to be a big economic driver. The multiplication of economic impact in a positive way with what we invest in health care is pretty dramatic. So that is a big increase.

Fighting opioid abuse—this is where people take prescription medicines. The Presiding Officer is a veteran, having just retired from her long military service. Many of those who serve are the most likely to have this problem because of injuries they sustained, accidents they were part of, attacks they were a victim of which create pain. So they take heavy amounts of appropriate things to ease that pain but then get addicted to it. This is an area people weren't talking about at all long ago, but deaths from prescription opioids have quadrupled since 1999—actually, more than that because they quadrupled between 1999 and 2013.

Overdose of prescription drugs costs the economy an estimated $20 billion in work loss and health care costs every single year. The lives of families are impacted when a successful person, a responsible person, or someone who has not achieved either of those things yet but is a loved part of your family, becomes a victim of opioid abuse. We have a commitment in this budget to $91 million. It is not the biggest line item in the budget, but it is almost three times what we have been spending.

Many of our Members have been real leaders in talking about this. Senator AYOTTE from New Hampshire, Senator PORTMAN from Ohio, and Senator SHAHEEN from New Hampshire are all very focused on this problem.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act benefits here as we move toward hopefully less Federal control on education but more ability to help local schools deal with people who have individual challenges.

Rural health is a big issue in my State and a big issue in the Presiding Officer's State. It is handled here in a different way.

Job training is an important thing we do.

But what do we not do here? This is my final addition to this: What are we not doing? We would have liked to have not funded over 40 programs, which was the bill that the Appropriations Committee sent to the floor months ago that was never debated. That would have been the chance to debate all 40 of those programs. I think there were 43 programs that cost about $2.5 billion. Debate all 43 of those programs and decide if the committee is right or not—we can't do that if we don't get it here on the floor. But we still eliminate 18 programs. Those programs currently were more than a quarter of a billion dollars of spending.

The President asked for 23 new programs that were $1.16 billion of spending that were not done in this bill.

The Independent Payment Advisory Board under ObamaCare, where there would be a board rather than you and your doctor who decided what your health care is going to look like—that is not funded, so that won't occur. And there won't be a big transfer from other accounts with some other label to insurance companies, because all of the expectations from ObamaCare have turned out not to produce the kinds of results its supporters thought it would.

Hopefully we have made a big difference in how we prioritize the spending of the people's money, of the taxpayers' money, and hopefully we have also made a renewed commitment to do this the right way. We have done it this way since, frankly, the control of the Senate changed half a dozen years ago. The new majority was totally committed to getting these bills to the floor. They were all ready—all 12 bills—for first time in 6 years, most of them ready about the end of May, the first of June, but with only a couple of exceptions were they allowed to come to the floor, and that was at the very last minute when it was too late for this process to work the way it should.

Let's hope for more transparency, more debate, and more challenges. I am chair of this one committee I have been talking about today, but certainly there have to be other ideas that other Members who aren't on this subcommittee have, who aren't on the Appropriations Committee have. They do their best to get those ideas in by talking, in this late process and during the year, about what should happen.

Let's do our best to make this happen the way the Constitution envisions and the way people have every right to expect. I hope for a better process but realize that this process does significantly change the priorities the Federal Government has been stuck with for the last 6 years and heads in a new direction.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOOMEY). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

COMPETITIVE SPACE LAUNCH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the senior Senator from Arizona came to the floor this morning and raised a question about a provision in the Omnibus appropriations bill, particularly the aspect of it that related to the Department of Defense. During the course of raising the issue, the senior Senator from Arizona used my name on the floor repeatedly. It was refreshing and I am relieved. The senior Senator from Arizona has not attacked me on the floor for 3 weeks, and I was fearful he was feeling under the weather, but clearly he is in fine form and feels good, and I welcome him back to the floor for another attack on me personally.

Let's talk about the issue he raised because it is complicated but extremely important when it comes to the defense of the United States. Here is what it boils down to: In the early 2000s, there were two companies making rockets that launched satellites. The two companies were Boeing and Lockheed, and they competed with one another, but in the early 2000s—and I don't understand why—they made an argument to the Department of Defense that the Nation would be better off if they merged the two companies into one company and then provided the rockets to launch satellites to defend the United States and collect information. They argued that if they worked together, it would cost less, and they merged. With the approval of the Department of Defense, they continued to bid on satellite launches.

What happened was a good thing and a thing that was not so good. What was good was that their product was very reliable. They launched satellites with great reliability, and that is of course what America and its national defense requires. The bad part is that the costs went through the roof. The costs went up about 65 percent over this period of time since they created United Launch Alliance, costing the Federal taxpayers about $3 billion more for launches than it did in the past. They argued that they would eliminate competition and provide reliability, and they did, but the costs went up dramatically.

A new player arrived on the scene—SpaceX. SpaceX is associated with Elon Musk, a name that is well known in America. They decided to get into the business. They were going to build rockets and launch satellites too. Naturally, the United States of America said: Be my guest but prove you can do it in a way that we can count on you, because when we need a satellite launched to collect information, we want to make sure it is successful.

Over the years, SpaceX improved, evolved, and developed the capacity to launch satellites to the point where NASA, for example—the National Aeronautics and Space Administration—used SpaceX rockets successfully. It reached a point where the Department of Defense said to SpaceX: You are capable and will be certified to now compete for Department of Defense business. It is to the credit of SpaceX that they reached that point.

I thought this was an exciting development because, once again, we were going to have competition between the United Launch Alliance, the old Boeing-Lockheed merger, and SpaceX, the

new company. The owner of SpaceX said to me as well as publicly: We can do this for a fraction of the cost to American taxpayers. What I did was invite the CEOs of both companies to come to my subcommittee—when I then chaired the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee—in March of 2014. No one had quite seen a hearing like this before. We put the CEOs of both companies at the table at the same time, and we asked them questions about their operations, reliability, costs, and projections for the future.

At the end of this hearing, I said to the CEOs of each of these companies: I want to do something that is a little unusual. I want to offer each of you the opportunity, if you wish, to submit 10 questions to the other CEO that you think should have been asked and perhaps we didn't—and so they did. It was a complete record and a good one. For the first time, it really showed me that we were moving to a new stage in rocket science and capacity that could serve the United States by keeping us safe and keeping the costs down, and that of course should be our goal.

Then there was a complication. Vladimir Putin of Russia decided to take aggressive action by invading Georgia and Ukraine, and other actions by him that we considered confrontational tended to freeze up the relationship between the United States and Russia. Why is that important? It is important because the engine being used by United Launch Alliance to launch America's defense satellites was an engine built in Russia.

People started saying: Why in the world are we giving Russia and Vladimir Putin the opportunity to sell rocket engines to the United States? Secondly, why would we want to be dependent on Russia for rocket engines? So the debate started moving forward. How do we exclude the Russians from building engines and still have competition between these two companies? That is what brings me here today.

We were trying to find the right combination to bring competition and reliability without engaging the Russians. Everyone in Congress knows we have authorizing committees and appropriations committees. The senior Senator from Arizona is the chair of the defense authorizing committee, the Armed Services Committee, and I have been chair and am now the vice chair of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

The senior Senator from Arizona started including provisions in the authorizing bill which said that ULA, United Launch Alliance, could not use Russian engines to launch satellites and compete for business using those engines in the United States. As a result, the Air Force came to see me. First, I might add, a letter was sent when this provision was added to the Defense authorization bill. The letter was sent in May of this year, signed by Ash Carter, the Secretary of Defense, and James Clapper, the Director of National Intelligence, suggesting that excluding Russian engines so quickly could cause a problem in terms of the availability of missiles to launch satellites as we need them. The limitation that was put in by the defense authorization committee as to the number of engines that could be used would be quickly depleted, and the Air Force, the Department of Defense, and our intelligence agency said that may leave us vulnerable, so they asked the Senator from Arizona to reconsider that provision. He did not. If anything, the language that came out of conference on this provision made it even more difficult for the United Launch Alliance to consider using a different type of engine. I might add, they don't have an alternative engine to the Russian engine. United Launch Alliance uses it now. We told them to develop an American engine, and I stand behind that. They told us it will take anywhere from 5 to 7 years for that to happen.

I understand this is a complex assignment, and we want them to get it right. It seems like a long time, but it points to the dilemma we face. If United Launch Alliance cannot bid for work with the Department of Defense using a Russian engine, they don't have an alternative engine to bid with. At that point, SpaceX becomes the sole bidder and the monopoly source for engines. We tried to move from ULA as a monopoly source or sole bidder to competition, and now by injecting this prohibition against Russian engines beyond a certain number, we are again getting back to the days of a sole bidder.

What we have allowed in this Omnibus appropriations bill is language which gives 1 year of flexibility to the Department of Defense when it comes to bidding for these satellite launches, and of course it means United Launch Alliance will be using Russian engines for that bidding.

The Senator from Arizona came to the floor and spent most of his time talking about the aggression of Russia and Vladimir Putin and how we need to be strong with our response. Back in the day, when our relationship was more constructive, the Senator from Arizona and I actually traveled to Ukraine. I agree with him about the aggression of Russia and Mr. Putin and why the United States needs to be strong in response, but we have to be careful that we don't cut off our nose to spite our face. If we reach a point where we don't allow ULA to use a Russian engine to compete, we could endanger and jeopardize the opportunities the United States needs to keep us safe, and that is exactly what the Secretary of Defense and Mr. Clapper said in writing to Senator MCCAIN.

My message is that there is nothing, incidentally, in this omnibus bill that was not discussed in the original bill as marked up. There is no airdrop of language. It is a slightly different version of the language but says the same thing—that we think there should be some flexibility as ULA moves to develop their new engine.

The Department of Defense has convinced me that it would be shortsighted of us to make it impossible for ULA to even bid on future satellite launches. God forbid something happens to SpaceX where they can't launch satellites. At that point then, we would be in a terrible situation. We wouldn't be able to keep our country safe when we should. None of us wants that to happen.

The provision in the omnibus bill gives 1 year for the Department of Defense and the Air Force to continue to work with ULA to have a launch and have competitive bidding. If SpaceX performs as promised and comes in with a lower bid for those launches, they deserve to win, and they will. In the meantime, we want to make sure we have the availability of sourcing beyond just one company—beyond SpaceX.

I am impressed with all of these companies. The Senator from Arizona raised the point that Boeing has its headquarters in my home State, and I am very proud of that. I have worked with them in the past. I think it is an excellent company and does great work. My initial premise in starting this conversation in the Appropriations subcommittee was that we should have competition, and Boeing should face competition. The insertion of the Russian engine issue has made this more complex, and it will take us some time to reach what should be our ultimate goal: quality and reliable engines in these rockets to launch satellites to keep America safe and the certainty that if one company fails to be able to meet our defense needs, there is an alternative supplier. That, to me, is the best outcome possible.

This section 8045 of the Department of Defense appropriations is critical to our national security and launching satellites into space. We have to assure the Department of Defense and our intelligence agencies that we can put critical satellites into orbit when we need it. We have to make certain that the costs of these launches is competitive so taxpayers end up getting the best outcome for the dollars they put into our national defense. We have to generate competition to drive down costs, and we have to bring to an end our reliance on Russian-manufactured rocket engines. I wish that were not the case. I wish our relationship with Russia was positive in every aspect, but it is not, and I join with virtually all of my colleagues in believing that the sooner we move away from Russian-made engines to American-made engines in competition, the better for us and the better for our Nation.

There is no doubt that our Omnibus appropriations bill recognizes the need to end our reliance on Russian engines, and we actually put our money where our mouth is. We added $143.6 million on top of the $84.4 million requested by the President to accelerate the development of a new rocket engine. This amount is $43.6 million more than the

$100 million authorized by the defense authorization committee, so we are making certain we are going to end this reliance on Russian engines. The question is how we manage the space launch through the several years of launches before we have that engine. We need to do it without jeopardizing our national security.

The general provision I referred to allows for space launch competition in 2016 without regard to the source of an engine. It will permit real competition on four missions in 2016, and it will avoid trading one monopoly for another. I think I have explained how we have reached this point.

I think there is good faith on both sides. I don't question the motives of the senior Senator from Arizona. I hope he doesn't question mine. What we need to make certain of is that we move toward a day when America is safe and that the money spent by taxpayers is well spent.

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

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

NASA'S BUDGET

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, we are going back into space with Americans on American rockets, and we are going to Mars. We are on the cusp of the next big breakthrough in space exploration.

It is interesting that this is at the very time that in our culture here on Earth, the movie that is harkening back—''Star Wars''—is coming out again, and it is going to be such a blockbuster at the box office. What is fictional in ''Star Trek'' and ''Star Wars'' is now becoming factual.

In large part, it is what has been done in the Nation's space program since the shutdown of the space shuttle back in 2011 and in the preparation of the new vehicles—the new rockets, the new spacecraft, the new satellites, the new exploratory missions that have gone on.

Who among us, merely three decades ago, would have thought the Hubble Space Telescope would look back into the far reaches of the universe—close to the beginning of that universe—and start to unlock secrets through this telescope that is orbiting the Earth that was put up by humans in the U.S. space shuttle? Who among us would believe that we now are going to launch a telescope in 2018 that will look back in time to the very beginning of the source of light in the universe—the big bang—and understand this universe all the more and how it evolved in this magnificent creation that we earthlings observe of the heavens? Who among us, over four decades ago when we landed on the Moon, were not impatient to escape the bounds of Earth's gravity once again to get out and explore the heavens?

That is now becoming a reality. It is becoming a reality in large part because of the budget that will be presented to the Congress, which we will pass—an appropriation that just in this present fiscal year that we find ourselves in right now will increase NASA's budget $1.3 billion over what NASA was appropriated last year. Getting Americans and American rockets back into space, since we haven't had Americans on American rockets since we shut down the space shuttle, had to be done. That was an essentially extraordinary creative flying machine, but its design had inherent flaws that were risky for human beings. Indeed, in over 135 flights of the space shuttle, we lost two crews—14 souls—because of its design. There was a malfunction where there was no escaping for the crew. But now we have new rockets that will have the crew in a capsule on the top of the rocket so that if there is an explosion on the pad, an explosion in ascent all the way into orbit, we can still save the crew because we can separate them by the escape rockets from the main vehicle and save the crew, ultimately having them land or by parachute—powered landing or a parachute landing.

These rockets are almost ready to fly. Indeed, some of them have been flying for quite a while. Two companies, SpaceX and Boeing, will have the spacecraft. SpaceX, its capsule and spacecraft called Dragon, is sitting on top of a rocket that has flown many times called the Falcon 9. Boeing, with a spacecraft called the Starliner, will sit upon the very proven Atlas V. Which one will fly first? We do not know. But the fact is that is only 2 years away—2017. They will fly with the first crews to and from the space station so that we no longer have to rely upon a very reliable partner that indeed helped us build the International Space Station to which we go and return not only with crew but with cargo as well. We won't have to rely on the Soyuz anymore. We will be flying on American rockets. That is going to happen in a short 2 years.

The assurance of that is this. It is the Omnibus appropriations bill that is coming forth that has appropriated the amount NASA needs to keep this competition between SpaceX and Boeing going for developing, hopefully, two spacecraft that will be launching Americans on American rockets to and from our International Space Station.

By the way, we have six human beings on the space station. It is an international crew. They are doing all kinds of experiments. At another time and another day, I can tell my colleagues about some of those exciting things.

We are going to Mars. We are going to Mars because we are developing a spacecraft called *Orion* that we have already test-flown out to 3,600 miles to check its structural integrity on a ballistic reentry. That was done a year ago. Now we are building the largest, most powerful rocket ever on Earth, called the Space Launch System, or SLS. *Orion* and SLS have also been given a boost in this appropriations bill. So we are well on our way for the first test of this full-up rocket with capsule in September of 2018. That is less than 3 years away, with the first crewed vehicle after the first test in 2021.

That is the forerunner to building the spacecraft and the technologies that can take human beings and keep them alive all the way from Earth to Mars, land on Mars, stay on Mars for a while, and return safely to the Earth. ''Star Wars,'' ''Star Trek,'' is fiction. It is exciting, but it's fiction. This is space fact. It is happening in front of our eyes.

Now, there are other things that are happening with this appropriations bill. We think, in this solar system, if there is a chance for life besides Mars, or life that was there and we want to know what happened—there is a moon around Jupiter called Europa. Europa is so cold that it has an exterior that is ice. But the gravitational pull of Jupiter, as Europa goes around and around Jupiter, is such that it causes the friction from an inner core that already has heat and heats up from the inside. So under this crust of ice on Europa is water. In our experience as earthlings, wherever we have found water, we have found life. So is not Europa one of the best chances of there being life as we understand it in those oceans? It is a smaller body than Earth—Europa—and yet has oceans that are twice the volume of the oceans on planet Earth. That is a real possibility.

So in this appropriations bill, there is $1.6 billion to proceed on a plan for taking us to Europa to see if there is other life in our solar system.

There is also something that is very important to us earthlings, and that is that we need to know what is happening to the planet and we need to be able to predict and we need to be able to foretell, because if a big storm is coming here, we want precise measurements to let us, bound on the face of terra firma, know what is that storm that is coming and what are the weather conditions. That accuracy is so important for us in our daily lives here on Earth, not even to speak of our national security.

You could go through the rest of the NASA budget and you can see that it indeed sets us on a course for extraordinary space exploration as well as taking care of the aeronautical research, which is the other ''A'' in NASA—aeronautics. That has a plus-up from the President's request—aeronautics—giving all the research on the technology to make sure that our aviation industry is at the absolute cutting edge.

We are going to Mars, and we are beginning this journey as we did with the

test of the spacecraft a year ago. That journey is going to accelerate, and in the lifetimes of many of those within the sound of my voice, they will witness a human crew of Americans and possibly an international crew that will go all the way to the planet Mars and return. Indeed what was science fiction based on science facts—the Matt Damon movie ''The Martian''—really is right within our grasp. It is an exciting time as we bring our space exploration back to life so that the American people can see that there is a viable space program and that we have a goal and that goal is the planet Mars.

COAST GUARD LEGISLATION

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I want to take advantage of this opportunity to also share with the Senate that we have a very important Coast Guard bill on which we are going to try to get unanimous consent so that we can send it on to the House. There are parts that have been controversial and those parts generally have been worked out. There are one or two others.

This Senator thinks the American people—unless they get in trouble out on the high seas—don't really have an understanding of what a professional military organization the U.S. Coast Guard is. We have the Coast Guard participating with our Defense Department over in the war zones—the area of responsibility over in Central Command. We have the Coast Guard basically doing the job for the U.S. Navy in the waters off of Alaska. We have a Coast Guard that is patrolling the waters off of the continental United States, as well as the island State of Hawaii. The Coast Guard is always there when Americans get in trouble, and indeed when mariners who are not Americans get into trouble. The Coast Guard is an incredible professional organization that is doing the job.

Down in the waters off of my State of Florida, the Coast Guard does this incredible job working with the U.S. Navy on the interdiction of drugs. When the drug smugglers have to be interdicted, the Navy, if they are tracking them, hands that over to the Coast Guard because the Coast Guard, in fact, has the law enforcement capability to go in and take down the smugglers.

The Coast Guard can shoot the motors out of these go-fast boats to interdict smugglers—even going after submerged vehicles—to stop them. The Coast Guard does that from not only their boats but also from the air. The Coast Guard stands tall. We in the Congress now need to stand tall for the Coast Guard.

Earlier this month the majority leader offered a unanimous consent to discharge from the Senate commerce committee and pass the Coast Guard Authorization Act, giving the Coast Guard the resources it needs to carry out its mission. It cannot be overstated.

It is a small, very agile service of 42,000 Active-Duty members. It plays a vital role in protecting the Nation from narcoterrorism, human smuggling, environmental disasters, and from the loss of life and property at sea.

So what is in this bill? It is the result of several months of negotiations between the House and the Senate. The chairman of our Senate commerce committee, JOHN THUNE, and I, as the ranking member of the commerce committee, have worked with our colleagues to craft a bill that will authorize a total of $9.1 billion in each of the fiscal years 2016 and 2017. It is a $380 million per year increase over the amount authorized last year, and it enhances the Coast Guard and its capability to do a number of the things that I have listed, which include cracking down on the drug trade and the destruction of evidence, including the destruction of illegal drugs. It enhances the Coast Guard capabilities to stop the smuggling of drug money across our maritime borders. The Coast Guard's Western Hemisphere strategy is to combat the criminal networks, secure the borders, and safeguard American commerce. So to meet all that, this legislation's increased funding is going to support the Coast Guard's ongoing fleet recapitalization program, including the design and construction of a new offshore patrol cutter and continued production of a fast response cutter.

I have ridden in these fast response cutters. I have ridden in the go-fast boats as they simulated a drug smuggler that was trying to avoid us. This boat can do the hairpin turns and the sudden 180-degree turns at top speed, and that is how these guys can't get away. If for some reason they were not able to interdict them at sea, we have them from the air.

I have watched the Coast Guard sharpshooters blow out the motors on a go-fast drug smuggling boat. But we have to recapitalize a lot of these old boats. The average age of a Coast Guard high endurance cutter is 45 years old. The average age of the Coast Guard's 210-foot medium endurance cutter is 48 years old. These are two of the primary ships that are used for interdiction and rescue worldwide. So new offshore patrol cutters, fast response cutters, will give our Coast Guard an effective coastal and offshore interdiction capability in order to meet its objectives.

You think of the Coast Guard off the coast. They are in Washington. I am not talking about the ones onshore. They are out there protecting national security assets in and around the Potomac and the Anacostia Rivers.

In addition to this recapitalization, the bill allows the Coast Guard to begin updating its fleet of polar icebreakers, allowing the service to pay an estimated $1 billion needed for the acquisition of a new state-of-the-art heavy polar icebreaker. Why do we need that?

Have you noticed recently what the Chinese have been doing in the Arctic? Especially, have you noticed what the Russians are doing in the Arctic? Have you noticed that the Russians have 19 icebreakers and we have just a few? Have you noticed that China is funding and building icebreakers for the Arctic?

Part of our icebreakers, the Polar Star and the Healy were built in the 1970s and 1990s. The Polar Star is now well beyond its intended 30-year service life. It is vital that we enable the Coast Guard to begin bringing these new vessels online to support the Coast Guard's Arctic strategy and cooperative maritime strategy and to meet the President's stated intent for increased American presence and capabilities in the Arctic.

I went with the Coast Guard to Alaska. As I said a moment ago, the Navy has really ceded the Alaskan waters to the Coast Guard to protect maritime shipping—a huge fishing fleet up there. But also on the North Slope of Alaska, which is the beginning of those Arctic waters, there is a lot of activity up there—not only fishing but exploring for oil. At times of the year when it is totally incapable of a seaworthy vessel to crack the ice, you have to have an icebreaker to do it. The Russians have 19. They are getting very aggressive in the Arctic. Just ask the Prime Minister of Norway, with all of his teams, how concerned they are with what the former Soviets are doing up in the Arctic. Thus, this bill enhances and speeds up our capability of getting another icebreaker—a modernized icebreaker.

So this legislation is also going to provide the Coast Guard parity with our Department of Defense sister services with respect to personnel policies such as parental leave and eligibility for combat-related special compensation. If they are out there on the frontlines, they should have parity with our sister men and women in uniform.

This legislation will ensure that the Coast Guard is properly equipped to protect our national and homeland security interests in our ports, on our coastal and inland waters, such as Washington, and on the high seas around the world.

This Senator believes that we will be able to do this by unanimous consent, if we work through a few more things. So I urge our colleagues in the Senate: Let's get this up and get it passed before the Christmas recess so the House will have it the first part of next year so we can get on about the process of getting this bill authorized, completed, and sent down to the President for signature into law.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT). The Senator from Pennsylvania.

ERIC WILLIAMS CORRECTIONAL OFFICER PROTECTION ACT OF 2015

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I am going make a unanimous consent request, but first I want to say a few words about the legislation about which the request pertains. I want to thank my colleague Senator BOB CASEY for joining me on this.

It was back in 2014 that Senator CASEY and I introduced the Eric Williams Correctional Officer Protection Act. It is a bipartisan bill, and it is a simple idea. The idea is to better enable these men and women who protect us every day by working as corrections officers—to better enable them to protect themselves in the very dangerous environments in which they go to work every day.

Amazingly enough, under the Bureau of Prisons policy, prison guards are often placed on duty, guarding large numbers of inmates by themselves, unarmed, and with no meaningful way to defend themselves. Officer Eric Williams of Wayne County, PA, paid the price for this policy. In February of 2013, Eric Williams was working alone in a housing unit of a Federal prison, a unit of 125 inmates. Carrying only a radio, handcuffs, and a set of keys, he had no means of self-defense and no one with him to provide back-up. A gang member serving a life sentence for first-degree murder savagely attacked and killed Officer Williams. The inmate used a homemade weapon to stab Eric Williams 129 times. He beat Eric so badly that his skull was crushed. The damage was so severe that Eric Williams' father stated: ''I didn't even recognize my boy laying in that casket.'' Eric was just 34 years old.

This Bureau of Prisons policy is very misguided. We send our law enforcement officers alone, without defensive gear, to guard large numbers that include convicted killers. So, working with Senator CASEY and with Eric Williams' parents, Don and Jean Williams, we introduced the Eric Williams Correctional Officer Protection Act. I should point out that Don and Jean Williams have been absolutely heroic advocates in insisting that correctional officers have this tool at their disposal.

This is a bill that would require the Bureau of Prisons to issue nonlethal pepper spray to guards at high- and medium-security prisons so that these guards will have some means to protect themselves, some means of self-defense. We know this works. We know this works because there are many, many documented cases where a violent attack is immediately ended by deploying pepper spray. The fact is, pepper spray completely and immediately incapacitates an attacker. It does so while doing no permanent damage.

Well, it is too late for Eric Williams, but there are thousands of correctional officers across America who are working in dangerous environments every day. If we pass this legislation, we are probably going to save some of their lives over time.

The bill is bipartisan, as I pointed out. It has been endorsed by the American Federation of Government Employees, by the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, by the Council of Prisons Local 33. I am pleased to announce that thanks to the concerted and, as I said, heroic efforts of Eric's parents, Don and Jean Williams, and many law enforcement and correction officers across the country, I believe that today the Senate is ready to enact this legislation.

I also thank my cosponsors, Senators MANCHIN, MCCONNELL, CORNYN, INHOFE, CAPITO, LANKFORD, KIRK, and VITTER.

Before I make the formal unanimous consent request, I yield to the senior Senator from Pennsylvania who has joined me in this effort, Mr. CASEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I want to thank Senator TOOMEY for his work on this legislation—our work together. As Senator TOOMEY did, I especially want to commend Don and Jean Williams, the parents of corrections officer Eric Williams. I will not reiterate the horrific nature of his death; Senator TOOMEY outlined that. I cannot imagine more of a nightmare for a corrections officer and for his or her family.

We can bring some measure of protection to these officers by making sure that every possible circumstance is one in which the officer has pepper spray to be able to prevent an attack or to slow an attack down enough until that corrections officer gets help.

I want to say how much we appreciate the fact that this is bipartisan. This is one of those issues that should not have any kind of political division. Senator TOOMEY outlined the challenge and also the solution for this problem.

This is not a guarantee, but it means that if a corrections officer—and they are always outnumbered, by the way. If they are outnumbered, they will have some measure of protection.

I want to emphasize one thing I certainly forgot about or maybe never fully understood until I was in a line at corrections officer Eric Williams' viewing before his funeral. The line was full of law enforcement officers. I think sometimes we forget—and it was made clear to me that night—that these individuals are part of law enforcement, just like police officers at the local level or State police officers or other law enforcement personnel. When you work in a Federal prison and you are a corrections officer, you are part of law enforcement.

Those of us who work hard to provide resources for law enforcement should once again support legislation like this. I want to thank Senator TOOMEY for his work. I want to thank those who made this possible. I hope we can have this legislation pass through the Senate before we leave by the end of this week.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, again, I want to thank Senator CASEY for his excellent work on this. At this time, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 238 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 bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 238) to amend title 18, United States Code, to authorize the Director of the Bureau of Prisons to issue oleoresin capsicum spray to officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons.

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

Mr. TOOMEY. 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. 238) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 238

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 ''Eric Williams Correctional Officer Protection Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE BUREAU OF PRISONS AUTHORIZED TO CARRY OLEORESIN CAPSICUM SPRAY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 303 of part III of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 4049. Officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons authorized to carry oleoresin capsicum spray

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Bureau of Prisons shall issue, on a routine basis, oleoresin capsicum spray to—

''(1) any officer or employee of the Bureau of Prisons who—

''(A) is employed in a prison that is not a minimum or low security prison; and

''(B) may respond to an emergency situation in such a prison; and

''(2) to such additional officers and employees of prisons as the Director determines appropriate, in accordance with this section.

''(b) TRAINING REQUIREMENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In order for an officer or employee of the Bureau of Prisons, including a correctional officer, to be eligible to receive and carry oleoresin capsicum spray pursuant to this section, the officer or employee shall complete a training course before being issued such spray, and annually thereafter, on the use of oleoresin capsicum spray.

''(2) TRANSFERABILITY OF TRAINING.—An officer or employee of the Bureau of Prisons who completes a training course pursuant to paragraph (1) and subsequently transfers to employment at a different prison, shall not be required to complete an additional training course solely due such transfer.

''(3) TRAINING CONDUCTED DURING REGULAR EMPLOYMENT.—An officer or employee of the Bureau of Prisons who completes a training course required under paragraph (1) shall do so during the course of that officer or employee's regular employment, and shall be compensated at the same rate that the officer or employee would be compensated for

conducting the officer or employee's regular duties.

''(c) USE OF OLEORESIN CAPSICUM SPRAY.—Officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons issued oleoresin capsicum spray pursuant to subsection (a) may use such spray to reduce acts of violence—

''(1) committed by prisoners against themselves, other prisoners, prison visitors, and officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons; and

''(2) committed by prison visitors against themselves, prisoners, other visitors, and officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 303 of part III of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 4048 the following:

''4049. Officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons authorized to carry oleoresin capsicum spray.''.

SEC. 3. GAO REPORT.

Not later than the date that is 3 years after the date on which the Director of the Bureau of Prisons begins to issue oleoresin capsicum spray to officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons pursuant to section 4049 of title 18, United States Code, as added by this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report that includes the following:

(1) An evaluation of the effectiveness of issuing oleoresin capsicum spray to officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons in prisons that are not minimum or low security prisons on—

(A) reducing crime in such prisons; and

(B) reducing acts of violence committed by prisoners against themselves, other prisoners, prison visitors, and officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons in such prisons.

(2) An evaluation of the advisability of issuing oleoresin capsicum spray to officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons in prisons that are minimum or low security prisons, including—

(A) the effectiveness that issuing such spray in such prisons would have on reducing acts of violence committed by prisoners against themselves, other prisoners, prison visitors, and officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons in such prisons; and

(B) the cost of issuing such spray in such prisons.

(3) Recommendations to improve the safety of officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons in prisons.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

HIGHER EDUCATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2015

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to enter into a colloquy with Senators AYOTTE, BALDWIN, CASEY, and PORTMAN.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. If it is agreeable to Senators, I will make a few remarks introducing the subject of the colloquy, and then the Senators will speak in that order. I am here today to talk about the Federal Perkins Loan Program Extension Act of 2015, which is a substitute to H.R. 3594. I have a bill which has been taken to the desk.

The original sponsors of the bill, which I will ask to be considered at the conclusion of the colloquy, are Senators AYOTTE, BALDWIN, JOHNSON, CASEY, COCHRAN, BOOZMAN, and me. We have debated the Perkins loan several times on the floor of the Senate. Twice, I have objected to the House bill to extend the Perkins Loan Program. This is a program that was set to expire in 2012, since the 1998 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

That date was not extended the last time we reauthorized the Higher Education Act. This is a program that, in 1998, the Congress and the President decided would expire in 2012. The expiration of the loan program should not have been a surprise to anybody. It has not received appropriations since 2004.

The Department of Education reminded institutions that the program was expiring earlier this year. I objected to the extension on the grounds that the current Federal loan program—one that all students, not select students, are able to use—has a lower interest late and better repayment options than the Perkins Loan Program. I objected because I believed there should only be one Federal loan program for undergraduate students, as well as one for graduate students, and one for parents.

That was the testimony we received in our education committee, the HELP Committee. Senator BENNET and I and a bipartisan group of Senators have introduced something called the FAST Act, which would, in a variety of ways, simplify the ability of students to apply for Federal student aid. One of those ways is to simplify the maze of student loans that are available to students today.

Sometimes students end up with more loans than they even know they have. Then they have trouble paying them back. However, in recent weeks, I have had many conversations with Senators. Some of them are on the floor today and are Members of this colloquy, who have suggested to me they would like to have the Perkins Loan Program extended until we can address it in the Higher Education Reauthorization Act.

Senator AYOTTE, Senator BALDWIN, Senator COLLINS, Senator CASEY, Senator JOHNSON, Senator PORTMAN, and Senator BLUMENTHAL are some of the Senators who have eloquently made that case on the floor of the Senate. They came and argued the merits of the Perkins Loan Program. Most of the arguments relied on the use of these loans by students to provide for financing up to a student's full cost of attendance to meet a gap in funding that is above their direct Federal loan limits for the very neediest students; or they argued it was an important resource to students in urgent circumstances such as when a student's parent loses a job.

I listened to these Senators. I have listened to university presidents and others who have talked with me about it. As a result, today I come here with what I believe is a fair compromise, cosponsored by the Senators that I mentioned, to address the specific issues raised.

We propose a 2-year extension of the Perkins Loan Program while we work on a long-term solution for simplifying the student aid program. This extension will give us time to move forward on the Higher Education Act reauthorization next year, and come to a consensus on how to simplify the Federal student aid program, which has become so complicated that many students will not even apply for loans, and many of those who do don't realize the opportunities they have to pay the loans back according to very generous terms.

That being said, I think it is important for me to say that I am still, frankly, skeptical of the merits of this duplicative loan program, which only serves 5 percent of all student loan borrowers and amounts to a little over one-half of 1 percent of all the outstanding federal student loans we have in the country today. The program provides an average loan of about $2,000 and illustrates the complicated mess our student loan system is in today.

My colleagues, cosponsors, and I have worked on this compromise to extend the Perkins Loan Program for 2 years for all eligible undergraduates and 1 year for current graduate students who have already received a Perkins loan for the graduate degree they are pursuing.

This is what the substitute does. It extends the Perkins Loan Program until September 30, 2017, for all eligible undergraduates. It provides 1 year of additional Perkins loans to graduate students who have already received a Perkins loan.

Under the Direct Grad PLUS Loan Program, graduate students have the ability to borrow up to the cost of attendance annually and have no aggregate or lifetime loan limits. In other words, you don't need the Perkins loan as a graduate student to meet costs because you can get as much money as you would need under the regular direct loan system.

The bill requires that the institutions award the maximum annual limit of subsidized direct loans prior to awarding a Perkins loan for current undergraduate Perkins loan borrowers.

It requires that institutions award the maximum annual limit of both subsidized and unsubsidized direct loans prior to awarding a Perkins loan for new undergraduate Perkins loan borrowers.

It requires the institution to disclose to Perkins loan borrowers the following: that the program is ending; next, that this loan is not eligible for certain repayment and forgiveness benefits available to borrowers utilizing the Direct Loan Program.

For an undergraduate, the interest rate is lower in the Direct Loan Program and they have a more generous way to repay the loan than under the

Perkins loan. We want the Perkins loan borrowers to know that.

We want them to know they may consolidate their Perkins loan into a Federal direct loan to receive the benefits of the Direct Loan Program; that is, the more generous repayment terms.

We want them to know that Federal direct loans and Perkins loans have different interest rates.

We want them to know that if they are receiving a Perkins loan as an undergraduate today and they have received one in the past, that their institution has already awarded all subsidized Federal direct loans for which they may be eligible for that year. In other words, the Perkins loan is their second loan.

Many students borrow more than they should and then have trouble paying it back. We want them to know that if they are receiving a Perkins loan for the first time, their institution has already awarded all subsidized and unsubsidized Federal direct loans for which they were eligible that year and that this is their third loan.

If this whole Federal student aid system sounds complicated, it is.

There are millions of students across our country who take advantage of generous Federal grants and loans—more than $30 billion in grants that they don't have to pay back every year. There is a total outstanding debt of federal student loans of $1.2 trillion, almost $100 billion in new loans every year. However, it is such a maze and so complicated that many students don't understand how much they are borrowing. So that was my purpose in objecting to an automatic extension of the Perkins loan without thinking about it in terms of how we simplify it and make it easier for students to understand the tangled maze of loans in the Federal student aid system.

I thank my colleagues who are here today for being so eloquent and so aggressive in pointing out the benefits of the Perkins Loan Program and for coming up with the suggestion that we find a fair compromise so that over the next 2 years the Perkins Loan Program will continue but that during that time, both our education committee and the full Senate and the House will have a chance to review and make simpler the Federal system of grants and loans for students who attend our 6,000 colleges and universities in the country.

At this point, I recognize Senator AYOTTE of New Hampshire, who was one of the first to come to the floor and very persuasively argue about the importance of some continuation of the Perkins Loan Program.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Tennessee. The Perkins loan is a very important loan program to people in New Hampshire and to 5,000 students in New Hampshire who are current recipients.

While I know my colleagues who are on the floor who have fought so hard for this—Senator BALDWIN, Senator CASEY, and Senator PORTMAN—would have preferred that the Senate take up and pass the House's Higher Education Extension Act prior to Perkins expiring, because all of us were on the floor on September 29 as well, I do very much appreciate the spirit of compromise that the Senator from Tennessee has shown in working with us to extend this very important loan program for 2 years, and I thank him for that and for not letting this expire.

I thank my colleagues on the floor who have fought so hard for the students in their States who, like the students in New Hampshire, the 5,000 students who received a Perkins loan during the last academic year—this is very important to those students. I have heard from them, the colleges, universities, and financial aid administrators in New Hampshire, who have urged that it is very important, especially before we end the year with the Perkins Loan Program expired, that we pass this extension.

Certainly I look forward to continuing to work to make sure that all of our student loan programs are easier for people to use; that they are simpler; and that we make sure young people in this country and those who are returning to education as well—perhaps in a change of career or a new course in their life—that they get the opportunity, no matter where they come from or their economic background, to reach their full potential in this country because that is the essence of the American dream.

Again, this program is very important to my home State. This program is also important to half a million students across the country. It hits a lot of students.

Unfortunately, in my home State of New Hampshire, we have the distinction of having the highest average student loan debt in the country. So every bit helps students. These 5,000 students in New Hampshire—I want them to know this program will continue, and I want to make sure the people of New Hampshire understand that I am going to continue to fight for access for all of our students in New Hampshire and those who want to have better educational opportunities to better their lives and reach their full potential.

I thank the Senator from Tennessee, and certainly I thank the other Senators who are on the floor on a bipartisan basis who fought so hard for the Perkins loan extension.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from New Hampshire. She has been a passionate advocate for the Perkins loan recipients in New Hampshire and across this country and played a major role in developing this 2-year compromise that permits us to continue the program while we look at the future.

Senator BALDWIN of Wisconsin was one of the first on the floor to point out the importance of passing the House bill and dealing with this issue. She is a member of the Senate's education committee, what we call the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. Both she and her colleague from Wisconsin, Senator JOHNSON, have vigorously advocated for an extension of the Perkins Loan Program. I thank Senator BALDWIN for her hard work and look forward to working with her not just on passing this bill but working in the committee to come to a proper resolution on student aid.

Ms. BALDWIN. I thank the chairman for this colloquy and for the moment at which we have now arrived.

Mr. President, I rise to speak about the Perkins Loan Program—a vital investment in students that has been successful in helping Americans access affordable higher education and pursue their dreams.

Due to Senate inaction, the Perkins Loan Program lapsed at the end of September. I have twice come to the floor to urge my colleagues to take action and extend this critical student loan program which has helped literally millions of America's low-income students for more than half a century.

I am proud to have earned the support of a strong bipartisan majority in the Senate to continue this investment. Since the program's expiration, a growing chorus of advocates, students, and colleges and universities have joined our bipartisan coalition in calling on the Senate to act.

As has been well documented, my friend Chairman ALEXANDER and I have had our differences on this issue. As he just shared, he has objected to my previous efforts to revive the Perkins Loan Program due to his concerns with the program that he wanted to address as a part of the discussion about reauthorizing the Higher Education Act—a discussion, by the way, I very much look forward to. But despite his prior objections, I have certainly remained firm in the belief that we must act now to help students, even as we look toward that future conversation on higher education starting at the education committee and then proceeding through the Congress.

I continue to work with my Republican colleagues and Democratic colleagues—especially those Republican colleagues who had concerns with the program—in order to find an interim path forward.

I am so pleased that we are here today with a bipartisan compromise that provides a 2-year extension of the Perkins Loan Program. The compromise before us today is not perfect, and this is not the legislation I would have written on my own. However, today we have found a bipartisan solution that breaks the gridlock and will revive the Perkins Loan Program, providing critical support to students across America who were left in the lurch when the program expired this fall.

This extension provides current and new undergraduate borrowers with access to Perkins loans through September 30 of the year 2017, allowing

them to complete both the 2016–2017 and 2017–2018 academic years with the support of this important program. In addition, it provides current graduate students with a Perkins loan an additional year of eligibility through September 30, 2016, allowing them to complete the 2016–2017 academic year with the support of Perkins. Like the 1-year extension measure which the House adopted by voice vote earlier this fall, this 2-year extension is fully paid for.

I thank Chairman ALEXANDER for working with me and Ranking Member MURRAY to address his concerns and to reach this compromise which we expect the Senate to pass in short order.

I also thank my strong allies in this fight: Senator MURRAY, Senator CASEY, Senator PORTMAN, Senator AYOTTE, Senator COLLINS, and many other supporters of the Perkins Loan Program in the Senate.

I also thank our partners on the House Education and the Workforce Committee, Chairman KLINE and Ranking Member SCOTT, who supported extending the Perkins Program. I am hopeful they will push this legislation across the finish line before Congress leaves for the year.

Since 1958, the Federal Perkins Loan Program has been successfully helping Americans access affordable higher education with low-interest loans for students who cannot borrow or afford more expensive private student loans.

In Wisconsin, the program provides more than 20,000 low-income students with more than $41 million in aid, students such as Andrew, a current student at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point campus. Without the support of his Perkins loan, Andrew said he would not have had the means to attend college with the little to no income at his disposal. Today, not only is Andrew making the dean's list every semester, but he also has his sights set on attending the law school at the University of Wisconsin. Andrew said: ''Without the assistance I get from the Perkins Loan I would be forced to either take out other high-interest loans, delay my graduation rate, or drop out—which is the last thing I want to do.''

I am pleased that we have reached an agreement to extend this program for 2 years to help students just like Andrew. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the HELP Committee to ensure that campus-based programs like Perkins are a part of the future of Federal support for higher education.

Again, I thank the chairman for his colloquy and his hard work on reaching this resolution for the moment and look forward to the larger debate in the Education Committee when we reconvene next year.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Wisconsin. This is the second time in 2 weeks that she has played a role in an important bipartisan decision on the floor of the Senate regarding education. She has made a major contribution to our Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and through her willingness to work in a bipartisan way with other Senators who she mentioned, we have been able to get a bipartisan result. Hopefully, it will be passed by the end of the year, and then we will work together in committee to find the right solution.

No Member came more quickly to me to talk about the Perkins Loan Program than did the Senator from Ohio, ROB PORTMAN, who has an eye for the budget with his broad experience as Director of the budget and with a large number of colleges and universities in Ohio. He is here today to discuss the Perkins Loan Program, along with Senator BALDWIN, Senator AYOTTE, and Senator CASEY.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Tennessee. I appreciate his work and help to ensure these kids are not going to be left in the lurch. There are kids in the State of Ohio who are expecting to get their Perkins loans this January as they go into the next semester, and there were certainly thousands of young people who were hoping in the fall that they were going to be able to take advantage of it, and they were very uncertain.

It is a big program in Ohio. We actually have over 25,000 Ohio students who receive financial aid through Perkins. In one school alone, Kent State, 3,000 students.

By the way, I got lobbied on this very directly. A young woman named Keri Richmond interned in my office last summer. Keri is a classic example of someone who needs Perkins because it fills in the gaps for her. In her case, she has a Pell. Yet as a young woman who has been in and out of foster homes her entire life—and, by the way, is a wonderful advocate and spokesperson for that program and how it helps foster kids to get on their feet—she does not have the help at home that many students do. So even for the small things, she needs that Perkins loan. She is very grateful today that we are extending this program, of course; but, more importantly, she is grateful for all her other colleagues at Kent State and around the State of Ohio.

I was with some Ohio State students a couple weeks ago for a holiday party with the president of Ohio State, who is very pleased this has been finally handled because he was trying to plan. As we know, schools play a big role in Perkins. It is essentially like a revolving loan program. With the interest, they are able to come up with new loans for the next year. So the colleges and universities in Ohio are very involved. We have 1,700 students at Ohio State; overall, we have 60 schools in the Buckeye State—colleges and universities—taking advantage of this. So this is a big deal for us.

I appreciate the fact that the chairman has been willing to sit down and work with us on this and come up with a way for us to move forward to give these young people the certainty that they need at a time when it is more expensive to go to college. This is a barrier for a lot of young people to be able to get that degree, to get the experience, to have the ability to be able to go out in this tough job market and be able to find work and find their place in the workforce. I am happy we have come to this point.

I will say I am very eager to work with the chairman, Ranking Member MURRAY, and others over the next period of time while we extend this program to come up with a better way to deal with our student loan program generally. I think the chairman makes a good point about the complexity. I think he is probably right that it is so complex that some parents and students are turned off by it, and we can simplify it. Certainly, we can, but I also want to make it clear that we need to be sure that we are providing maximum flexibility for students who might otherwise get left behind and wouldn't be able to take advantage of the opportunity to go to college and get a degree. We should be doing everything in our power to provide more students in my home State of Ohio and around the country the chance to get the tools they need in order to be able to be successful.

I thank Senator AYOTTE, Senator CASEY, and Senator BALDWIN. We have been at this for a while. We have been out here on the floor a few times talking about this. I think this is a result that lets us say to the people we represent back home: We are going to give you that certainty, that confidence to know this is not going to be pulled away.

On the other hand, we are going to work hard over the next couple of years to ensure that this program is viable for the longer term—along with other programs—and simplify these programs so they do work better for all the parents and all the students whom we represent.

I thank the chairman. This is one of the good results at the end of the year. In a way, going into the Christmas season, it is appropriate that we have this little package that is now wrapped up and has a ribbon on it. But it does expire, so our work is not done, and we will only redouble our efforts to ensure that we can come up with a program that does provide the flexibility and important safety net that Perkins does.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Ohio. He is exactly right. I know of no State that has more small colleges of the kind that would take advantage of Perkins loan probably than the State of Ohio. It is important to say that Senator BALDWIN, Senator CASEY, and Senator AYOTTE have been urgently making their case on the floor over the last several weeks and have done so in such an effective way that we have been able to come up with a bipartisan compromise. The more of that we are able to do, I think the more confidence the

American people will have in their Senators. So I appreciate his leadership in making this possible.

Another Senator who is a member of the Senate's committee that oversees education is the Senator from Pennsylvania, Mr. CASEY. He, too, has just completed work on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which many people thought we had no chance of passing this year and which we passed by a very large margin. I thank him, as I did Senator BALDWIN, for working in such a constructive way.

Some people look at the Senate and say: Well, you all are always arguing. Of course we are. That is what we do. That is like looking at the Grand Ole Opry and saying: You all are always singing. We have different points of view—and we do on the Perkins loan. But once we make our points of view known, we then do our jobs and we say: OK. Now we need to get a result. If all we wanted to do was to make a speech or make a point, we could stay home or get our own radio show. But we are Senators, and our job, having had our say, is to get a result.

So I thank Senator CASEY, the Senator from Pennsylvania not only for his work on this compromise on Perkins loans but also for his work on our efforts to fix No Child Left Behind. I look forward to his comments.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I thank the chairman for his work in helping us get to this point today. It is an important moment at the end of an important year, and we are grateful for his leadership. Even when we have had a basic disagreement to get this compromise worked out, it would not have happened, it could not have happened without his leadership and working with Democrats on our side of the aisle, Senator MURRAY, as the ranking member of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, working with Chairman ALEXANDER. I thank Senator BALDWIN for her work in leading this effort on our side and leading our team.

This is a compromise, which, as Senator ALEXANDER noted, some people don't think we do enough of. I think it is an important example of why we must work together.

When we consider the compromise that I worked on and the other Senators who are here and others who are not here, along with our staffs—I mentioned Jared and Lauren on my staff, who did a lot of work on this, and we are grateful for that.

But we can report today some good news for more than 150,000 current freshmen Perkins loan recipients whose eligibility was cut off when the program expired on the 30th of September of this year. This bipartisan agreement provides for a 2-year extension of the Perkins Loan Program and provides some certainty for students and their families as we debate a longer term solution. We have more to do. Simply put, what students tell us they need is that basic certainty.

One of the reasons we are happy we have reached a compromise at this stage is that I think most of us believe what have I often said—that early education applies to higher education. If young people learn more when they are in their college years, they are going to earn more later. One of the ways to learn more when you are at that age is to have the resources and help of a loan program such as Perkins.

Perkins loans are critically important in a State such as Pennsylvania. Forty thousand students in Pennsylvania receive these loans at more than 100 schools. As many people know, these loans are fixed rate and they are low interest. Unlike traditional subsidized loans, they don't accrue interest when the student is in school. They have significant robust forgiveness opportunities for borrowers who, for example, become high school teachers or first responders or librarians or nurses or Peace Corps volunteers, among so many other professions. The loans can be consolidated to qualify for income-based repayment and other loan-forgiveness options.

This agreement ensures that those with the least financial resources will be able to continue to receive this important source of financial aid. Because of this compromise, freshmen and students across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will not have to choose between dropping out and taking out unaffordable, high-interest private loans in order to secure their degree.

I would like to give two examples before I conclude.

Abigail Anderson, a freshman at Immaculata University, currently receives a Perkins loan of $2,000. She said she had it all figured out, but with this program expiring on September 30, she said: It changes everything. She said she didn't know how she was going to pay for school next year because her parents couldn't afford to pay any more. About the Perkins Loans, Abigail Anderson said, ''Every little amount counts. It makes a difference.''

Here is another example. Amber Gunn, a freshman at Temple University, is from Hazelton, PA, near my hometown of Scranton. Amber did not have enough money to pay her tuition bill even for this year. Her mother wasn't able to cosign her loans, but she was able to get a Perkins loan in the amount of $5,000 from the help of Temple University's financial aid office. Amber Gunn said as follows:

> Without the Perkins Loan I probably wouldn't have been able to enroll for my first semester of school. I'm not sure what I'll do next year without the loan, I'm kind of in a predicament.

For some, that might be an understatement.

So now, with this bipartisan agreement, neither Abigail nor Amber and so many others will have to worry. They can focus their attention on the end of the semester, their exams—and whatever else they are having to focus on—instead of wondering whether they will be able to afford to return to campus for their sophomore years.

Even with this compromise, we have lots of work to do—more work to do to come together on reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. But this is a good moment for the Senate, and it is especially a good moment for students and families across the country, and in my case for the some 40,000 in the State of Pennsylvania.

I thank the chairman for his leadership and again thank Senator BALDWIN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I once again thank the Senator from Pennsylvania for being both a passionate advocate and skilled legislator in helping us come to a result here that meets most of the goals of the Senators who spoke about this, at least for the next 2 years, and gives us a chance in our committee to continue to work on it.

BUDGETARY REVISIONS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, section 4313 of S. Con. Res. 11, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2016, allows the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee to revise the allocations, aggregates and levels in the budget resolution for legislation that would amend the Higher Education Act of 1965. The authority to adjust is contingent on the legislation not increasing the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016–2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016–2025.

I find that amendment No. 2929 fulfills the conditions of deficit neutrality found in section 4313 of S. Con. Res. 11. Accordingly, I am revising the allocation to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and the budgetary aggregates to account for the budget effects of the legislation.

I ask unanimous consent that the accompanying tables, which provide details about the adjustment, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

BUDGET AGGREGATES—BUDGET AUTHORITY AND OUTLAYS

(Pursuant to Section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and Section 4313 of S. Con. Res. 11, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2016)

$s in millions	2016
Current Aggregates:	
Budget Authority	3,009,288
Outlays	3,067,674
Adjustments:	
Budget Authority	269
Outlays	269
Revised Aggregates:	
Budget Authority	3,009,557
Outlays	3,067,943

REVISION TO THE ALLOCATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS

(Pursuant to Section 302 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and Section 4313 of S. Con. Res. 11, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2016)

$s in millions	2016	2016–2020	2016–2025
Current Allocation:			
Budget Authority	12,137	83,101	160,672

REVISION TO THE ALLOCATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS—Continued

(Pursuant to Section 302 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and Section 4313 of S. Con. Res. 11, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2016)

$s in millions	2016	2016–2020	2016–2025
Outlays	14,271	85,383	171,731
Adjustments:			
Budget Authority	269	−14	−13
Outlays	269	−14	−13
Revised Allocation:			
Budget Authority	12,406	83,087	160,659
Outlays	14,540	85,369	171,718

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of H.R. 3594, which was received from the House.

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3594) to extend temporarily the Federal Perkins Loan program, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. I ask unanimous consent that the Alexander substitute amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to, and that the bill, as amended, be read a third time.

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

The amendment (No. 2929) 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 ''Federal Perkins Loan Program Extension Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF FEDERAL PERKINS LOAN PROGRAM.

(a) AUTHORITY TO MAKE LOANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 461 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087aa) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking ''of stimulating and assisting in the establishment and maintenance of funds at institutions of higher education for the making of low-interest loans to students in need thereof'' and inserting ''assisting in the maintenance of funds at institutions of higher education for the making of loans to undergraduate students in need'';

(B) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

''(b) AUTHORITY TO MAKE LOANS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—

''(A) LOANS FOR NEW UNDERGRADUATE FEDERAL PERKINS LOAN BORROWERS.—Through September 30, 2017, an institution of higher education may make a loan under this part to an eligible undergraduate student who, on the date of disbursement of a loan made under this part, has no outstanding balance of principal or interest on a loan made under this part from the student loan fund established under this part by the institution, but only if the institution has awarded all Federal Direct Loans, as referenced under subparagraphs (A) and (D) of section 455(a)(2), for which such undergraduate student is eligible.

''(B) LOANS FOR CURRENT UNDERGRADUATE FEDERAL PERKINS LOAN BORROWERS.—Through September 30, 2017, an institution of higher education may make a loan under this part to an eligible undergraduate student who, on the date of disbursement of a loan made under this part, has an outstanding balance of principal or interest on a loan made under this part from the student loan fund established under this part by the institution, but only if the institution has awarded all Federal Direct Stafford Loans as referenced under section 455(a)(2)(A) for which such undergraduate student is eligible.

''(C) LOANS FOR CERTAIN GRADUATE BORROWERS.—Through September 30, 2016, with respect to an eligible graduate student who has received a loan made under this part prior to October 1, 2015, an institution of higher education that has most recently made such a loan to the student for an academic program at such institution may continue making loans under this part from the student loan fund established under this part by the institution to enable the student to continue or complete such academic program.

''(2) NO ADDITIONAL LOANS.—An institution of higher education shall not make loans under this part after September 30, 2017.

''(3) PROHIBITION ON ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS.—No funds are authorized to be appropriated under this Act or any other Act to carry out the functions described in paragraph (1) for any fiscal year following fiscal year 2015.''; and

(C) by striking subsection (c).

(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Notwithstanding the amendments made under paragraph (1) of this subsection, an eligible graduate borrower who received a disbursement of a loan under part E of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087aa et seq.) after June 30, 2016 and before October 1, 2016, for the 2016–2017 award year, may receive a subsequent disbursement of such loan by June 30, 2017, for which the borrower received an initial disbursement after June 30, 2016 and before October 1, 2016.

(b) DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS FROM STUDENT LOAN FUNDS.—Section 466 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087ff) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''After September 30, 2003, and not later than March 31, 2004'' and inserting ''Beginning October 1, 2017''; and

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking ''September 30, 2003'' and inserting ''September 30, 2017'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking ''After October 1, 2012'' and inserting ''Beginning October 1, 2017''; and

(B) by striking ''September 30, 2003'' and inserting ''September 30, 2017''; and

(3) in subsection (c)(1), by striking ''October 1, 2004'' and inserting ''October 1, 2017''.

(c) ADDITIONAL EXTENSIONS NOT PERMITTED.—Section 422 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1226a) shall not apply to further extend the duration of the authority under paragraph (1) of section 461(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087aa(b)), as amended by subsection (a)(1) of this section, beyond September 30, 2017, on the basis of the extension under such subsection.

SEC. 3. DISCLOSURE REQUIRED PRIOR TO DISBURSEMENT.

Section 463A(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087cc–1(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (12), by striking ''and'' after the semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (13), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(14) a notice and explanation regarding the end to future availability of loans made under this part;

''(15) a notice and explanation that repayment and forgiveness benefits available to borrowers of loans made under part D are not available to borrowers participating in the loan program under this part;

''(16) a notice and explanation regarding a borrower's option to consolidate a loan made under this part into a Federal Direct Loan under part D, including any benefit of such consolidation;

''(17) with respect to new undergraduate Federal Perkins loan borrowers, as described in section 461(b)(1)(A), a notice and explanation providing a comparison of the interest rates of loans under this part and part D and informing the borrower that the borrower has reached the maximum annual borrowing limit for which the borrower is eligible as referenced under subparagraphs (A) and (D) of section 455(a)(2); and

''(18) with respect to current undergraduate Federal Perkins loan borrowers, as described in section 461(b)(1)(B), a notice and explanation providing a comparison of the interest rates of loans under this part and part D and informing the borrower that the borrower has reached the maximum annual borrowing limit for which the borrower is eligible on Federal Direct Stafford Loans as referenced under section 455(a)(2)(A).''.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on this measure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Hearing no further debate, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall it pass?

The bill (H.R. 3594), as amended, was passed.

Mr. ALEXANDER. 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. ALEXANDER. Once again, I thank Senator BALDWIN, Senator CASEY, and the other Senators who participated in our colloquy, Senator AYOTTE and Senator PORTMAN. They have all pushed hard to see that we get a result on the Perkins loan extension. They have been effective advocates and skilled legislators, and I am grateful for their hard work.

There have been other Senators who have spoken on the floor and have been very passionate advocates. I don't think I have a list of all of them, but I know, for example, Senator COLLINS made her case here on the floor and in the conference on our elementary and secondary education bill for the students of Maine who receive Perkins Loans. I know Senator BLUMENTHAL was here on a day when I was here as well making his case for students in Connecticut. I know the Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. JOHNSON, was here making a vigorous case for the students from Wisconsin, as did Senator BALDWIN. Senator BOOZMAN of Arkansas and Senator COCHRAN of Mississippi have also been advocates as well as those who participated in the colloquy.

We have had a broad group of Senators involved both on the floor and in the negotiations. We now have passed a bill in the Senate. It will go to the House. Hopefully, it will be considered and become a law by the end of the year.

I look forward to working with my two colleagues on the education committee to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, with the goal of simplifying and making more effective the Federal Student Aid Program so American students can afford and can attend college or university.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CRUDE OIL EXPORT BAN

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise again to raise the case for lifting the 40-year-old ban on exporting crude oil. Lifting the ban will not only benefit my home State of North Dakota, but it will also benefit our Nation and our allies in a host of different ways, and that is why I worked hard to include legislation to repeal the ban in the year-end legislation that Congress now has under consideration.

Importantly, this is must-pass legislation, meaning it will be very hard for the President to veto lifting the ban on exporting crude oil. When taken together, the reasons for lifting the oil export ban are very powerful. Doing so will encourage more domestic production, increase the global supply of crude oil, thereby reducing the cost at the pump for our consumers, particularly over the long term, and it will grow our economy and create good-paying jobs for our citizens.

The last reason for lifting the ban is vitally important as well, particularly now as we work on making sure our Nation is secure. National security through energy security helps to keep our people safer. I will take a few minutes and go through those benefits one by one.

Let's start with the American consumer. The price of oil is based on supply and demand. The more oil on the market, the lower the price. It is a matter of simple economics—supply and demand. The volatility and global price of crude oil is felt right down to the consumer level. More global supply means lower prices at the pump for gasoline, benefiting our consumers and small businesses across the country. That means more money in consumers' pockets. Those facts are backed up by studies at both the U.S. Energy Information Administration—the EIA—which is part of the Department of Energy, as well as the nonpartisan Brookings Institute.

This spring, EIA Administrator Adam Sieminski confirmed that finding in testimony before our Energy and Natural Resources Committee, of which I am a member. In September, the EIA released a new report that reaffirms the benefits to consumers and businesses that would result from lifting the decades-old crude oil export ban. It stands to reason if we just think about it for a minute. Oil is a global commodity, right? The global price is based on North Sea oil, or Brent crude, so that is the global price. Because we are not allowed to export oil, the domestic price is different. That is based on WTI—West Texas Intermediate—crude. So the West Texas Intermediate crude price typically simply runs somewhere between $5 and $8 a barrel lower than Brent crude, the international price. So here we are producing oil—my State of Texas and others—we produce some of the lightest, sweetest crude in the world. Yet when our producers sell that, they are getting $5 to $8 less per barrel than people who are producing internationally. So we are talking about OPEC, Russia, Venezuela, our competitors—they price off Brent. They are getting $5 to $8 more for every barrel they sell.

Now, think about that. Let's say you are a store or a business of any kind. For selling the same product or selling a better product, you are going to get less money than your competitor. Which of you stays in business? Which of you grows and produces more of that product? Which of you goes out of business?

So what is going on in the world right now? We have OPEC flooding the market. Why are they doing that? They are doing that to capture market share and to reassert their dominance. Once they put us out of business, then they are back in the driver's seat and prices will go right back up for the consumer. We don't want to let that happen. We want a robust oil and gas industry that will make sure that we have competition, that we have energy security, and that consumers have lower prices at the pump.

Second, in addition to benefiting consumers, crude oil exports benefit our economy here at home. Crude oil exports will increase revenues and boost overall economic growth. It will help increase wages, create jobs, and improve our balance of trade. One area of our economy that currently enjoys a favorable balance of trade is agriculture. That is because our farmers and our ranchers successfully market their products around the globe. Our crude oil producers can do the same if they are given the opportunity. Local economies also benefit. Service industries, retail, and other businesses and communities centered on oil development will see more economic activity and growth if this antiquated ban is lifted. Also, crude oil exports will benefit our domestic industry, our energy industry, obviously.

The EIA's latest study concluded that lifting the ban will reduce the discount for light sweet crude oil produced in States such as North Dakota, Texas, and others and encourage investment to expand domestic energy production.

The drop in the price of oil this year has slowed domestic production. In our State of North Dakota, we continue to produce oil. In fact, our State increased production in October to almost 1.17 million barrels a day. That is up a little bit from last month when we produced about 1.16, but we are already down from our peak earlier this year of 1.2 million barrels a day.

This goes back to what I am saying. We are in a fight to determine who is going to produce oil and gas globally. Do we want that to be America or would we prefer that to be OPEC, Russia, Venezuela, and some of our other adversaries?

Our producers are resilient, innovative, and highly competitive. They are developing new technologies and techniques to become more cost-effective and more efficient all the time. Allowing them to compete in the global market will not only make us more inventive, more creative, and deploy better technologies but grow our economy and grow our domestic oil and gas industry.

Of course, that means high-paying jobs for our people. According to a study by IHS, a global provider of industry data and analysis, lifting the ban will attract an estimated $750 billion in new investments and create nearly 400,000 additional jobs in the United States between 2016 and 2030. I have seen studies that are actually higher. That is $750 billion in private investment—not government spending, in private investment—to stimulate and grow our economy and 400,000 additional jobs. Again, those are jobs in the private sector—not more government—private sector jobs, economic growth, more revenue to help reduce the deficit and the debt without raising taxes. We know that from experience in North Dakota, where in recent years per capita personal income has been growing faster than any other State in the country, not solely but in large part because of oil and gas production.

On a national level, crude oil exports will help to bring our energy policy into the 21st century. The crude oil export ban is an economic strategy that was implemented in the 1970s, and the world has changed dramatically since then. Back then, the conventional wisdom was that there was a finite amount of oil in the world, and we pretty much knew where it was, and there were even alarms at that time that we were going to run out of oil. Barton Hinkle pointed out in Reason magazine that as recently as 2005, the BBC asked: ''Is global oil production reaching a peak?''

In 2008, the Houston Chronicle declared: ''We are approaching peak oil sooner than many people would have thought.''

Two years later, the New York Times reported on a group of environmentalists who ''argue that oil supplies peaked as early as 2008 and will decline rapidly, taking the economy with them.''

Yet here we are. Nobody envisioned the kind of energy revolution we are seeing in the United States—in North Dakota, in Texas, and in other oil-and-gas-producing States—with new and creative technologies that produce more energy with better environmental stewardship.

Back in 2011 I asked then-Interior Secretary Salazar to have the U.S. Geological Survey do a new study to update estimates of recoverable reserves in the Williston Basin. In April of 2013, the results came in and they were profound. The USGS found that there are approximately 7.4 billion barrels of technically recoverable oil in the Williston Basin, which is more than twice the previous estimate. The upper end of that estimate is 11.4 billion barrels of recoverable oil. It is about twice the USGS estimate made in April of 2008, which projected about 3.65 billion recoverable barrels in the Bakken formation.

So my point is, in less than 5 years' time, with the new technology and development, we have more than doubled the amount of recovery oil just in the Williston Basin, in the North Dakota-Montana area, from 3.65 billion barrels to 7.4 billion barrels, and we are just scratching the surface.

The report also estimates there to be about 6.7 trillion cubic feet of undiscovered, technically recoverable natural gas, nearly three times the estimate 5 years earlier.

So again my point: We don't even drill for natural gas. We are drilling for oil and we produce natural gas as a byproduct. And the amount available is going up dramatically. As I say, the most recent estimate for natural gas, 3.67 trillion cubic feet, is more than double the amount just 5 years earlier. That is what technology is doing with the resource. This is the opportunity we have.

Recoverable oil projections to date may be as little as several percentages of what is actually in the ground. That is the kind of potential we have. That is the kind of potential we have to depend on ourselves for energy, not OPEC or anyone else.

I recently asked the USGS Director, Suzette M. Kimball, to update the most recent assessments to provide more information on a new formation that we are producing in North Dakota—the Tyler. That is because industry advances in directional drilling and hydraulic fracturing have greatly expanded the ability to access formerly difficult areas. As I said, the industry is working on a new formation—the Tyler formation.

I want to make one other point, too, and this goes to environmental stewardship. We are actually producing less greenhouse gas in the country today than we have in prior years. A big part of the reason is something called hydraulic fracturing because now, with hydraulic fracturing, we are producing so much more natural gas that we have low-priced, abundant natural gas, and as we use more of it we are actually reducing carbon emissions in the United States. So isn't it ironic that as we develop and deploy the new technologies to produce oil and gas more efficiently, more economically, and more dependably, at the same time, through hydraulic fracturing and directional drilling, we are also doing so with better environmental stewardship.

Isn't that what American innovation and ingenuity is all about? Isn't that the creativity that we unleash in the private sector, when we create a good business climate and we empower investment, rather than block it with regulation and taxation and roadblocks and redtape that doesn't make any sense? That is how we create that rising tide that lifts all boats. That is how we become the most powerful and dynamic economy in the history of the world. That is how we create more jobs and opportunity for our people.

So now, just 10 years after some were lamenting the depletion of the world's oil reserves, the model has shifted from scarcity to abundance, and we will need additional investments in technology, transportation, and energy infrastructure, such as pipelines, rail, roads, and other industry needs to produce that energy. The good news is that the industry will build the infrastructure, create the jobs, and produce the energy we need if we just provide them with that good business climate and that opportunity to do it. As I said, as they deploy those advanced technologies, as they make that investment, they produce jobs, economic growth, more tax revenue, without raising taxes, to help with the debt and deficit, and they do so with better environmental stewardship. That is how we lead the world forward with better environmental stewardship, with American ingenuity, creativity, and innovation.

Lifting the ban will create more domestic production and energy infrastructure, which holds two key benefits. First, more domestic production and infrastructure means that in a national emergency, Americans will not be dependent on the need for oil from elsewhere in the world—places like OPEC. Americans do not want to return to depending on OPEC for our energy.

The second benefit is that U.S. crude oil will provide strategic geopolitical benefits for us and for our allies around the world. It will provide our friends with alternative sources of oil and reduce their reliance on Russia, Venezuela, Iran, and other unstable parts of the world for their vital energy needs.

As a further security advantage, adding more domestic supply will provide a buffer against shortages going to volatile conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere around the globe. We finally have an opportunity to curb the disproportionate influence OPEC has had on the world oil markets for almost half a century, and we need to capitalize on it.

One final point on national security. We must recognize the implications of the President's deal with Iran, which lifts sanctions against Iranian oil. That agreement will put 1 million barrels a day of Iran's oil on the global market and billions of dollars in their Treasury. Does it make any sense at all to maintain a ban on U.S. oil exports while the President lifts a ban on Iranian oil exports? Of course not. Clearly, it does not. In fact, we should be maintaining the sanctions on Iran even as we lift the oil export ban on our producers.

The consensus among lawmakers and experts in the field of energy and national security is evident: Lifting the ban on U.S. oil exports will create jobs, boost our economy, and bolster our national defense. It is supported by studies done by the U.S. Energy Information Administration, EIA—part of the Department of Energy—the nonpartisan Brookings Institute, and Harvard Business School.

Last week we held an Energy and Natural Resources Committee meeting to examine the link between terrorism and the global oil and gas market. The results were telling. Expert witnesses from such highly regarded, nonpartisan think tanks as the Center for a New American Security and IHS, a global provider of data and analysis, affirmed that lifting the oil export ban will enhance national security. Representative of the general opinion in the hearing was testimony by Dr. Sara Vakhshouri, a nonresident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, who said that with the Middle East in turmoil and confronting terrorist attacks and threats, it is important to have alternative resources and ''especially from the U.S.''

Jamie Webster, senior director at IHS, capped the issue, saying: ''We have put out a couple of studies on the crude export issue and our finding is that this is a clear win for the U.S. economy and also for energy security. It's difficult to find a case where this is not a positive.''

The ban on crude oil exports is an anachronism, a solution to a problem that no longer exists owing to the innovation of the American energy industry. At this time in our history, all the circumstances argue for lifting the ban. Americans need jobs, the economy needs a free market boost, and the American people deserve the security of knowing that in an emergency, we have a reliable and abundant source of energy as well as the infrastructure to deliver it. Lifting the ban on crude exports is an idea whose time has come. Let's get it done.

I am very pleased to see my esteemed colleague from the great State of Texas, the only State that produces more oil than my home State of North Dakota, but we are working hard, and you know when you are in second position, you always run a little harder, work a little harder. We are hot after them, but I must say they do an amazing job down there. His leadership on

this issue has been tremendous because he understands it is not only important for the Lone Star State, but it is important for our country.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, while the Senator from North Dakota is still here, let me just say that he gave a speech that I wish I could have given. I couldn't say it any better than he did, but I will just make one point as he is preparing to leave the floor.

Some people wonder why is it that the Texas economy is doing so well relative to the rest of the country. Last year, 2014, our economy grew at 5.2 percent. The U.S. economy grew at 2.2 percent. Now the fact that we are producing energy using the techniques the Senator from North Dakota talked about—fracking and horizontal drilling—fracking, by the way, has been around for 70 years or more—that has helped contribute to job creation and our economic growth. This is something we would like to see expand across the country.

We have been blessed, as has the Senator from North Dakota, with abundant natural resources. What we are asking to be able to do is to sell those to willing buyers overseas. Many of them are some of our closest allies, who are being terrorized by thugs such as Vladimir Putin, who uses energy as a weapon. Think about how powerful this would be in our national security toolbox to be able to sell natural gas and crude oil to some of our closest allies so they don't have to rely on people like Mr. Putin.

I congratulate the Senator from North Dakota, Mr. HOEVEN, for his leadership on this issue. We have all worked together on it, and it has been a team effort, and we are close to getting it done.

The final point I want to make is that this is not just about energy-producing States, this is a net positive for the United States and for our allies abroad.

Mr. HOEVEN. Will the Senator from Texas yield for just a minute?

Mr. CORNYN. I will be happy to.

Mr. HOEVEN. I want to pick up on that last point. It is particularly important when you consider this legislation that this bill just doesn't benefit the oil-and-gas-producing States, it really benefits everybody when you think about all of the infrastructure and the materials, the equipment that goes into producing that energy. When you talk about drilling down 10,000 feet, 2 miles underground, and drilling out 3 miles in multiple directions; when you talk about the equipment that is needed to do that, the tanks, the transportation; when you talk about all the things—the research, development, engineering—that go into it, I doubt there is a State in the Union that isn't touched by this energy industry. That is something I think all of our Members have to keep in mind when we look at this legislation. It is not just about energy-producing States, it is about all of us in terms of the economy, and it is about all of us in terms of national security. We are the ones leading forward with the newest technology that will leave the environment with better stewardship.

I am glad the Senator actually brought up that point, and I hope our colleagues will keep that in mind as we bring forward this legislation.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, there is another benefit that spreads evenly among Americans, and that is low gasoline prices. The single driver for low gasoline prices is the supply of oil. Because of the abundant supply of oil due to innovation and these techniques the Senator from North Dakota talked about, oil prices are lower than they have been in a long time.

You can buy a gallon of gasoline in Texas for well under $2. I think I saw it as cheap as $1.80 or maybe lower than that in some places. That has a direct impact on the pocketbook of working families. That is another reason why this legislation needs to be passed on Friday of this week in the House and in the Senate. I thank the Senator from North Dakota for this brief discussion.

WORKING TOGETHER IN THE SENATE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I wanted to come to the floor and talk about what we have been able to accomplish this year because sometimes I think people, when they hear us talk, think we are somehow claiming credit where credit is not entirely due or whether we are trying to make this purely a partisan matter. It is not, but it does require good leadership.

As the Presiding Officer knows, having been speaker of the house in North Carolina, the people who set the agenda—that is a pretty important power. All of the legislation that has passed this year would not have passed if it weren't for the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, under the new majority scheduling it for a vote in the Senate and chairmen in the relevant committees processing that legislation at the committee level and making it available for floor consideration.

It is not just the Republican majority. Time after time, we have seen Republicans and Democrats working together hand in glove to try to pass legislation that is good for the American people. We saw that on the Education reform bill, where Senator MURRAY and Senator ALEXANDER worked so closely together. We saw it on the highway bill—the first multiyear highway bill in a decade—where the Senator from California, Mrs. BOXER, working together with Senator INHOFE from Oklahoma and the majority leader, worked to really turn things around in the House of Representatives, to give them the space and time to pass a multiyear highway bill and to work with us to reconcile the differences and get it to the President. That is pretty important.

I was on the phone earlier today talking with some of the folks at the Austin American-Statesman about the impact on the traffic situation we have on I–35. It is a veritable parking lot during many times of the day. People understand the importance of taking care of infrastructure and maintaining it but also expanding it so people can get from point A to point B, but more importantly, what that means in terms of the environment and their quality of life.

So my simple point is that there is a big difference to the way this Chamber operated under the Democratic leader, when Senator REID was majority leader, back when our friends across the aisle were in the majority. The statistic has been mentioned that there were 15 rollcall votes on amendments. We have had more than 200 so far this year alone. Frankly, I think our Democratic friends like the way the Senate has been operating under the current majority more than they did when they were in the majority because under the dysfunction of the previous majority, even Democrats in the majority weren't able to get votes on the amendments. When they stood before the voters, people asked ''What have you done?'' and they didn't have much to show except dysfunction.

As the Presiding Officer knows, whether it is North Carolina or other places around the country, we got a number of new Senators as a result of that misguided dysfunction, which was calculated but I think proved to be a miscalculation.

It is a good thing to see the Senate operating again in the interests of the American people. We have had a pretty busy session. I am not claiming it was perfect. Frustrations abound. It is in the nature of divided government.

The legislative process was designed by our Founding Fathers in the Constitution to be hard because they actually saw the concentration of power as a threat to their freedom and their liberty, and they didn't want an efficient Federal Government. They wanted checks and balances. They wanted checks between the various branches, between the two branches of the legislature, and also checks and balances with regard to the allocation of power to the Federal Government relative to the States and individuals. All of that separation of power was designed to require deliberation and to require transparency and the building of consensus before legislation was passed that would have an impact on their lives.

It has been a good thing to see the Senate working again, and I think all of us, Republicans and Democrats alike, can be proud of some of the work we have done.

One of the things I am most proud of this year is the fact that we were able to pass a bill called the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act by 99 to 0. This

was the first legislation that actually provided a crime victims compensation fund to help provide grants to victims of human trafficking. As I have described before on this floor, the typical profile of a victim of human trafficking is a young girl between the ages of 12 and 14. We need to have resources available for people with big hearts in communities all across this country to help rescue these victims of trafficking and help them recover their lives and get on with their lives in a more productive and safe manner. This is one of the things we have done together.

PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE AGREEMENT

Mr. CORNYN. Now, Mr. President, I want to spend a few minutes talking about some of the things on which I don't think we are going to be able to find political consensus. That has to do with the President's moving up his list of priorities. Among all the other things that are going on in the world, he seems to be saying that climate change is the most urgent challenge facing the United States and the world. I worry a little bit any time I hear a politician—or anybody, for that matter—making sort of messianic claims. The President characterized the agreement in Paris—and I will talk more about the nature of that agreement—''a turning point for the world.'' It strikes me that it takes quite a bit of hubris and really arrogance to be claiming that yes, this is going to be a turning point for the world. As a matter of fact, the Wall Street Journal said that it pays to be skeptical of a politician who claims to be saving the planet.

I don't share the President's priorities when it comes to climate change because I think there are actually more urgent priorities, such as fighting terrorism both abroad and here at home. That would be a more urgent priority. Some of the other more prosaic work we do here is pretty important to the quality of lives of the American people and to the economy, our ability to create an environment where they can find work and provide for their families. I think those needs are more urgent.

Nevertheless, the President seems to be once again exaggerating what his authority is under our Constitution. Of course, the President has no legal authority to bind his successor. What he seems to be saying is ''This is an agreement between me and the 140-some-odd nations,'' and it won't last beyond his Presidency. Last time I checked, the President will be leaving the White House sometime in January 2017. What he has purported to do is enter into an agreement that would somehow bind his successor and would somehow bind the Congress and the American people. But under our Constitution, this President—no President has any authority to do anything like that.

So it is clear that this agreement has been crafted in a way that gives some of the countries that are parties to the agreement more leeway than others. Some major economies don't have to play by the same rules that the United States would.

This agreement represents the President once again trying to claim authority he simply does not have. We don't have a king. In America, we made that decision a long time ago. I think it was 1787 when we decided we would not have a king, but the President seems to act like a monarch and claim authorities from some source other than the Constitution. It seems unbelievable that after the Obama administration has failed to find support for so many of the President's overreaching regulations here at home—not in the Congress, not in the State houses, not in the courts—his response was to sign on to an agreement with the United Nations that seeks to tax our use of energy. It is another attempt to do an end run around the Constitution and around the American people.

What really frustrates me is the President's willingness to sacrifice our economy—job creation and the ability of people to find work and to provide for their family—to promote a cause that offers no guarantee of a more resilient climate or a clean environment.

The President and some of his supporters frequently like to say: Well, people who don't regard climate change as a priority are anti-science. I actually think people who think agreements such as this are going to provide the answer are anti-science.

First, if you start looking at some of the models that are used to predict temperatures decades and perhaps centuries out, this is not what you would call science, this is more like an economic projection or model, and we know how reliable they have been in the past.

I couldn't help but think about growing up and a book that I remember reading called ''The Population Bomb,'' which was written by a Stanford professor named Paul R. Ehrlich. The thesis of ''The Population Bomb'' was that unless we did something to control population, millions of people were going to starve to death because we were going to outstrip our food supply.

Well, obviously that didn't happen. One of the reasons it didn't happen is because of a man by the name of Norman Borlaug, a Nobel Prize winner, and now considered the father of the Green Revolution. By the way, he did spend a little bit of time at Texas A&M in Bryan College Station. But he was a very heroic figure who used science to help figure out how to increase production of the food supply in a way that made Paul Ehrlich's prediction a pipe dream. It just didn't happen.

I think that by predicting all these dire consequences, it is the predictors—it is the people who are embracing this sort of climate change theology—who don't have any confidence in our ability to innovate our way out of these problems.

I will use one more anecdote to try to make the point. At the start of the 20th century, horses in New York City were producing about 5 million pounds of manure a day. Can you imagine what an environmental hazard this would be with manure piled on vacant lots with rats? I will not go into all the details; it is pretty repulsive to think about. But there is a book called ''SuperFreakanomics,'' which uses this great example. They said: Well, what happened to that? Instead of some grandiose government policy or instead of some new tax or regulation that government issued, what happened to that and the environmental hazard that presented was the internal combustion engine. So not overnight, but apparently in short order, that manure was disposed of. Horses were replaced by cars.

Again, it is just another example of how American innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurialism can take care of many of these problems that some of our friends worry so much about and think should be such an important priority for us. America's entrepreneurs have shown time and again that they are simply more adaptive and genius than government regulators and bureaucrats.

By bypassing the American people and signing our country up for a bad international agreement that doesn't put our country first, we should instead focus on finding innovative solutions that fit the diverse needs of consumers, businesses, and a growing economy alike.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

HONORING OUR MEN AND WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

SERGEANT SEAN RENFRO, TROOPER TAYLOR THYFAULT, JAIMIE JURSEVICS, AND OFFICER GARRETT SWASEY

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I rise today to honor our men and women in law enforcement. Across the United States this year, 118 law enforcement officers have paid the ultimate sacrifice.

In Colorado, we honor our four fallen officers: Sergeant Sean Renfro with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, whose care and concern for others did not end when he was off duty; Trooper Taylor Thyfault with the Colorado State Patrol, an Army veteran and a cadet training to become a trooper and due to his bravery was honored as a trooper before being laid to rest; Jaimie Jursevics with the Colorado State Patrol, a new mom and the victim of the careless actions of another; and Officer Garrett Swasey with the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs Police Department, our most recent loss, as he responded to the senseless attack in Colorado Springs.

Each of their legacies reflects an extraordinary Colorado spirit, each a cherished member of their community, leaving behind loved ones as they

worked to uphold the law and care for those around them. These heroes risked their lives, and they showed the highest courage. And as we prepare our hearts and our homes for the holiday season, I hope we can all take a few moments to express our sincere gratitude for their service and protection. In the best of times, patrolling the roadways, being present in our neighborhoods, and maintaining order can be a difficult and dangerous duty. I am proud of the work the men and women who make up each law enforcement office in Colorado carry out each and every day. On watch in precincts, correctional facilities, and along our highways, they diligently fight to safeguard our State.

Colorado families, including mine, from the Eastern Plains to the Western Slope remain safe in large part because of the work and valor of our law enforcement personnel. As the guardians of our communities, they prepare to respond to things that most of society simply hope will never happen to them. Lt. Col. Dave Grossman wrote that American law enforcement is the loyal and brave sheepdog, always standing watch for the wolf that lurks in the dark.

With the recent events at home and abroad, we are reminded of the threats that are hiding in the shadows and the dangers that police officers confront each and every day. Yet they remain steadfast in their commitment to stand against evil.

I am personally grateful for the sacrifices they make and the commitment they demonstrate to protect our State and our country. Their courage and selfless service were exemplified in the recent tragedy in Colorado Springs. As first responders, they are the first to encounter the fear, the calls for help, and the danger, but in that fear and danger, they provide hope and safety. Driven by courage and the desire to serve, they fulfill a great need throughout our communities. They carry these values as they begin their watch each and every day when they leave their family to protect mine and every other American. Their badge identifies them as a source of help in vulnerable times, and behind each badge of police officers, sheriff deputies, correctional officers, and patrolmen and patrolwomen is a heart that extends beyond its own bounds.

Calling Colorado home rings truer when you also have the honor to safeguard it. I am thankful for their service and thankful to the families for their continued sacrifice. They are constantly in my family's thoughts and prayers, and we wish them each a safe and happy holiday.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

TAX BREAK EQUALITY

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, today is a great day to be an oil company in America. Not since August 27, 1859, when Edwin Drake drilled that first oil well in Titusville, PA, has there been a day as good for the oil industry in our country as today.

Why is today a great day for Big Oil? Well, I will tell you. Last night at 2 a.m., the Republican leadership released its spending bill. Tucked into that bill on page 1,865 is a provision that would massively reshape our Nation's energy policy. Tucked into that bill is language that would roll back longstanding U.S. law and allow the oil industry to sell American crude oil overseas for the first time in more than 40 years.

If this becomes law, it means potentially $175 billion in new revenue for the oil industry over the next decade, up to $500 billion in new revenues for the oil industry over the next 20 years. That is why this provision is in there. It is corporate welfare for the most profitable industry in the history of the world, the oil industry.

What does this mean for the American people? Lifting the ban on the exportation of American oil so it goes overseas rather than staying here in America. It will be a disaster for our economy, for our climate, for our national security, and for our consumers. Do you remember the old mantra of the Republican Party, ''Drill here, drill now, pay less''? Now they have changed it. Their new mantra is ''Drill here, export there, pay more.''

The oil industry push to export American oil isn't about helping consumers at the pump; it is about pumping up Big Oil's profits. When has the oil industry ever pushed for policies that would drive down prices and their profits? These are for-profit corporations, not charitable institutions. They are looking to make lots of new money off of selling oil around the world but not here in the United States.

If we allow this to happen, it will be a disaster for consumers in many regions of the country—for example, the Northeast. The Department of Energy has said that losing our refineries on the east coast, which could easily happen because of this new law, will lead to ''higher prices,'' ''higher price volatility,'' and the potential for ''temporary [supply] disruptions'' in our region.

Right now consumers across America in 2015 are saving $700 because gasoline prices are so low and $500 on home heating oil because prices are so low. That is a stimulus, almost like a tax break in the pockets of working-class and poor Americans all across our country.

Exports would wipe out this economic stimulus for average Americans. It would begin to lead to the higher prices that the oil industry wants, both on the global market and here in the United States of America. And the new revenue the oil industry collects from exports is not magically created out of thin air; it will be transferred from American consumers and our domestic refiners into the pockets of the Big Oil companies in our country. This could amount to one of the largest single energy taxes in the history of the world.

Remember, Saudi Arabia and their OPEC allies control the global oil trade. They control the price that is paid on the global market, and recently OPEC suggested oil prices may rise again next year, putting in jeopardy the economic benefits that low gasoline prices and the low home-heating oil prices have provided for average Americans.

Second, national security. Importing our oil while we export our young men and women abroad—that is what we have right now. We are importing oil from Saudi Arabia, from Nigeria, from Algeria, from Kuwait, and from Iraq. That is what happens every day. That is a big reason we have so many young men and women over in the Middle East protecting those cargo ships of oil coming into our country. We still import 5 million barrels of oil a day. China and the United States are the largest importers.

We don't have oil to export. We are still importing 25 percent of our oil into our country right now, and we are importing it from countries we should not be importing that oil from. If we have a chance to back out that oil, to tell those countries we don't need their oil any more than we need their sand, we are doing a big favor for our young men and women in uniform. We are allowing ourselves to step back and be more dispassionate in the decisions we make about our relationships with all of those countries.

What this decision says is we are going to export our own oil even as we continue to import oil from the Middle East. This will only heighten our dependence upon oil coming in from countries that we should not be importing oil from if we have a chance to back it out. That is what is wrong with this decision at its heart—oil. It is not like a widget. It is not like a computer chip. You don't fight wars over that. You fight wars over oil. That is why ISIS targets the part of Syria that it does. That is why the part of Saudi Arabia that has the oil is the one now being jeopardized by rebels. That is why Libya is so valuable and being fought over—oil, oil, oil—and the revenues that they produce in order to then create that instability, create that jihadism that we are dealing with. We should be backing out all the oil we are importing from that region if we have a chance to do so, and we do, but not after this bill passes. We are going to be in a situation where we basically are saying we are going to be permanently dependent upon that oil being imported from that region.

I listened last night to all the Republican candidates for President debating in Las Vegas about national security. Well, that is what this is all about—this is all about that oil. This is all about that oil revenue that goes into the pockets of people who should not

have our money, who spend it in ways we don't feel good about.

In my opinion, this decision will dramatically weaken our national security position, weaken our ability to be stronger in the Middle East because we are less dependent upon pretty much the only product they make—oil—and would be able to deal with the national security issues in a much better way, being much more clear-eyed, dispassionate, and protective of American interests and the interests of those we are allied with over the world.

Third, this is a tale of two tax breaks. One tax break is for Big Oil. They get $7 to $8 billion a year in tax breaks, and it is permanent—permanent. What happened in this bill is that the $7 to $8 billion for tax breaks for wind and solar are now going to be phased out. We hear constantly from Republicans out here on the floor that they believe in ''all of the above.'' Well, you can't have ''all of the above'' competing fairly if one industry—the oil industry—gets their $7 to $8 billion in tax breaks every year, and wind and solar—the technologies of the 21st century—are going to have their tax breaks phased out over the next 4 to 5 years. That is in this bill.

So the oil industry gets $500 billion in new revenues over the next 20 years, $140 billion worth of tax breaks over the next 20 years, and wind and solar watch their tax breaks evaporate over the next 4 to 5 years. Is that a good deal for America, for the climate, for our job creation in America with jobs that are here in America? That is not a good deal. By the way, Big Oil wants their tax breaks so they can export the oil out of our country. Is that a good deal? It absolutely is not.

For the offshore wind industry, which has yet to be born, we need the tax breaks to incentivize companies—wind companies from around the world—to come to the Northeast, to come to this incredible place which has been called the Saudi Arabia of wind. Those tax breaks are going to phase out before an industry is even born—the offshore wind industry. Does that make any sense? If we are going to give tax breaks to oil, we should give tax breaks to the offshore wind industry. We should give tax breaks to all these renewable industries on a predictable basis for years to come. That is not happening in this bill. It is just the opposite.

For national security, for equality, in terms of all energy resources but especially those nonpolluting energy resources, there should be equality, but there is not. There is not. We could have an America with 40 percent of all electricity being wind and solar by the year 2030, if we kept the same tax breaks between now and 2030—40 percent. The 7 percent we would add in from hydropower and then the power that comes from nuclear power in our country, over 60 to 65 percent of all electricity in America would be noncarbon polluting by the year 2030, but the tax breaks for wind and solar are going away in 4 to 5 years. Does that make any sense? No, not at all. That is what this bill does, and that is why this bill has that provision that was inserted late at night a couple of nights ago that is on page 1,865 in this omnibus bill.

The Koch brothers wrote a letter to all Republicans a couple of days ago. They said: Lift the ban on exportation of oil out of our country, even as we still import from the Middle East, and reduce and kill solar and wind tax breaks.

Good. We understand the agenda. It is in this bill, and it is not good for America. It is not who we are. It is not this innovation economy which we know is going to have the capacity, like we did with cell phones, to very briefly in history just move from this kind of a phone in 1996, when it never really existed in people's pockets anywhere on the planet, to this kind of phone and now 600 million people in Africa have it today. We did that—America. We can do the same thing with renewable energy, but we need to ensure that those tax breaks are equal to oil's, for oil is the technology of the 19th century, the oil of the 20th century. We have to have a vision of what is possible here in the 21st century. This bill does not include that.

That is why it is being added to a must-pass bill. It could not pass if it was not in a must-pass bill with unrelated issues, unrelated appropriations. They needed it to carry it through because they could not do it standing alone down here on the floor of the Senate.

So whether it be the impact on our economy, which is going to drive prices higher, or whether it be on our national security, it is going to increase our dependence upon imports from the Middle East. Whether it be the impact on consumers, where they are going to be paying higher prices, or whether it be the environment, where, believe it or not, by the year 2025 this is going to lead to upward of 2 to 3 million new barrels of oil per day being exported out of our country—that is the equivalent of building 150 coal-burning plants in our country and sending those emissions up into the sky.

Having a bill pass on the floor of the Senate in the same week that the whole world came together in Paris and signed an agreement saying we were going to have less greenhouse gases going up into the atmosphere and that the United States was going to be the leader—we cannot tell the rest of the world to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels while we announce in the next week we are going to change our policy and start drilling for 2 to 3 million new barrels just to export it out of our country and phase out the tax breaks for wind and solar as we tell the rest of the world they should be moving to wind and solar. That does not work. You cannot preach temperance from a bar stool. You cannot preach temperance from an oil rig and tell other countries to move to renewables. It just doesn't work that way. It doesn't work that way. They might nod. They might say: Oh, don't worry. We are still going to honor our commitments. But you know behind your back as a country they are just going to be saying: I see what they are doing. We will start doing the same stuff. We will build a few more coal-burning ones. We will burn more fossil fuels over here. If they are not sincere, why should we be sincere? If they can preach temperance on Sunday and then on Wednesday say ''bingo'' in the church hall, we can do the same thing.

So I am just afraid that on every one of these lines this bill fails: environment, national security, consumers, and the economy. It is bad for America. It is bad policy. We should feel better about our capacity to innovate.

I am especially concerned about wind. I am especially concerned about offshore wind. There is a reason we call ourselves the Saudi Arabia of wind. It is because we have the potential to back out the oil from Saudi Arabia. That is why. That is our metaphor because we know how much oil they have and how they have controlled the price of oil in the world every single day since 40 years ago, when they decided to have their first oil embargo. That is when we put this law on the books that we would never export our oil again. We would keep it here.

It is 40 years later. The Middle East is in chaos. It is hard for anyone to even describe what the future for the Middle East is going to be. How many of these leaders are actually even going to be in place in 5 years? No one in the world knows, but we do have one thing. We have our own domestic energy source, wind—natural gas, wind, and solar. We should keep it here to protect ourselves. It will make us a better partner with the rest of the world. If we are totally strong, we can project our power diplomatically, economically much better than we are.

So for me this is a historic day. I understand what Big Oil wants to do. I understand what the Republicans want to do. Our leader HARRY REID did his absolute best to get the best deal he could for the renewable energy sources that we have, to stand up as long as he could these tax breaks. He did a good job, but the pressure was on him from the Republicans. Unfortunately, in this agreement, the wind and solar tax breaks will expire. Wind tax breaks expire very soon.

From my perspective, we should have this debate out here soon. We should have a debate about the Middle East. We should have a debate about oil, about our national security, about our role in the future. It is time for us to have the big debates out here, the big debates in prime time, with everyone participating and everyone understanding that the rest of this century is going to be about the United States over in the Middle East. Whether we

like it or not, from the day we invaded Iraq, that was our destiny. So let's have those big debates. In the center of that has to be oil and the revenues that are fueling so much of what is happening over there.

I thank the Presiding Officer for giving me the opportunity to speak today.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

OIL AND GAS EXPORTS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I couldn't help overhearing my friend from Massachusetts talking about something really good that is going to happen; that is, we are going to lift the caps off our exports on oil and gas.

I just can't understand why we ever had caps on exports. It seems like this administration is perfectly willing not just to approve of but to encourage countries like Iran and Russia to export their oil and help them and yet preclude us from doing the same thing. Right now one of the problems we have with Russia is they have a hand up on us because there are so many countries over there dependent on them for their ability to have energy. It is just pretty amazing that is going on.

So I am really glad. Hopefully, this will go through. I know in my State of Oklahoma it has cost literally hundreds of jobs in just three companies because they could no longer afford to drill here.

That is a big issue. I remember I was invited to Lithuania back when the President of Lithuania wanted to dedicate and open their first terminal so that they would be able to import gas and oil, some of that being from us. Everyone there was so joyous of the fact that they were not going to have to rely on Russia any longer, that they could rely more on us. We do have friends out there whom we want to be able to take care of.

PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE AGREEMENT

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, this past weekend, the officials from the administration traveled 3,800 miles to Paris to attend the international climate negotiations in Paris. As a reminder, this is a program that has been going on now for 21 years. The ones who started this whole idea that the world is coming to an end because of global warming came from the United Nations.

I have gone to several of these meetings. I didn't go to this one because even John Kerry, our Secretary of State, said publicly that there is not going to be anything binding. If there is nothing binding, then why are they even there? In fact, it was interesting because when he made that statement, President Hollande of France was outraged. He said: He must have been confused when he said that. But that changed the whole thing. It was on November 11 that he made that statement.

Anyway, they went ahead and they had their 21st annual conference. I remember one of them I went to. I ran into a friend of mine from a West African country.

I said: Luke, what are you doing here? Why are you over here? You don't believe all this stuff, do you, on global warming?

He said: No, but we stand to be able to bring back literally billions of dollars to Benin, West Africa. Besides that, this is the biggest party of the year.

The worst thing they said happened at the South America meeting 3 years ago was they ran out of caviar. Anyway, we are paying for all that stuff. When they went over and said that wonderful things were going to happen in Paris, we knew it wasn't going to happen.

The COP21 conference has nothing do with saving the environment. With no means of enforcement and no guarantee of funding as developed countries had hoped, the deal will not reduce emissions and it will have no impact on global temperatures.

When they say they had this historic meeting, everyone was scratching their heads wondering: What happened? Did they win anything at all?

James Hansen is the scientist who is credited with being the father of global warming. I can remember when I got involved with the issue when they came back from Kyoto and wanted to ratify a treaty, and that was at the turn of the century, 1998. James Hansen has been working on global warming—he is a NASA scientist—for years. It goes all the way back to the eighties. He characterized what happened in an interview he had with the British newspaper the Guardian. He said the agreement is a fraud. Here is the guy who is the father of global warming, and he said it is a fraud and it doesn't accomplish anything. This is likely because the only guaranteed outcome from the Paris agreement is continued growth in emissions.

According to a study from the MIT Joint Program on the Science and Policy of Global Change, global emissions will increase by 63 percent through—that is assuming that everyone complies with their commitments, which obviously they will not and they can't—global emissions will increase by 63 percent through 2050 compared to the year 2010. By the end of this century, the MIT study projects, temperatures—if they were successful—would only be reduced by 0.2 degrees Celsius.

Even the 26 to 28 percent greenhouse gas emission reductions which President Obama committed to on this agreement is really a fraud. There is an environmentalist witness who came before our committee. He was the Sierra Club's former general counsel, and his name is David Bookbinder. He testified before the Senate Environment and Public Works committee—the one that I chair—this year saying that the President's power plan does not add up to the 26 to 28 percent target; it is totally unattainable.

When asked to explain the targets in corresponding regulatory actions to Congress, the key administration officials refused to do that.

In fact, something happened. It may be the first time this has happened. People wonder how the unelected bureaucracies go off and do things that are not in keeping with the majority of the American people, and we see this all the time. To preclude that from happening, every bureaucracy has a committee in the Senate and in the House that is supposed to be watching what they are doing and they are supposed to be overseeing. They have jurisdiction, just like my committee has jurisdiction over the EPA. I tried to get them to come in and tell us when it was announced by President Obama that they were going to propose the 26 to 28 percent reduction in greenhouse gases by 2025, and they refused to testify.

I would ask the Chair, in the years you have been here, have you ever seen a bureaucracy refuse to come before the committee that has the jurisdiction? They did. We are the authority in Congress to approve such—it has not only not pledged the money that has been committed as our price to pay, we haven't actually appropriated any money at all.

So while proclaimed as historic, this agreement did little to overcome the longstanding obstacle that has plagued international climate agreements from the start where responsibility is unequally divided between the developed and the developing world.

I can remember back in about 1999, I guess it was, around the Kyoto time, we had a vote here, and I was involved in that vote. It was called the Chuck Hagel and Bob Byrd vote. It said that if you come back from any of these places where you are putting this together with a treaty—whether it is Kyoto or another treaty—we will not vote to ratify a treaty that either is bad for the economy of America or doesn't treat China and the developing countries the same as it treats us. That passed 95 to 0. So when they go over and come back, it is dead on arrival. The thing is, everyone knows it except for the 192 countries that were over there. So we can't figure out why they would call this a historic event.

While the administration is pushing forward with economically disastrous climate regulations before the end of his Presidency, China gets to continue business as usual, including emissions growth through 2030—each year. That is about 15 years of increase. They

came back saying: Well, we have to increase our CO_2 emissions for 15 more years.

Yesterday morning, just 3 days after India signed off on the final Paris agreement, the Guardian—that is the big newspaper in London—reported that India is targeting to more than double its output of 1.5 billion tons through 2020 because ''coal provides the cheapest energy for rapid industrialization that would lift millions out of poverty.''

At the historic meeting they had, the top official from India's Coal Ministry said:

Our dependence on coal will continue. There are no other alternatives available.

India is not alone; there are numerous other countries that will continue to do that.

Even though the temperature level set is misleading, a 1.5-degree cap on global temperature increase is no more realistic or technologically feasible than the 2 degrees they used before this.

The fine print remains the same. For any agreement to have legal significance within the United States, it has to be ratified by the Senate. People in other countries don't know that. They think someone, particularly a very strong President like President Obama—that he can just pretty much mandate anything he wants. It doesn't work that way in the United States.

In what was literally the final hour—this is very interesting—they had to delay the announcement of their agreement by 2 hours because they wanted to make one change in the agreement. They had language that said ''developed country''—that is us, the United States—''parties shall continue taking the lead by undertaking economy-wide. . . .'' and then explained how to do it. They wanted to replace the ''shall'' with ''should'' because they discovered in their discussions that if they left ''shall'' in there, it would have to come to the U.S. Senate for ratification, and they would all be embarrassed because we would know what the results of that would be.

Missing from the administration's top 21 celebratory speeches is the fact that neither the American people nor the U.S. Senate supports the international agreement and that the centerpiece regulatory commitment—the so-called Clean Power Plan—faces significant legal obstacles in the Congress—in fact, not just obstacles, but it has already been voted on. There is a CRA—that is the Congressional Review Act—and the Congressional Review Act is saying that we are going to reject the Clean Power Plan, and it passed with an overwhelming majority of Democrats and Republicans in the House. What they agreed on has already been rejected.

Missing from almost all of the Paris agreement coverage before and after is that the basis for this agreement is not scientific but political. Ninety percent of the scientists do not believe the world is coming to an end because of global warming, as environmental NGOs and the U.S. administration officials claim.

A Wall Street Journal op-ed examined what constituted this misrepresentation of 97 percent. We always hear that 97 percent of the scientists say that this is true; it must be true. Anytime you have something that is unpopular, if you keep saying over and over again that the science is settled, a lot of people out there believes it is. But when they did the analysis of the 97 percent consensus and explained it, it was simply based on fractions of respondents. For example, in a commonly cited 2009 survey of over 3,100 respondents, only 79 were counted because they claimed their expertise was solely climate-related.

Well, the 97 percent consensus was reviewed just a few weeks ago by one of the news stations in their poll——

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 1 more minute.

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

Mr. INHOFE. The poll found that 97 percent of Americans don't care about global warming when stacked against issues such as terrorism, immigration, health care, and the economy. I remember when it used to be the No. 1 concern of Americans, and following the same March Gallup poll over the years, it has gone from No. 1 or No. 2 over that period of time to No. 15—dead last. They have a lot of work to do, and it is not going to work.

Before I yield the floor, let me thank my friend from Connecticut for all of his help last night. We worked late, and we did the right thing. I appreciate that very much.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am pleased and honored to follow my colleague from Oklahoma, and I extend my thanks to him for his cooperation on the legislation we did last night by unanimous consent, which I was pleased to support eventually and work with him to reach a resolution on.

(The further remarks of Mr. BLUMENTHAL are printed in today's RECORD during consideration of S. Res. 310.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

RECOGNIZING THE PEOPLE OF CAMPBELL COUNTY, WYOMING

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I recently traveled to my hometown of Gillette, WY. I am usually in Wyoming most weekends, but I get to my hometown only about every other month because I have a huge State to cover. I happened to get there when the senior citizens were having their annual crafts gala. As I wandered through, looking at all of the marvelous things they had done, I was shown a Christmas ornament specifically designed for our county. I was asked if I could take it and a message to our President. Of course I agreed, and today I want to share that message and that ornament with my fellow Senators.

That is what it looks like on the tree.

The letter says:

Dear Mr. President,

We seniors of Gillette, Campbell County, Wyoming, want to send you this Christmas ornament that reflects the support of many programs in our community. Without the coal and oil industries, Campbell County would not have such a wonderful school system or the outstanding programs for seniors. The Campbell County Senior Center provides hot lunches for seniors Monday through Friday and serves about 100 (or more) every day. It also offers numerous other activities such as ceramics, painting, exercise classes, social activities, computer classes, day trips to local points of interest, and assistance in completing forms for government programs. We feel the Campbell County Senior Center is the Cadillac of all senior centers.

The coal and oil industries not only support Campbell County but they support the whole State of Wyoming. Much of the tax dollars generated by the coal and oil industries are distributed throughout Wyoming. When your administration tries so hard to close down these industries, it not only affects the thousands of families in Campbell County but it affects the whole state. Although we realize there are valid concerns about global warming and environmental issues in our country, we want to testify that the coal and oil industries in our county are environmentally conscience and they work hard to beautify the land here.

The people of Wyoming not only receive but they also give freely. If there is anyone in need here, the people step forward and give their time, talents, and resources. If every state in this country would give as Wyoming does, there wouldn't be any hunger or homelessness.

We have enclosed some photos to show you a few of the programs offered to children, seniors, and families in Campbell County. We ask that you please take the time to look at them. We would also like to invite you to visit Campbell County to see the wonderful community we have. Visit our open-pit coal mines and our oil industry along with the various forms of wildlife that share this land.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to the concerned seniors of Gillette, Wyoming.

May God Bless You and Your Family!

The letter is dated November 17, 2015. At the end of the letter is a list of a number of the seniors who signed the letter. I ask unanimous consent that their names be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Thomas W. Procket, Sheryl Matthews, Nancy Pauluson, Rollie G. Banks, Zaigie Setterling, Marlene Jones, Debbie S. Schofield, Jeff Ketterling, Buede Jones, James Osborne, Camel A. Lipne, Naima Appel, Jim & Eseelle Hanson, Marian Neugebauer, Colleen Neese, Joann Gilliertson, Betty Lou Anderson, Norm Bennett, Marie Mortellaro, John P. McClellam, Mary Jo Younglund, Bradley Shane Anderson, Marie Tarno, Margret Chase, Barbara Rognnae, Laura Kerry, Bernie A. Darson, Bonnie Z. Namor, June Keeney, Kerolyn S. Jones, Allie Bratton.

Janel Laubach, I C. Hecht, Rhyllis Rae Alldekoven, Cathy Raney, Barbara

Leastmen, Patsy K. Drume, Susan Burke, Fred C. Smiley, Betty Beesley, Mary Ann Bourne, Renee Davis, Mary Frances Reest, Judy G. Deters, Andrew W. Deters, Glorienera H. Ceven, Lucille Gaungen, Belle Demple, Maria Case, Raymond Case, Bill & Elaine Sharpe, Rose & Fred Schave, Lloyd Derrick, J.W. Keeflang, Ruth Steffen, Gladys Pridgeon, John A. Hart, Fays Coleman.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I have taken a closer look at the ornament that they gave me to give to the President. We are not only the energy capital of Wyoming, but we are also the energy capital of the Nation. We produce 40 percent of the Nation's coal, and the reason we produce 40 percent of the Nation's coal is that this coal is cleaner than anywhere else. Powder River Basin coal is lower in sulfur and other chemicals, and they have even found ways to improve the way it operates. If some of the money from the Department of Energy were used as an incentive for cleaning up coal, it could be done much better.

Our university, again using money from the energy business, is also working on a few projects. One of them is to use solar power to separate hydrogen out of water and burn the hydrogen with coal to make it burn better and cleaner.

We have five powerplants in my county, and we love to talk people into coming to Campbell County. We are successful at getting senior staffers, from both Republican and Democratic offices, to come each year to take a look at what it is like in that part of the country. The biggest comment that all of them make as they leave is that they had no idea that it could be that clean. They thought the coal mines would be dirty.

I ran into that when I went to the first global warming conference in Japan. I went there early, as the negotiations were starting, and I guess I was one of the first people to show up in a suit, so people were leaping over tables and everything to interview me. I usually don't do that. I ask what their circulation is in Wyoming, and of course in Japan it was zero, so I didn't do any interviews. But one of the big papers in Tokyo was so interested that I wouldn't do an interview that they sent a reporter to Wyoming. They called first and asked if it would be OK if he came and traveled with me for a day. I said that it would be fine as long as he also visited a coal mine and powerplant.

He came and traveled with me, and he had no idea of the distances that we have between the few people that we have in Wyoming. We are the least populated State in the Nation. He also followed through on visiting the coal mine and powerplant. Again, he had the same comment. He couldn't believe it could be done so cleanly and so well.

In the early days of the coal mines coming in, people said they would never able to reclaim that land because we have such low moisture in Wyoming. We are actually considered high desert. In fact, the eastern part of that State has the most desert. God didn't put anything above the ground. He put it all under the ground, and part of it is coal under 80 feet of dirt, which is considered nothing in the coal mining business. So we have been able to mine the coal with this open pit and to reclaim it.

Now it is fun to take people out to see one of these mines because when you get to it, they say: Don't let them tear up that part over there. We say: That is where the mine used to be. This is where it is going to be. They then say: Oh, go ahead and tear that up because it looks better after they put everything back in its place.

It could be done better yet, but there are some requirements in the reclamation that it has to be put back the way that it was, and that puts some constraints on it. Nobody would move millions of tons of dirt on a farm or ranch and put it back exactly the way it was, down to where the rocks are placed.

We have a product that is used nationally and that the Chinese would like to use. Did you know that during the Olympic games in China they had to fire out rockets that would go to a fairly high altitude and then spread out some chemicals that would clean the air so that it would look nice on television? They are extremely interested in getting Campbell County coal shipped to them so they can burn that in their powerplants and clean their air.

It is the least expensive form of energy there is, and I am talking about just one of the forms of energy. We also have oil, which results in natural gas and coalbed methane. This little symbol is a uranium symbol. We also produce most of the Nation's uranium in our county. That could be used more extensively to provide clean power and as a source for agriculture as well, including raising bison.

So I wanted to share this Christmas ornament with all of my colleagues and echo what the seniors have said and suggest that America is the most innovative country in the world and if we have a problem, we can solve it. A little bit of incentive can go a long way. We are an inventive country. A little bit of incentive has gone a long way a lot of times.

We actually have had some private companies that are talking about restocking the space station. We have the plane that was powered by bicycle pedals that crossed the English Channel. If we can do those sorts of things, there is no limit to what can be done.

We have to quit discouraging inventiveness and encourage the use of the resources we have.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for such time as I consume, not to exceed 30 minutes.

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

OMNIBUS SPENDING BILL

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I rise to address the 2,000-page, trillion-dollar-plus, year-end omnibus spending bill—drafted behind closed doors, away from public view, with only a limited number of people involved. Members of the Senate and Members of the House were unaware of what deals were being cut and what decisions were being made. I believe it contains provisions that will cause material harm to American workers—I just do—and to matters involving this legislation that I have worked on for years. I am very disappointed. Actually, I am deeply disappointed.

This bill contains dramatic changes to Federal immigration law that would increase, by as much as four-fold, the number of low-wage foreign workers provided to employers under the controversial H–2B visa program. It has been a matter of controversy for a number of years. It has been added to this bill without hearings and without an open process in the Senate. These foreign workers are brought in exclusively to fill blue-collar, low-wage, nonfarm jobs—not agricultural jobs—in hotels and in restaurants and on construction sites, in amusement parks, landscaping, truck driving, and in many other occupations—jobs being sought by millions of Americans around this country. Millions are taking those jobs every day.

When we go into hotels and restaurants, are not Americans doing those jobs? H–2B workers are supposed to be here to fill seasonal jobs that Americans allegedly ''won't do.'' That is what they say—those who want more, cheaper labor.

Even those they are supposed to be temporary positions, foreign H–2B workers are allowed to bring their spouses and their children with them—which, of course, results in costs being incurred by local communities, hospitals, and schools across the country. Although the alien's spouse and children are not supposed to work in the United States, I don't think anyone is under the illusion that this administration has any intention—or previous ones, for that matter—to do anything to stop them from working if they want to, nor will they be deported if they violate the terms of their employment, nor will they be removed if they overstay the visa they have been given.

Hotels have good jobs. Construction has good jobs. As to landscaping, there is a group that does my lawn in Alabama. Three African-American men come out and work on our lawn in a fairly short period of time, using good equipment. The head person is in his 40s and had 20 years in the Army. What do people mean that Americans won't do this work?

At a time of record immigration, we do not appreciate the scope of it. We already have the highest number of foreign-born individuals in American history. We are not against immigration. Immigration is a positive thing—properly conducted. Good people come into

America. But we are at record levels both in total numbers and, in a few years, the highest percentage of foreign-born in America will be reached, and it will continue thereafter. So is it any wonder that 83 percent of the electorate wants immigration either frozen or reduced?

The Republican-led Congress is about to deliver the President a fourfold increase in one of the most controversial foreign worker programs we have. In fact, it is a much larger version of a proposal that was contained in the Gang of 8 comprehensive immigration bill that was rejected by the American people and the House of Representatives just 2 years ago. The result is higher unemployment and lower wages for Americans. The free market controls—more labor, lower wage; more labor, less job opportunity. It is indisputable.

The Economic Policy Institute has noted: ''Wages were stagnant or declining for workers in all of the top 15 H–2B occupations between 2004 and 2014,'' and ''unemployment rates increased in all but one of the top 15 H–2B occupations between 2004 and 2014, and all 15 occupations averaged a very high unemployment rate . . . Flat and declining wages, coupled with such high unemployment rates over such a long period of time, suggests a loose labor market and an over-supply of workers rather than an under supply.''

I think that is a fact. Our free market friends ought to understand that.

It is worth noting that the civilian labor force participation rate is currently at around 62.5 percent, a low that we have not seen in nearly four decades. Labor participation rate means the percentage of workers in the working ages that actually have a job. It is the lowest rate we have had in four decades.

Nevertheless, despite this low labor force participation rate, this provision in the omnibus bill would exempt from the statutory limit, which is now 66,000 H–2B workers a year—any worker who was present in the United States during the three previous years. Thus, instead of 66,000 foreign workers, the bill would allow up to 264,000 foreign workers to be present in the United States on H–2B visas. That is over a quarter of a million low-wage, low-skilled workers brought in to occupy blue-collar jobs. That may be good for certain businesses that now have a large number of workers, because they don't have to raise wages and change working conditions and raise benefits to attract and keep workers. They can just bring in people from abroad who are thankful to get any good cash-income job at lower wages.

This is bad for struggling American workers trying to get by and take care of their families. It is particularly bad, as economist after economist has shown, for minorities, including African Americans and Hispanics, and recent immigrants who are here lawfully looking to try to get a little better wage with a little better retirement and health care benefits. This is going to help them? Give me a break.

On top of this provision, this omnibus bill approves, without any conditions—the President's request for increased refugee admissions, allowing him to bring in as many refugees as he wants. He can do that. It is hard to believe, but he is allowed to do so. He simply has to notify Congress of how many he intends to admit. He can bring them from anywhere he wants and allow them access to unlimited welfare and entitlements at the taxpayers' expense, which is not scored as a cost.

At the Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest that I chair, we had an official from Health and Human Services who testified that 75 percent of the refugees are self-sustaining within 180 days. But my staff helped me to ask the follow-up question. What we found was that means Health and Human Services is no longer giving them refugee money, but that other kinds of welfare don't count against them. But 93 percent, we know, of immigrants from the Middle East between 2009 and 2013 are on food stamps, and 73 percent are on Medicaid or health care programs. And they may be there the rest of their lives.

This is not being scored. This is why a country that is smart seeks to bring in people who have the greatest chance of being successful.

Sure, some will do well, and many are wonderful people, and we have a tradition of that. I am just saying that we have a President with unlimited powers who has an agenda, and he is passing on the costs that are going to be to the detriment of working Americans for decades to come.

So the risks associated with the refugee admissions program are significant.

With respect to Syria, FBI Director James Comey repeatedly said that we simply do not have the ability to vet refugees from Syria. Testifying before the House Committee on Homeland Security in October, he said:

> We can only query against that which we have collected. So if someone has never made a ripple in the pond in Syria in a way that would get their identity or their interests reflected in our database, we can query our database until the cows come home, but we are not going to. There will be nothing to show up because we have no record on that person.

Well, that is absolutely correct. Of course, that is correct. But they tried to tell us in Committee that we are going to do biometric checks. So I proceeded to ask repeatedly, and finally, after the most difficult time, they acknowledged they have no database in Syria to check biometrics against. It is not like the United States: If you are caught by the police, they take your fingerprints, and they can tell whether you were convicted in Maine, Alabama, or California. It is in the computer system. They don't have that in Syria. So that was a misrepresentation, an attempt to mislead and create false confidence in the American people that we have an ability to vet people coming here from Syria—an ability we don't have. The FBI Director honestly and directly stated that.

Any claims made by others that refugees in the United States never engage in acts of terrorism are demonstrably false. Just a few weeks ago, I identified a list of at least 12 individuals who were admitted to the United States as refugees, but who have been implicated in terrorism in the last year alone.

We found out there may be more, and probably they are under investigation right now. In fact, the FBI has said there is a terrorism investigation in every single State in America. These terrorists, for example, are from Somalia, Bosnia, Kenya and Uzbekistan. They came in different stages in their lives. Some were admitted as children, others as adults. Yet they all turn their backs on this country after being welcomed here as refugees.

This is not made up. It is a real problem. The American people want some action. They would like to see Congress and this Administration respond, especially, and they are rightly angered and upset with their elected representatives and their President for not taking sufficient action.

I, along with my colleague Senator SHELBY and others in the House, asked for inclusion of specific language in this omnibus bill that would protect the interests of the American people, that would reassert the constitutional role of Congress in establishing a uniform system of immigration, that would require the identification of offsetting cuts in Federal spending to pay for the refugee admission program. But none of that was included in the omnibus bill.

I doubt they ever spent a minute looking at a letter from two Senators. As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest, I sent appropriators a list of several dozen provisions for inclusion in our funding bills to improve immigration enforcement and to block Presidential overreach and lawlessness, including among other things, provisions to defund sanctuary cities.

Why should we be funding and providing Federal law enforcement money to cities that won't cooperate with the Federal Government in its most basic responsibility of respect and comity between these various Federal and State agencies. It goes on every day. But we are being blocked in sanctuary city after sanctuary city.

Also, I asked the appropriators to prevent visas from being issued to nationals of countries that refuse to take back their criminals. This is important. My former colleague Senator Specter offered a bill for a number of things. It would bar admission for certain visas for nationals of countries that won't take back their people who have been in the United States. It is a fundamental principle of immigration

law worldwide that if you admit a person from a foreign country, when their visa is up, they go home. Their visa is up if they commit a crime, and they are to be sent back home; they are to be deported.

But country after country is refusing to take back their convicted criminals. I guess they figure: ''Why don't you keep our criminals for us?'' But that is not what the law is, and we are stuck with them in jails. We have to pay for their housing. After 6 months, absent certain circumstances, the Supreme Court says they generally have to be released. It's possible that if an alien files a habeas petition that the government will have to go to court and have hearing with a judge. This is driving up costs, using incredible amounts of hours. We shouldn't tolerate it one minute. There is no reason that this government shouldn't act—which the law will now allow and directly says they should do—to refuse to issue visas to a country that won't take back their criminals. They refuse to do it. There is additional legislation that would force that, and we could have done it in this bill. It should have bipartisan support.

I also asked for language in the bill to defund the unlawful, improper Executive amnesty. The President's actions are unlawful. We don't have to fund his unlawful activity. There is no duty on behalf of Congress to acquiesce and provide money to people to work in a big building in Crystal City to process millions of people in the country illegally for amnesty because the President now says: ''I am just going to let them stay.'' It has been blocked for the most part by a Federal court, but there is nothing in the bill to expressly defund it.

I asked for legislation to protect American workers against abuses in the H–1B program. This is where Southern California Edison had a program. They brought in 500 foreign workers from India in some sort of contract deal, had the American workers who had been at Edison doing computer work for years train the new workers, and then ended up terminating the Americans and replacing them with those from abroad. How can anyone say there was a shortage of workers? The same was done by Disney. Senator NELSON of Florida and I introduced legislation to fix that. I have introduced legislation with Senator CRUZ and supported legislation from Senator GRASSLEY to fix this program. None of that has been included in this bill. Why not?

I asked for an expansion of the 287(g) program that allows Federal law enforcement officials and officers to assist with enforcing our immigration law. This was a good program. It had been on the books. President Bush finally began to expand it. They train local law officers for weeks at a time, and they become extensions of Federal law enforcement officers to help identify and process people who are unlawfully in the country and who have been apprehended—a very good program that had good results. This Obama Administration has eviscerated it. It is less than half of what it was. It should have been expanded all over America, if you actually want the law enforced in this country. But if you don't want the law enforced in America, you kill a program like 287(g). Did the appropriators put in the omnibus bill anything to deal with that abuse? No.

We put in language that would prevent illegal aliens from receiving tax credits. This is unbelievable. The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration from President Obama's own Treasury Department has done an analysis of this and urged that it be fixed. People come to America illegally, with children somewhere around the world. They don't have a Social Security number. They use an ITIN identification document—which was intended for executives. They use that, and they file a tax return. They don't pay taxes because their income is low, but they get a tax credit based on children that are not even in the country.

How abusive is that? I understand this was rejected and was not in the omnibus bill because President Obama didn't want it. So he gets to dictate what is in a congressional bill that I think would have 90-percent support by the American people if they understood how significant it was? That is a different figure, but it is an abusive, improper tax credit.

So all of these provisions were rejected by the bill supporters.

But industry's request for more foreign workers was granted—unconditionally approved. So I asked about this provision. I heard it might be under consideration, so I asked about it. I said: ''The American people don't want a fourfold increase in immigration. I know there are some special interests pushing for this. I have heard that. Tell me it is not so.'' I was told it wasn't so. But last night—this morning at 2 a.m.—when the bill was produced, it was in there. So I am not happy about it, colleagues. I don't see how we can operate around here if we can't rely on representations.

Because of this bill, sanctuary cities will continue to get Federal funds, the Obama Administration can continue issuing visas to countries that refuse to repatriate their criminal aliens, and the President's Executive amnesty continues.

Meanwhile, the tax bill that will be moved with the omnibus bill makes permanent the Additional Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit, but it does nothing to block their future distribution to illegal aliens. A tax credit to a person who doesn't pay taxes is a check from the government. It is not a tax deduction; it is a direct payment. It scores as a welfare benefit. This means more illegal aliens will continue to get tax credits. It should be stopped.

As I feared, the ultimate effect—and I have expressed concern about this for some months now—is that this bill will fund the President's entire lawless immigration agenda. The only real bill we have to provide an opportunity to legislate and fix some of these things is a big omnibus bill. And what does it do? It funds essentially the President's entire agenda.

In fact, the omnibus spending bill will ensure that at least—for example, we have had discussions about the Middle East. People argue that we are not letting in enough people from the Middle East, and that we shouldn't talk about a pause. But under this bill it would ensure that at least 170,000 green cards—that means permanent residency with a guaranteed path to citizenship—and refugee and asylee approvals will be issued to migrants from Muslim countries just over the next 12 months. We are very generous about this, and it is very difficult to know if we are managing this properly, except that we know it is not being safely monitored, and the FBI Director has told us so.

This bill even fails to address substantial problems with the EB–5 investment visa program, problems that some of my colleagues have worked for months to resolve. The problems with this program have been documented by the Government Accountability Office and the Department of Homeland Security Inspector General, not the least of which are issues related to fraud and national security. We can fix that program. We need to do it. This would have been a good opportunity.

For years the American people have suffered under the lawless, dangerous, and wage-reducing immigration policies of this administration. They sent us here to Washington to protect their interests, to protect the people's interests, to ensure the defense of their families, and to advance the common good—the public interest. They did not send us here to bow down to the President's lawless immigration policies, nor to line the pockets of special interests in big business. That is not what we are here for.

Whom do we represent?

This bill explains why Republican and Democratic voters are in open rebellion, as former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich said recently—open rebellion. They elected people whom they believed were going to take action to protect their security, their jobs, and their wages. And what do they get? A bill that is worse than current law. It goes in the opposite direction—no wonder people are upset.

This legislation represents a further disenfranchisement of the American voter. What does a vote mean in this country? At a time when hundreds of thousands of criminal aliens are on our streets, criminal aliens are killing innocent Americans, numerous foreign-born individuals are implicated in terrorism, tens of thousands of aliens from Central America continue to stream across our southern border, countless Americans are being replaced

by foreign workers and forced to train their replacements, and millions of Americans are just struggling to get by, this Congress has chosen to make things worse.

We need to remember whom we represent and whom our duty is to. Our duty is to voters, the American people, not the interests of businesses, activist groups, and that kind of thing.

I appreciate the opportunity to share these remarks. I have been very firm about my statements here, but I am very unhappy about this bill. I do not believe this is the kind of legislation we should be moving. It was not moved in the normal process on the floor of the Senate, where amendments could be offered and a bill could be studied over months of time before final passage, perhaps. So with regret and a good deal of frustration, I urge my colleagues to oppose and reject this proposal.

I would also just mention one more thing, and then I will wrap up. Senator SHELBY and I wrote a letter to the Appropriations Committee on November 16, asking for Congress to assume its constitutional duty ensuring immigration laws are uniform by approving the number of refugees who come to America, and not leave that as an open-ended power given to the President, who can execute it in an arbitrary manner.

We also said that no benefits should be provided to future refugees until the Congressional Budget Office submits a score—a simple report on the cost of this program. How long would it take? Not that long. Don't we need to have a score, a cost number?

We also asked that no refugees be admitted until the Department of Homeland Security submits a report on terrorist and criminal refugees.

None of those provisions were included in any of the legislation before us. I think all of those are logical.

I also previously wrote letters asking for other provisions, such as prohibiting funds for lawsuits against States that are trying to help enforce immigration laws, to bar funds for attorneys for illegal aliens through these grant programs that are being utilized. Fundamentally, it has never been the responsibility of the Federal Government to prepare and provide free attorneys for people who have entered the country illegally. It never has been the law.

I also asked that no funds be provided for sanctuary cities.

I asked for language that prohibited funds for Executive amnesty policies; that prohibited funds for the DACA Program; that there would be no spending of funds in the Immigration Examinations Fee Account for anything other than naturalization and immigration benefits provided by Congress.

I asked for language that would bar funds for salaries of political appointees or other employees who direct employees to violate the law. Why should we be paying people who direct their own subordinates to violate fundamental provisions of immigration law?

I asked for language that would prevent funds from being used to grant ''prosecutorial discretion'' to aliens in removal proceedings, no funds for an extension of Temporary Protected Status unless approved by Congress, and no funds to continue the Administration's abuse of the parole authority. We shouldn't be funding these abusive practices that undermine the certainty of immigration laws.

I asked for language to prohibit funds to grant H–1B visas to companies that have replaced American workers. I asked for restrictions on the issuance of Employment Authorization Documents, and that no funds be used to add new countries to the Visa Waiver Program until implementation of a biometric exit system.

This bill does direct some money to a biometric exit system, which, if this Administration would act, would begin to do something significant. But they have resisted what the 9/11 Commission has said we must have. When people come into the country, they are checked in, they are fingerprinted, and they are biometrically identified, but nobody checks if they left. So you can come into America on a visa and never go home. This is why almost half of the people illegally in America today came lawfully on a visa. They just didn't return when they were supposed to.

I asked for money to establish—notably, there has been an advocacy unit in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the past to protect illegal immigrants and give them all kinds of additional rights—an advocacy unit for victims of immigrant crimes.

I asked for others, too.

I would just say that I, and others, have raised a series of important issues that need to be fixed, and would receive, if understood by the American people, 90 percent support. Senator GRASSLEY, chairman of the Judiciary Committee—of which my Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest, is a part—has also been active in these things. It is a deep disappointment that this last piece of legislation that could make some improvement in a number of these issues will do nothing of significance, but it will increase by four-fold the number of low-skilled, low-wage workers allowed to enter this country from 66,000 to 264,000. They will pull down wages and reduce the job prospects of struggling Americans.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WILDFIRE PROVISIONS IN THE OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, most of us are busy today reviewing the contents of the Omnibus appropriations bill that was released late last night—actually, early this morning. I come to the floor this afternoon with my colleague from Washington, the ranking member on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, to speak about the wildfire provisions. More specifically, I am here to explain why Congress chose not to accept a flawed proposal from the administration and really, I think, to be here to give hope and optimism about a path forward for next year.

I think it goes without saying that our Nation's wildfire epidemic is a serious challenge that demands attention from each one of us. Each year the wildfire season seems to include new ''worsts'' and shattered records, and 2015 has been particularly devastating. It seems as though we didn't have a wildfire season; we've had a wildfire year. We all know that we have seen too much acreage burn, too many western communities have suffered damage, and, tragically, lives have been lost.

According to the National Interagency Fire Center, more than 9.4 million acres of our country had burned through October 30 of this year. In Alaska, where most of these fires occur, we lost over 5 million acres during this period. For perspective, that is about the size of the State of Connecticut. That is what we saw burn in Alaska alone this year.

Those of us whose States are impacted by wildfire started this year in agreement that the way wildfire management has been funded is broken; and that it is past time we fix it. We know we can't continue to underfund fire suppression, only then to scramble to borrow money to fight fires—and all this while the fires are many times burning out of control. We know that we need to end this very disruptive and unsustainable cycle of fire borrowing, which drains funds from other programs as agencies desperately seek resources. I think this fire borrowing concept is one area where we have all been able to come together, whether it is those within the agencies or those of us looking to address policy, the appropriators. We have to figure out how we are going to stop the fire borrowing that goes on within the various accounts in an effort to respond to these wildfires.

Earlier this year, as the chairman of the Interior-Environment Appropriations Subcommittee, I set out to fix this very broken system. Under my direction, our committee reported a bill to do just that. The Interior appropriations bill included a permanent, fiscally responsible fix for fire borrowing. It would have provided resources to the agencies up front—enough funding to fully cover the average annual cost of firefighting over the past 10 years—while allowing for a limited cap adjustment in have truly catastrophic fire

years. The bill simultaneously increased funding for fire prevention efforts and took steps also to return to active forest management.

We thought this was not only a sound approach to address the fire borrowing but also the forest management issues that so many of us are concerned about. Unfortunately, we ran into a wall with the House of Representatives. They wouldn't accept the language because of its limited cap adjustment. Instead, we worked across Chambers within the Appropriations Committee to provide an unprecedented level of funding to address wildfire in this omnibus.

As I said, I am still going through the omnibus myself and trying to figure out whether to support the overall bill. But I do think it is important to recognize and understand what we have included in this omnibus. The wildfire provisions are both responsible and pragmatic. It provides real money, right now and gives us the time to develop long term real solutions. The bill includes $1.6 billion for fire suppression, which is $600 million over the average cost of fighting wildfires over the past 10 years. It also includes $545 million for hazardous fuels reduction, and it includes $360 million for the Forest Service's timber program, which will help us resume the active management of our forests.

What we have in this omnibus bill is more funding for wildfires than was spent during the 2015 fire season—and, again, that was one of the most expensive fire seasons in history. When we think about what we have done, barring a truly record-setting fire season in 2016, fire borrowing should not be an issue for us the rest of this fiscal year. We did this the right way—the way that Congress should deal with the government's responsibilities—by making cuts elsewhere to pay for this within the budget. Again, this is real money. This is money that will be available immediately because we have done this through the appropriations process.

We have had many conversations—Senator CANTWELL and I and many in this body—with Members who were hoping to see a different proposal. The House had a proposal, colleagues here in the Senate had a proposal, and the administration had a proposal. They were hoping it could be factored into the omnibus, but for a number of reasons it was not included within the bill.

The administration's proposal would have amended the Stafford Act to expand the purposes for emergency funding for major disasters to include fighting wildfires on Federal lands. The House included a similar idea in a forestry bill it passed earlier in the year. The irony here is that the Administration came out very strongly against this back in July, just a few months ago. The President's advisers issued a Statement of Administration Policy objecting to the repurposing of the Stafford Act and the use of the Disaster Relief Fund for wildfire suppression operations.

In September, the director of FEMA wrote an opinion piece about this. He said that tapping the Disaster Relief Fund for wildfires would ''undermine the federal government's ability to budget for and fund responses to disasters, as well as to finance state and tribal public infrastructure recovery projects.''

The Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the head of the Office of Management and Budget echoed that concern in a letter where they said, ''We do not believe that Congress should modify the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act as a means to address the escalating costs of wildfire.''

Yet here we are just a few months later, and the administration is now proposing to amend the Stafford Act. And after reviewing the proposal, it appears to be nothing more than a workaround that still has serious problems.

I think the first important reminder is that the Stafford Act itself is designed to provide Federal assistance to State, local, and tribal governments to alleviate disaster suffering and facilitate recovery after a disaster has occurred. There is no precedent for accessing it to provide emergency money for disasters on Federal lands.

The second concern we have is that this proposal doesn't actually end fire borrowing. What it does is create an account that is separate from the Disaster Relief Fund that is subject to appropriations, which means that it is now empty. That fund may be there, but there is nothing in it, and it could remain empty. There is no guarantee that appropriators will fund the account or that the President will ever request funds for it. And if there are no funds in the account, then basically what we have to assume is that the agencies are going to have to borrow again. So we haven't fixed the borrowing.

We have an average of 68,000 fires each year. Under this proposal, each one could require a separate Presidential declaration once the initial appropriations run out. So we have to ask the question: How does this actually work? Does the Forest Service Chief have to estimate how much each fire is going to cost? What happens in the meantime while you have all these fires burning? Again, the agencies are going to be in a situation where they are going to be forced to fire borrow.

Even if we assume that Federal dollars will be appropriated to the fund envisioned by this proposal and that the President will make disaster declarations after he is asked to do so by Cabinet officials, we are still setting another troubling precedent. The administration will effectively be able to decide to give itself money under the Stafford Act. This is not like giving an individual money after they have suffered a disaster, a loss to their home or property; this is the administration being able to decide to give itself money. So the question is, is this really something that we want to do?

Finally, I think this proposal is a missed opportunity. It was supposed to be coupled with a set of productive forest management reforms. What we saw is a good start. There are forest reforms in there but there is not very much in this to get excited about for Alaska, where we have both a wildfire problem and a timber problem. The proposal also does too little to help our firefighters or our communities which are at physical risk from wildfires and economic risk from restrictions on timber harvesting.

I am certainly not alone in this. Again, Senator CANTWELL has spoken very passionately on this issue—not only in committee but here on the floor. I am going to yield to her in just a moment.

We heard from a representative from the International Association of Fire Chiefs, who said that ''due to the rapidly rising cost of wildland fire suppression, IAFC [the International Association of Fire Chiefs] is concerned that the [Disaster Relief Fund] could run out of money as it is also used to address hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and other emergencies.''

We have also heard from a nonprofit organization called Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology. Their letter to congressional leaders observes that ''allowing agencies to declare wildfires as disasters simply to access near-unlimited funding for suppression will undermine efforts that have been long in the making to shift agencies toward alternative proactive strategies in fire preparedness and planning, fuels reduction and forest restoration.''

I want to find a solution to the fire-budgeting problem as much as anyone in this Chamber, but the proposal that surfaced during budget negotiations was not the right way to go. It was not developed in the open and transparent manner that we would hope, and it has not been fully vetted. It has drawn opposition not only from Members here but from outside groups whose members are on the ground actually fighting these fires. So the only solution was to do what we have done, which is fully fund firefighting within the budget that we were given.

The omnibus is our path forward on wildfire funding for this year. It devotes greater resources to fire prevention and hazardous fuels reduction and contains real money—not an empty account—that will be available immediately. We can use the window it provides to develop long-term solutions.

This is where I want to give encouragement to other Members. I am committed, as I know that Senator CANTWELL is, to working to address the longer term solutions to these issues. I am here today to affirm that wildfire management legislation will be a top priority for those of us on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee next year.

I know we come at this from different perspectives, but that is OK. Let's bring our different perspectives and work collaboratively with all Members to develop a commonsense bill that properly addresses the challenges and concerns that Senator CANTWELL has articulated when it comes to active forest management, how we deal with our hazardous fuels, and how we work on the front end to prevent these catastrophic fires. We need to be working together toward these solutions, and I certainly make that commitment with my ranking member to advance early on in the New Year these provisions that I think will make a difference.

I know Senator CANTWELL wants to be part of the solution here and she has played a great part as we have worked together to craft a solution in the committee. With that, I know that from the Energy and Natural Resources Committee perspective, we have a lot on our plate. But I think that from my perspective as a Senator from Alaska, this is an issue that the people in my State feel very passionately about.

I will ask Senator CANTWELL, as we deal with the pressing issues that are before us, is this an area where we can come together as an energy committee to address these very immediate concerns?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, responding to my colleague from Alaska—and I will make a longer statement in a second—I do want to thank her for her leadership, not just as chairwoman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, but also as the chairwoman of the Appropriations Interior subcommittee.

Thank you for your detailing exactly why it is so important to have real money up front. You are right. For you and me and for many Western States, we have seen a change in fire habit, and we have seen probably two of the worst fire seasons our country has seen in many years and the fact that this year's season may trump that.

It is very important that we give the agencies the tools to address this issue and that we give them the tools now—not a guessing game, not how much they might get or how much they might borrow but how much they have now. I think the 50-percent increase is a recognition of how dire the situation is and makes sure that these communities know that they get those resources.

Yes, I wish to thank the chairwoman for allowing the committee to have a hearing. Senator BARRASSO participated at a very critical moment and at a very sad moment because it was just days after we learned that we lost firefighters in the central part of our State.

I wish to say that she has had a committee hearing. We have had committee hearings. My staff attended what was called the Wildfire and Us Summit. Many people in the central part of our State participated in that summit. Your question is, Is this important to us? I think when you have a rain forest that catches on fire or you have parts of Alaska that have never burned that are up in smoke, you bet this is of critical importance to both our States and to many Western States. I thank you for the question and thank you for helping to get real resources on the table and a 50-percent increase over last year's fire budget. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I know that Senator CANTWELL has a longer statement that she would like to make at this point in time.

I yield to Senator CANTWELL.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I thank my colleague Senator MURKOWSKI for her leadership on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and I thank the Senator for her discussion on fighting wildfires in the United States of America. I think she gave a great rendition. My hat is off to appropriators. I can tell you this: What we need is real money, and that is what she has provided. I thank her for that.

I thank her partner on the subcommittee, Senator UDALL from New Mexico. They worked together and had to provide a framework in which the omnibus reflects an appropriation that we will vote on later this week containing $1.6 billion for fire funding and fire suppression. That is $500 million more than last year. So I consider it a very good down payment.

Congress has recognized that it is very important to provide funding for fire suppression and at sufficient levels so that agencies can address the issues of prevention and hazardous fuel reduction. This is something. It is critically important.

I am pleased that this is a very large increase in firefighting accounts this year. Besides the 50-percent increase in fire suppression, as my colleague mentioned, there is $375 million in hazardous fuel reduction and new grants to local communities to decrease their fire hazards, additional fuel reduction projects such as controlled burns in our forests, and research on protecting homes during massive wildfires.

This is critically important to my State, as they have implemented many programs over the last two seasons that they call ''hasty response'' or fuel reduction, where they have been able to show that certain treatments have actually been able to save communities and neighborhoods that have done such treatment. The challenge becomes this: How do you educate the rest of the community, the rest of the State, on the vital importance of doing this fuel reduction? It is very important that we continue this.

I thank again the chairwoman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the interior subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations on the fact that this is real money today, a 50-percent increase without the necessity for a future declaration of disaster, without a future appropriations request, without pitting States against each other on every disaster, but providing some predictability with this increase about how to move forward for the 2016 firefighting season.

It is very important, as she mentioned, that we continue to focus on a variety of issues and resolutions: stopping the way that we continue to erode funds from other accounts while ensuring there are considerations of cost and oversight for large and expensive fires, integrating forest research to better prioritize where prevention money goes, increasing controlled burns on our Federal lands, ensuring personnel and equipment can operate seamlessly across jurisdictions during wildfires, funding community preparedness and FireWise activities, funding risk mapping, providing technology on all large fires to ensure managers know in real time the location of the fires and of our firefighters, and upgrading our air tanker system.

We saw a lot of this, and we heard a lot about our air tanker system during our committee hearings and that there was much more we could be doing.

As to establishing surge capacity, we heard a lot from our local communities that joined in the fight and are more than willing to join in this effort of helping us fight wildfires, but we need to have the capacity and the training.

As to ensuring communications, nothing was more frustrating in some of these wildfires than to have no broadband communication and yet to be in charge of all the evacuation for the region without the ability to communicate to the people that needed to be evacuated. It is critically important that we have on-the-ground communications systems available on day one.

Doing preventative treatments when risks are low is a particular issue for our State. We want to make sure that we have cooperation in working with other agencies. We don't want to do fire treatments when we are in drought conditions and high temperatures and dry, dry conditions, but when there are less risks.

We want to do mapping to clearly identify where the risks are, and we want to use technology for safety and effectiveness, such as GPS and other systems that can be used from the air, and modifying the individual assistance program. I say that because various communities that have been hardest hit by our fires have been in rural communities, but the way the definition works under our current law basically has prejudice against a community if it is not dense enough to meet the current requirement.

I wish to say that the ranking member, myself, and probably even the Presiding Officer have very rural communities that can be devastated by fires. That means an entire community that may be based on recreation or outdoors

or any kinds of outdoor activities could be so devastated and yet would be left without the resources, simply because they didn't meet a population density number. To me, we need to address this because these communities are integral parts of our larger United States and the economic stability of many of our States.

We want to continue to make these improvements in our system. As I said, the chairwoman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee allowed several hearings to take place, and we want to continue the efforts in working with our colleagues to make sure that we are moving forward on this issue in providing all the resources that we can.

I wish to address one issue, and that is that we are not going to get this overall solution by simply clearcutting large swaths of land in which we haven't made the right assessments. I say that because we have had so many issues in the State of Washington where dangerous erosion has taken place in those circumstances, but it is clear that we all agree that massive fuel reduction does need to take place.

I look forward to working with my colleague on that because there are many ways in which we can prevent and fight our national wildland fires. I look forward to working with Senator MURKOWSKI, and I thank her for getting us real money—a 50-percent increase—that doesn't require another declaration, doesn't require a future event. It is there, and we can start using it. Let's go to work with our colleagues in defining how we do hazardous fuel reduction in the most aggressive way possible, giving our communities better tools to fight these fires in the future, and working to make sure that we have the best equipment and the best resources for those individuals who are fighting those fires.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I want to thank the Senator from Washington for not only her comments here this evening but for her leadership and guidance in this area. When your State is hard hit by these disasters, you learn a lot. You learn a lot about what works in the process and, unfortunately, what doesn't work. When you cannot get a cat to run a fire break because it doesn't have the appropriate card or designation, people come to us and say: Well, that is crazy. And you have to agree; it is crazy. We can do better. When we are talking about the issue of wildland fire and management, it is this management piece that I really hope we can get to, because it is not just about throwing more money at the fires and hoping that we get it right. It is not only about ensuring that we prioritize and get it right with suppression dollars, but also that we are working aggressively to deal with the prevention, with hazardous fuels reduction, with actively managing these issues. That is how we are going to be making the headway. That is where we need to be working collaboratively, whether you are from a very open, remote, and large State such as Alaska or whether you are a State that sees smaller fires that have a catastrophic impact on your local economies. I know that Senator CANTWELL has articulated that very, very clearly within the committee.

We have our work cut out in front of us. I worked on a statement that included no shortage of fire puns and needing to put a damper on this 10-alarm fire that was out there, but I decided that the issue of fire was not a joke or a laughing matter for anybody.

We have a lot of work to do, and I am ready to do it. I am rolling up my sleeves and looking forward to a lot of cooperation from my colleagues as we address this very important priority.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MAKING FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.J. Res. 78, which was received from the House; that the joint resolution be read a third time and the Senate vote on passage of the resolution with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 78) making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2016, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the joint resolution.

The joint resolution was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the joint resolution?

If not, the joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 78) was passed.

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

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

SIGNING AUTHORITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the majority leader be authorized to sign duly enrolled bills or joint resolutions on Wednesday, December 16.

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

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill 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.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO NEW ZEALAND AMBASSADOR MICHAEL MOORE

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, my friend Chairman HATCH and I rise today to offer our sincere gratitude to Ambassador Michael Moore of New Zealand who is returning to his home country after more than 5 years here in Washington and a long, successful career as a beloved public servant.

With roots as a union organizer, he rose to become Prime Minister of New Zealand and later served as a Director-General of the World Trade Organization. He dedicated much of his career to the belief that freer trade can help address some of the most intractable challenges facing impoverished people around the globe.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I am happy to join my friend and Finance Committee colleague in expressing our gratitude to Ambassador Moore. Here in Washington, he witnessed the passage of three trade agreements, as well as historic trade legislation earlier this year that reflects many of the values he fought to instill in global trade policy. Ambassador Moore was always there with advice and good counsel as we navigated difficult waters, and his irrepressible spirit and good humor will be sorely missed.

Mr. WYDEN. As they say in New Zealand, ''He tangeta, he tangeta, he tangeta,'' which translated from the Maori language roughly means, ''people are the most important thing.''

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING THE WILDY FAMILY

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate the Wildy family for being named the 2015 Arkansas Farm Family of the Year.

This honor recognizes the dedication of Wildy Family Farms and David and Patty Wildy to Arkansas's No. 1 industry.

The Wildy family settled in Mississippi County in 1914 and has been on

the same farm since 1938. David has devoted his life to farming, spending his childhood on the farm, and his passion has been passed down to his children. Wildy Family Farms is a fifth-generation farm. His father and grandfather both earned the Arkansas Master Farm Family award. Being named the Arkansas Farm Family of the Year has been a longtime dream for David.

David and Patty oversee 9,200 acres of land where they grow soybeans, cotton, wheat, milo, and peanuts. The Wildys are committed to being good stewards of the environment. Energy and water conservation play a major role in the business. Using a private environmental audit process to protect the condition of the land, Wildy Family Farms is able to meet and improve its conservation goals and the standards established for environmentally responsible practices.

David is a leader in Arkansas agriculture. He served as a member of the Mississippi County Farm Bureau board of directors for 7 years, presiding as president in 1986. In addition, he served on the Arkansas Agriculture Department board from 2005–2010 and is a member of the St. Francis Levee District board of directors, the University of Arkansas Agriculture Development Council, and several other boards and associations.

The Arkansas Farm Bureau's Farm Family of the Year program honors farm families across the State for their outstanding work both on their farms and in their communities. This recognition is a reflection of the contribution to agriculture at the community and State level and its implications for improved farm practices and management. The Wildy family is well deserving of this honor.

I congratulate David and Patty as well as other partners, which includes their sons and daughters Justin and Kristi Wildy, Tab and Taylor Wildy, Hayley Wildy and Paul and Bethany Harris, on their outstanding achievements in agriculture and ask my fellow colleagues to join me in honoring them for this accomplishment. I wish them continued success in the Farmer of the Year program and look forward to the contributions they will continue to offer Arkansas agriculture.●

TRIBUTE TO JEFF SAYER

● Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, my colleague Senator JIM RISCH joins me today in expressing our gratitude to Jeff Sayer, a great Idahoan and public servant. We honor Jeff's contributions over the past few years as he transitions from State service.

Jeff Sayer has served honorably as the State of Idaho director of the Department of Commerce since October 2011. During his 4 years of service at the Department of Commerce, Jeff accomplished many important objectives. They include the reorganization of the department, making it leaner and more responsive to business. Jeff likes to say that he wants a department that ''moves at the speed of business,'' and he was successful in meeting that goal. Jeff launched the Idaho Global Entrepreneurial Mission and established the Idaho Opportunity Fund, as well as Idaho's Tax Reimbursement Incentive that resulted in 4,047 new jobs, $496 million in new capital investments, $1.65 billion in total wages, and $288 million in new State revenue. These are just some of the impressive accomplishments of the Department of Commerce under the direction of Jeff Sayer.

Jeff's leadership of the Governor's Leadership in Nuclear Energy, or LINE, Commission is equally important. Jeff started this commission, led it through a complete review of the State's role in supporting nuclear energy and Idaho National Laboratory, and oversaw the completion of a final report that is still helping guide policymakers in Idaho and Washington, DC.

While we congratulate Jeff on being presented with an outstanding opportunity to return to the private sector, we are saddened to be losing his leadership and talents in State government. We wish Jeff and his wife, Laurel, well in their new endeavor and look forward to still leaning on Jeff for guidance and wisdom on a frequent basis.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a nomination which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

(The message received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:06 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following joint resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.J. Res. 76. Joint resolution appointing the day for the convening of the second session of the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress.

H.J. Res. 78. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2016, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 102. Concurrent resolution providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 2:09 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 2270. An act to redesignate the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, located in the State of Washington, as the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, to establish the Medicine Creek Treaty National Memorial within the wildlife refuge, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the Acting President pro tempore (Mr. MCCONNELL).

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 6:37 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.J. Res. 78. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2016, and for other purposes.

The enrolled joint resolution was subsequently signed by the Acting President pro tempore (Mr. MCCONNELL).

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment:

S. 329. A bill to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain segments of the Farmington River and Salmon Brook in the State of Connecticut as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–182).

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and an amendment to the title:

S. 556. A bill to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–183).

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, without amendment:

S. 782. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a bison management plan for Grand Canyon National Park (Rept. No. 114–184).

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1583. A bill to authorize the expansion of an existing hydroelectric project (Rept. No. 114–185).

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, without amendment:

S. 1592. A bill to clarify the description of certain Federal land under the Northern Arizona Land Exchange and Verde River Basin Partnership Act of 2005 to include additional land in the Kaibab National Forest (Rept. No. 114–186).

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1694. A bill to amend Public Law 103–434 to authorize Phase III of the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project for the purposes of improving water management in the Yakima River basin, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–187).

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, without amendment:

S. 1941. A bill to authorize, direct, expedite, and facilitate a land exchange in El Paso and Teller Counties, Colorado, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–188).

S. 1942. A bill to require a land conveyance involving the Elkhorn Ranch and the White River National Forest in the State of Colorado, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–189).

S. 2046. A bill to authorize the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to issue an order continuing a stay of a hydroelectric license for the Mahoney Lake hydroelectric project in the State of Alaska, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–190).

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with amendments:

S. 2069. A bill to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to modify provisions relating to certain land exchanges in the Mt. Hood Wilderness in the State of Oregon (Rept. No. 114–191).

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, without amendment:

S. 2083. A bill to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project (Rept. No. 114–192).

H.R. 373. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of Agriculture to expedite access to certain Federal land under the administrative jurisdiction of each Secretary for good Samaritan search-and-recovery missions, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–193).

H.R. 1324. A bill to adjust the boundary of the Arapaho National Forest, Colorado, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–194).

H.R. 1554. A bill to require a land conveyance involving the Elkhorn Ranch and the White River National Forest in the State of Colorado, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–195).

H.R. 2223. A bill to authorize, direct, expedite, and facilitate a land exchange in El Paso and Teller Counties, Colorado, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–196).

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. MCCAIN (for himself and Mr. FLAKE):

S. 2406. A bill to require the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to review certain decisions to grant categorical exclusions for Next Generation flight procedures and to consult with the airports at which such procedures will be implemented; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 2407. A bill to posthumously award the Congressional Gold Medal to each of J. Christopher Stevens, Glen Doherty, Tyrone Woods, and Sean Smith in recognition of their contributions to the Nation; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. FRANKEN:

S. 2408. A bill to direct the Secretary of Labor to issue an occupational safety and health standard to reduce injuries to patients, nurses, and all other health care workers by establishing a safe patient handling, mobility, and injury prevention standard, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 2409. A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to improve payments for hospital outpatient department services and complex rehabilitation technology and to improve program integrity, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 812

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 812, a bill to enhance the ability of community financial institutions to foster economic growth and serve their communities, boost small businesses, increase individual savings, and for other purposes.

S. 901

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) 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. 1579

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1579, a bill to enhance and integrate Native American tourism, empower Native American communities, increase coordination and collaboration between Federal tourism assets, and expand heritage and cultural tourism opportunities in the United States.

S. 1587

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1587, a bill to authorize the use of the United States Armed Forces against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

S. 1631

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1631, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify certain provisions relating to multiemployer pensions, and for other purposes.

S. 1900

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1900, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to allow the Secretary of Education to award job training Federal Pell Grants.

S. 1926

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) and the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) were added as cosponsors of S. 1926, a bill to ensure access to screening mammography services.

S. 2070

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 2070, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

S. 2312

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) were added as cosponsors of S. 2312, a bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to make improvements to payments for durable medical equipment under the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

S. 2336

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) 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. 2373

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) 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. CON. RES. 26

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 26, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress regarding the right of States and local governments to maintain economic sanctions against Iran.

S. RES. 113

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 113, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee should recommend the issuance of, and the United States Postal Service should issue, a commemorative stamp in honor of the holiday of Diwali.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 2407. A bill to posthumously award the Congressional Gold Medal to each

of J. Christopher Stevens, Glen Doherty, Tyrone Woods, and Sean Smith in recognition of their contributions to the Nation; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, on September 11, 2012, militants attacked the Temporary Mission Facility of the United States, and its personnel, in Benghazi, Libya. As the attack unfolded, our people attempted to defend the Mission and protect United States diplomatic personnel. Tragically, they did not succeed and four brave Americans sacrificed their lives.

Today, along with Senators AYOTTE, WARREN, FEINSTEIN, BOXER, WYDEN, and MERKLEY, I am introducing legislation to honor Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens, Glen Doherty, Tyrone Woods, and Sean Smith by posthumously awarding them the Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of their selfless service and extraordinary contributions to the nation, at the cost of their lives. These distinguished public servants and warriors made the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation, and their memories will live on as an inspiration to all for their bravery and commitment to our Nation.

J. Christopher Stevens was serving as United States Ambassador to Libya and previously served twice in the country, as both Special Representative to the Libyan Transitional National Council and as the Deputy Chief of Mission. He served in the United States Foreign Service for twenty-one years. Public service was his life work. He started his career serving as a Peace Corps volunteer teaching English in Morocco.

Glen A. Doherty grew up in Winchester, MA. He was a Navy SEAL for twelve years. He served in Iraq and Afghanistan, attaining the rank of Petty Officer First Class and earned the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation medal.

Tyrone Woods was a Navy Seal for 20 years. He also served in both Iraq and Afghanistan, attaining the rank of Senior Chief Petty Officer when he retired. In Iraq, he led multiple raids and reconnaissance missions and earned the Bronze Star.

Both Glen Doherty and Tyrone Woods were working to protect American personnel abroad when the Temporary Mission Facility of the United States in Benghazi, Libya, was attacked. As the coordinated attack unfolded, Glen and Tyrone exposed themselves to enemy fire as they engaged attackers armed with guns, mortars, and rocket-propelled grenades. Their ultimate sacrifice saved the lives of American personnel who were rescued and safely returned to their families.

Sean Smith served in the Air Force for 6 years, attained the rank of Staff Sergeant and was awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal. After leaving the Air Force, he served in the State Department for 10 years on various assignments which took him to places such as Baghdad, Brussels, Pretoria, the Hague, and Tripoli.

As their careers attest, all four men served our Nation honorably and with high distinction and utmost bravery. They made the supreme sacrifice for our country, and this medal represents the deep gratitude of a nation that will never forget their heroic service.

I ask all Senators to join me in support of this legislation to posthumously award these four brave American heroes the Congressional Gold Medal for giving our Nation their last full measure of devotion.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2929. Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mr. BOOZMAN) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 3594, to extend temporarily the Federal Perkins Loan program, and for other purposes.

SA 2930. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. CARPER (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mr. JOHNSON)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1616, to provide for the identification and prevention of improper payments and the identification of strategic sourcing opportunities by reviewing and analyzing the use of Federal agency charge cards.

SA 2931. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. LANKFORD) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 310, condemning the ongoing sexual violence against women and children from Yezidi, Christian, Shabak, Turkmen, and other religious communities by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria militants and urging the prosecution of the perpetrators and those complicit in these crimes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2929. Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mr. BOOZMAN) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 3594, to extend temporarily the Federal Perkins Loan program, 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 ''Federal Perkins Loan Program Extension Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF FEDERAL PERKINS LOAN PROGRAM.

(a) AUTHORITY TO MAKE LOANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 461 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087aa) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking ''of stimulating and assisting in the establishment and maintenance of funds at institutions of higher education for the making of low-interest loans to students in need thereof'' and inserting ''assisting in the maintenance of funds at institutions of higher education for the making of loans to undergraduate students in need'';

(B) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

''(b) AUTHORITY TO MAKE LOANS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—

''(A) LOANS FOR NEW UNDERGRADUATE FEDERAL PERKINS LOAN BORROWERS.—Through September 30, 2017, an institution of higher education may make a loan under this part to an eligible undergraduate student who, on the date of disbursement of a loan made under this part, has no outstanding balance of principal or interest on a loan made under this part from the student loan fund established under this part by the institution, but only if the institution has awarded all Federal Direct Loans, as referenced under subparagraphs (A) and (D) of section 455(a)(2), for which such undergraduate student is eligible.

''(B) LOANS FOR CURRENT UNDERGRADUATE FEDERAL PERKINS LOAN BORROWERS.—Through September 30, 2017, an institution of higher education may make a loan under this part to an eligible undergraduate student who, on the date of disbursement of a loan made under this part, has an outstanding balance of principal or interest on a loan made under this part from the student loan fund established under this part by the institution, but only if the institution has awarded all Federal Direct Stafford Loans as referenced under section 455(a)(2)(A) for which such undergraduate student is eligible.

''(C) LOANS FOR CERTAIN GRADUATE BORROWERS.—Through September 30, 2016, with respect to an eligible graduate student who has received a loan made under this part prior to October 1, 2015, an institution of higher education that has most recently made such a loan to the student for an academic program at such institution may continue making loans under this part from the student loan fund established under this part by the institution to enable the student to continue or complete such academic program.

''(2) NO ADDITIONAL LOANS.—An institution of higher education shall not make loans under this part after September 30, 2017.

''(3) PROHIBITION ON ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS.—No funds are authorized to be appropriated under this Act or any other Act to carry out the functions described in paragraph (1) for any fiscal year following fiscal year 2015.''; and

(C) by striking subsection (c).

(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Notwithstanding the amendments made under paragraph (1) of this subsection, an eligible graduate borrower who received a disbursement of a loan under part E of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087aa et seq.) after June 30, 2016 and before October 1, 2016, for the 2016–2017 award year, may receive a subsequent disbursement of such loan by June 30, 2017, for which the borrower received an initial disbursement after June 30, 2016 and before October 1, 2016.

(b) DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS FROM STUDENT LOAN FUNDS.—Section 466 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087ff) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''After September 30, 2003, and not later than March 31, 2004'' and inserting ''Beginning October 1, 2017''; and

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking ''September 30, 2003'' and inserting ''September 30, 2017'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking ''After October 1, 2012'' and inserting ''Beginning October 1, 2017''; and

(B) by striking ''September 30, 2003'' and inserting ''September 30, 2017''; and

(3) in subsection (c)(1), by striking ''October 1, 2004'' and inserting ''October 1, 2017''.

(c) ADDITIONAL EXTENSIONS NOT PERMITTED.—Section 422 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1226a) shall not apply to further extend the duration of the authority under paragraph (1) of section 461(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087aa(b)), as amended by subsection (a)(1) of this section, beyond September 30, 2017, on the basis of the extension under such subsection.

SEC. 3. DISCLOSURE REQUIRED PRIOR TO DISBURSEMENT.

Section 463A(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087cc–1(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (12), by striking ''and'' after the semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (13), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(14) a notice and explanation regarding the end to future availability of loans made under this part;

''(15) a notice and explanation that repayment and forgiveness benefits available to borrowers of loans made under part D are not available to borrowers participating in the loan program under this part;

''(16) a notice and explanation regarding a borrower's option to consolidate a loan made under this part into a Federal Direct Loan under part D, including any benefit of such consolidation;

''(17) with respect to new undergraduate Federal Perkins loan borrowers, as described in section 461(b)(1)(A), a notice and explanation providing a comparison of the interest rates of loans under this part and part D and informing the borrower that the borrower has reached the maximum annual borrowing limit for which the borrower is eligible as referenced under subparagraphs (A) and (D) of section 455(a)(2); and

''(18) with respect to current undergraduate Federal Perkins loan borrowers, as described in section 461(b)(1)(B), a notice and explanation providing a comparison of the interest rates of loans under this part and part D and informing the borrower that the borrower has reached the maximum annual borrowing limit for which the borrower is eligible on Federal Direct Stafford Loans as referenced under section 455(a)(2)(A).''.

SA 2930. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. CARPER (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mr. JOHNSON)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1616, to provide for the identification and prevention of improper payments and the identification of strategic sourcing opportunities by reviewing and analyzing the use of Federal agency charge cards; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Saving Federal Dollars Through Better Use of Government Purchase and Travel Cards Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) IMPROPER PAYMENT.—The term ''improper payment'' has the meaning given the term in section 2 of the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 (31 U.S.C. 3321 note).

(2) QUESTIONABLE TRANSACTION.—The term ''questionable transaction'' means a charge card transaction that from initial card data appears to be high risk and may therefore be improper due to non-compliance with applicable law, regulation or policy.

(3) STRATEGIC SOURCING.—The term ''strategic sourcing'' means analyzing and modifying a Federal agency's spending patterns to better leverage its purchasing power, reduce costs, and improve overall performance.

SEC. 3. EXPANDED USE OF DATA ANALYTICS.

(a) STRATEGY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with the Administrator for General Services, shall develop a strategy to expand the use of data analytics in managing government purchase and travel charge card programs. These analytics may employ existing General Services Administration capabilities, and may be in conjunction with agencies' capabilities, for the purpose of —

(1) identifying examples or patterns of questionable transactions and developing enhanced tools and methods for agency use in—

(A) identifying questionable purchase and travel card transactions; and

(B) recovering improper payments made with purchase and travel cards;

(2) identifying potential opportunities for agencies to further leverage administrative process streamlining and cost reduction from purchase and travel card use, including additional agency opportunities for card-based strategic sourcing;

(3) developing a set of purchase and travel card metrics and benchmarks for high risk activities, which shall assist agencies in identifying potential emphasis areas for their purchase and travel card management and oversight activities, including those required by the Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–194); and

(4) developing a plan, which may be based on existing capabilities, to create a library of analytics tools and data sources for use by Federal agencies (including inspectors general of those agencies).

SEC. 4. GUIDANCE ON IMPROVING INFORMATION SHARING TO CURB IMPROPER PAYMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with the Administrator of General Services and the interagency charge card data management group established under section 5, shall issue guidance on improving information sharing by government agencies (including inspectors general) for the purposes of section 3(a)(1).

(b) ELEMENTS.—The guidance issued under subsection (a) shall—

(1) require relevant officials at Federal agencies to identify high-risk activities and communicate that information to the appropriate management levels within the agencies;

(2) require that appropriate officials at Federal agencies review the reports issued by charge card-issuing banks on questionable transaction activity (such as purchase and travel card pre-suspension and suspension reports, delinquency reports, and exception reports), including transactions that occur with high risk activities, and suspicious timing or amounts of cash withdrawals or advances;

(3) provide for the appropriate sharing of information related to potential questionable transactions, fraud schemes, and high risk activities with General Services Administration Office of Charge Card Management and the appropriate officials in Federal agencies; and

(4) include other requirements determined appropriate by the Director for the purposes of carrying out this Act.

SEC. 5. INTERAGENCY CHARGE CARD DATA MANAGEMENT GROUP.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Administrator of General Services and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall establish a purchase and travel charge card data management group to develop and share best practices for the purposes described in section 3(a).

(b) ELEMENTS.—The best practices developed under subsection (a) shall—

(1) cover rules, edits, and task order or contract modifications related to charge card-issuing banks;

(2) include the review of accounts payable information and purchase and travel card transaction data of agencies for the purpose of identifying potential strategic sourcing and other additional opportunities (such as recurring payments, utility payments, and grant payments) for which the charge cards or related payment products could be used as a payment method; and

(3) include other best practices as determined by the Administrator and Director.

(c) MEMBERSHIP.—The purchase and travel charge card data management group shall meet regularly as determined by the co-chairs, for a duration of three years, and include those agencies as described in section 2 of the Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–194) and others identified by the Administrator and Director.

SEC. 6. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

(a) GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator for General Services shall submit a report to Congress on the implementation of this Act, including the metrics used in determining whether the analytic and benchmarking efforts have reduced, or contributed to the reduction of, questionable or improper payments as well as improved utilization of card-based payment products.

(b) AGENCY REPORTS AND CONSOLIDATED REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the head of each Federal agency described in section 2 of the Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–194) shall submit a report to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget on that agency's activities to implement this Act.

(c) OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall submit to Congress a consolidated report of agency activities to implement this Act, which may be included as part of another report submitted to Congress by the Director.

(d) REPORT ON ADDITIONAL SAVINGS OPPORTUNITIES.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of General Services shall submit a report to Congress identifying and exploring further potential savings opportunities for government agencies under the Federal charge card programs. This report may be combined with the report required under subsection (a).

SA 2931. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. LANKFORD) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 310, condemning the ongoing sexual violence against women and children from Yezidi, Christian, Shabak, Turkmen, and other religious communities by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria militants and urging the prosecution of the perpetrators and those complicit in these crimes; as follows:

On page 3, line 4, insert ''by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria militants'' before the semicolon at the end.

On page 3, line 10, strike ''and''.

On page 4, line 2, strike the period at the end and inserting ''; and''.

On page 4, after line 2, add the following:

(4) defines ''complicit'', for purposes of this resolution, as having knowingly and willingly taken actions which have directly supported, promoted, enabled, aided, abetted, or encouraged crimes involving sexual violence against women and children from Yezidi, Christian, Shabak, Turkmen, or other religious communities by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria militants, including actively working to deny, cover up, or alter evidence of such crimes.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 16, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''The Administration's Strategy in Afghanistan.''

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Joshua Manning, a NASA fellow and a detailee, and Brandon Fisher, a Coast Guard fellow at the commerce committee, be allowed floor privileges for the 114th Congress.

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

MEASURE INDEFINITELY POSTPONED—H. CON. RES. 91

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that H. Con. Res. 91 be indefinitely postponed.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 269, 433, 435, 436, and 437.

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 Thomas O. Melia, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development; Gabriel Camarillo, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force; Marcel John Lettre, II, of Maryland, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence; the Navy, Vice Adm. Kurt W. Tidd to be Admiral; and Thomas Edgar Rothman, of Maryland, to be a Member of the National Council on the Arts for a term expiring September 3, 2016.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote en bloc 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; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Melia, Camarillo, Lettre, Tidd, and Rothman nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination under the privileged section of the Executive Calendar: PN892; that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; 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 nomination; that any related statements 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.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Steven Michael Haro, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Haro nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

SECURING FAIRNESS IN REGULATORY TIMING ACT OF 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 3831, which was received from the House.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3831) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend the annual comment period for payment rates under Medicare Advantage.

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 (H.R. 3831) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

SAVING FEDERAL DOLLARS THROUGH BETTER USE OF GOVERNMENT PURCHASE AND TRAVEL CARDS ACT OF 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 315, S. 1616.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1616) to provide for the identification and prevention of improper payments and the identification of strategic sourcing opportunities by reviewing and analyzing the use of Federal agency charge cards.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the Carper substitute amendment which is at the desk 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 with no intervening action or debate.

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

The amendment (No. 2930) 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 ''Saving Federal Dollars Through Better Use of Government Purchase and Travel Cards Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) IMPROPER PAYMENT.—The term ''improper payment'' has the meaning given the term in section 2 of the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 (31 U.S.C. 3321 note).

(2) QUESTIONABLE TRANSACTION.—The term ''questionable transaction'' means a charge card transaction that from initial card data appears to be high risk and may therefore be improper due to non-compliance with applicable law, regulation or policy.

(3) STRATEGIC SOURCING.—The term ''strategic sourcing'' means analyzing and modifying a Federal agency's spending patterns to better leverage its purchasing power, reduce costs, and improve overall performance.

SEC. 3. EXPANDED USE OF DATA ANALYTICS.

(a) STRATEGY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with the Administrator for General Services, shall develop a strategy to expand the use of data analytics in managing government purchase and travel charge card programs. These analytics may employ existing General Services Administration capabilities, and may be in conjunction with agencies' capabilities, for the purpose of —

(1) identifying examples or patterns of questionable transactions and developing enhanced tools and methods for agency use in—

(A) identifying questionable purchase and travel card transactions; and

(B) recovering improper payments made with purchase and travel cards;

(2) identifying potential opportunities for agencies to further leverage administrative process streamlining and cost reduction from purchase and travel card use, including additional agency opportunities for card-based strategic sourcing;

(3) developing a set of purchase and travel card metrics and benchmarks for high risk activities, which shall assist agencies in identifying potential emphasis areas for their purchase and travel card management and oversight activities, including those required by the Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–194); and

(4) developing a plan, which may be based on existing capabilities, to create a library of analytics tools and data sources for use by Federal agencies (including inspectors general of those agencies).

SEC. 4. GUIDANCE ON IMPROVING INFORMATION SHARING TO CURB IMPROPER PAYMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with the Administrator of General Services and the interagency charge card data management group established under section 5, shall issue guidance on improving information sharing by government agencies (including inspectors general) for the purposes of section 3(a)(1).

(b) ELEMENTS.—The guidance issued under subsection (a) shall—

(1) require relevant officials at Federal agencies to identify high-risk activities and communicate that information to the appropriate management levels within the agencies;

(2) require that appropriate officials at Federal agencies review the reports issued by charge card-issuing banks on questionable transaction activity (such as purchase and travel card pre-suspension and suspension reports, delinquency reports, and exception reports), including transactions that occur with high risk activities, and suspicious timing or amounts of cash withdrawals or advances;

(3) provide for the appropriate sharing of information related to potential questionable transactions, fraud schemes, and high risk activities with General Services Administration Office of Charge Card Management and the appropriate officials in Federal agencies; and

(4) include other requirements determined appropriate by the Director for the purposes of carrying out this Act.

SEC. 5. INTERAGENCY CHARGE CARD DATA MANAGEMENT GROUP.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Administrator of General Services and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall establish a purchase and travel charge card data management group to develop and share best practices for the purposes described in section 3(a).

(b) ELEMENTS.—The best practices developed under subsection (a) shall—

(1) cover rules, edits, and task order or contract modifications related to charge card-issuing banks;

(2) include the review of accounts payable information and purchase and travel card transaction data of agencies for the purpose of identifying potential strategic sourcing and other additional opportunities (such as recurring payments, utility payments, and grant payments) for which the charge cards or related payment products could be used as a payment method; and

(3) include other best practices as determined by the Administrator and Director.

(c) MEMBERSHIP.—The purchase and travel charge card data management group shall meet regularly as determined by the co-chairs, for a duration of three years, and include those agencies as described in section 2 of the Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–194) and others identified by the Administrator and Director.

SEC. 6. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

(a) GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator for General Services shall submit a report to Congress on the implementation of this Act, including the metrics used in determining whether the analytic and benchmarking efforts have reduced, or contributed to the reduction of, questionable or improper payments as well as improved utilization of card-based payment products.

(b) AGENCY REPORTS AND CONSOLIDATED REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the head of each Federal agency described in section 2 of the Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–194) shall submit a report to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget on that agency's activities to implement this Act.

(c) OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall submit to Congress a consolidated report of agency activities to implement this Act, which may be included as part of another report submitted to Congress by the Director.

(d) REPORT ON ADDITIONAL SAVINGS OPPORTUNITIES.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of General Services shall submit a report to Congress identifying and exploring further potential savings opportunities for government agencies under the Federal charge card programs. This report may be combined with the report required under subsection (a).

The bill (S. 1616), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

REGARDING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF DEMOCRACY IN MONGOLIA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 320, S. Res. 189.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 189) expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the 25th anniversary of democracy in Mongolia.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 189) was agreed to.

The resolution was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of June 1, 2015, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

CONGRATULATING THE PEOPLE OF BURMA ON THEIR COMMITMENT TO PEACEFUL ELECTIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 321, S. Res. 320.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 320) congratulating the people of Burma on their commitment to peaceful elections.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment to strike out all after the resolving clause and insert the part printed in italic.

S. RES. 320

Whereas Burma conducted general elections on November 8, 2015, the country's first national vote since a civilian government was introduced in 2011 that ended nearly 50 years of military rule;

Whereas the people of Burma have, by their vigorous participation in electoral campaigning and public debate, strengthened the foundations of a free and democratic way of life;

Whereas preliminary reports indicate that voter turnout exceeded 80 percent;

Whereas international observers have reported that election day was largely free and fair and conducted in an orderly and peaceful fashion despite broader structural concerns such as the disenfranchisement of the Rohingya;

Whereas the ruling military-backed Union Solidarity *and* Development Party suffered a dramatic loss at the polls, and the National League for Democracy won a sizable majority in both chambers of Burma's Union Parliament, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, and will select Burma's next President;

Whereas Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi has symbolized the struggle for freedom and democracy in Burma and has actively supported democratic reform through her leadership of the National League for Democracy;

Whereas the National League for Democracy espouses a policy of nonviolent movement towards multi-party democracy in Burma, supports national reconciliation, and endorses strengthening democratic institutions, protecting human rights, implementing free market economic reforms, and reinforcing rule of law;

Whereas President Thein Sein and Commander-in-Chief Min Aug Hlaing made public commitments to respect the election results and vowed to abide by the law to ensure an orderly and prompt transition to a new government; and

Whereas the continued democratic development of Burma is a matter of fundamental importance to the advancement of United States interests in Southeast Asia and is supported by the United States Senate: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the people of Burma for embracing democracy through their participation in the November 8, 2015, general elections, and for their continuing efforts in developing a free, democratic society that respects internationally recognized human rights;

(2) recognizes the National League for Democracy's victory as a reflection of the will of the Burmese people;

(3) calls on the Union Solidarity and Development Party to undertake a peaceful transfer of power and abide by the law to ensure an orderly and prompt transition to a new government;

(4) encourages all parties to pursue national reconciliation talks and work together in the

spirit of national unity to seek what is best for the country;

(5) recognizes that while the Government of Burma has made important progress towards democratization, there remain serious challenges and impediments to the realization of full democratic and civilian government, including the reservation of unelected seats for the military and the disenfranchisement of groups of people including the Rohingya;

(6) expresses hope that newly elected members of parliament will contribute to the ongoing political transformation and will herald a new generation of responsible democratic leadership in Burma;

(7) calls on the Government of Burma to support meaningful efforts to reform the 2008 Constitution of Burma, with the full and unfettered participation of all the people of Burma and in a manner that promotes and protects democratic development of Burma and safeguards against arbitrary interference by the military;

(8) calls on the Government of Burma to release all political prisoners;

(9) supports negotiations between the Government of Burma and ethnic groups and organizations toward a genuine national ceasefire;

(10) encourages the President of the United States, in close and timely consultation with Congress, to continue to support efforts to promote genuine democratic transition and to ensure that any changes in United States policy toward Burma, including the consideration of any potential relaxation of restrictions, are aligned with support for a genuine and sustainable democratic transition; and

(11) reaffirms that the people of the United States will continue to stand with the people of Burma in support of democracy, partnership, and peace.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendment be agreed to; that the resolution, as amended, be agreed to; that the preamble be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The resolution (S. Res. 320), as amended, was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

CELEBRATING THE 135TH ANNIVERSARY OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ROMANIA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 322, S. Res. 326.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 326) celebrating the 135th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the United States and Romania.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations with an amendment to the preamble.

(Omit the part in boldface brackets and insert the part printed in italic.)

S. RES. 326

Whereas the United States established diplomatic relations with Romania in June 1880;

Whereas the Governments of the United States and Romania strive to continually improve cooperation between government leaders and strengthen the two countries' strategic partnership, focusing on the political-military relationship, law-enforcement collaboration, trade and investment opportunities, and energy security;

Whereas the Governments of the United States and Romania are committed to supporting human rights, advancing the rule of law, democratic governance, economic growth, and freedom;

Whereas Romania joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 2004, and has established itself *both* as a resolute ally of **[**both**]** the United States and *as a* strong NATO member;

Whereas the Government of Romania continues to improve its military capabilities, and has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to provide forces and assets in support of operations that address the national security interests of the United States and all NATO members, including deployments to Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Kosovo;

Whereas, in 2011, the United States and Romania issued the ''Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership for the 21st Century Between the United States of America and Romania,'' reflecting increasing cooperation between our countries to promote security, democracy, free market opportunities, and cultural exchange;

Whereas the United States and Romania signed a ballistic missile defense (BMD) agreement in 2011, allowing the deployment of United States personnel, equipment, and anti-missile interceptors to Romania;

Whereas, in October 2014, the United States Navy formally launched Naval Support Facility Deveselu to achieve the goals of the 2011 BMD agreement and thus established the first new United States Navy base since 1987;

Whereas, in September 2015, Romania stood up a NATO Force Integration Unit;

Whereas Romania will host the Alliance's Multinational Division-Southeast headquarters in Bucharest and commits significant resources to the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force;

Whereas Romania has agreed to host components of the United States European Phased Adaptive Approach missile defense system, which will be operational by the end of 2015; and

Whereas, for the past 25 years, the Government of Romania has shown leadership in advancing stability, security, and democratic principles in Central and Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans, and the Black Sea region, especially in the current difficult regional context: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) celebrates the 135th anniversary of United States-Romanian diplomatic relations;

(2) congratulates the people of Romania on their accomplishments as a great nation; and

(3) expresses appreciation for Romania's unwavering partnership with the United States.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to; that the amendment to the preamble be agreed to; that the preamble, as amended, be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 326) was agreed to.

The amendment to the preamble was agreed to.

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

CONDEMNING THE ONGOING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM YEZIDI, CHRISTIAN, SHABAK, TURKMEN, AND OTHER RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES BY ISLAMIC STATE OF IRAQ AND SYRIA MILITANTS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 297, S. Res. 310.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 310) condemning the ongoing sexual violence against women and children from Yezidi, Christian, Shabak, Turkmen, and other religious communities by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria militants and urging the prosecution of the perpetrators and those complicit in these crimes.

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

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am here to support the bipartisan efforts and goals of my colleagues in S. Res. 310, which condemns the ongoing sexual violence perpetrated by ISIL against women and children from Yezidi and other religious communities.

The horrific and despicable actions of ISIL against women and girls who were kidnapped, enslaved, tortured, raped, and impregnated in conflict-affected regions there and others around the world are one of the horrors of terrorism. This resolution addresses it, but it could and should have gone much further. In fact, it lacks the recognition of the full range of support that Yezidi survivors of sexual violence desperately need. That is the reason that I offered two amendments to improve this important resolution, to urge the President to exercise his existing authority. No new author is necessary for him to provide and support age-appropriate, comprehensive post-violence care, including the provision of treatment to prevent HIV infection, trauma and surgical care, mental health services, social and legal support, and a full range of medically necessary reproductive health services, including emergency contraception, safe abortion care, and maternal health services.

When the horrors that ISIL inflicts on the Yezidis came to light in the New York Times report entitled ''ISIS Enshrines a Theology of Rape,'' including systematic rape of women and children in ISIL-held territory, I demanded that our great Nation take action. I refer my colleagues' attention to that article.

We cannot allow for the continued use of rape as a tool of warfare to destabilize and disrupt communities, to

exert control over women and girls, and in the case of the Yezidis, to impregnate them purposefully and relentlessly. Survivors should not be forced to carry pregnancies to full term simply because access to reproductive health care is not available following their vicious assault.

We cannot stand idly by while witnessing such violations of human rights and dignity. The United States must work to increase access to reproductive health care for the vulnerable populations, particularly safe abortion services, and most especially for the Yezidi girls and women who were purposefully impregnated as a tool of terrorism by ISIL.

I have called on the administration multiple times to confront this horror. In September, I wrote a letter with five of my Democratic colleagues to Secretary Kerry, calling on the State Department to declare Iraqi religious minorities, including the Yezidis, as protected priority groups so they could seek refugee assistance within Iraq's border.

In October, I wrote a letter with 27 of my Democratic colleagues, calling on the President to take action to properly implement existing law. Existing law includes the Helms amendment. Tomorrow is the 42nd anniversary of the Helms amendment. For its entire existence, the Helms amendment has been incorrectly interpreted, and it continues to serve as a critical obstacle in our foreign aid efforts to provide for safe abortions in the case of rape, incest, and life endangerment.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the letter and the response of the administration dated December 7, 2015, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, October 22, 2015.

President BARACK OBAMA,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We write to express our deep concern for the reproductive health of women and girls who are kidnapped, enslaved, tortured, raped, and impregnated in conflict-affected zones worldwide. Rape is increasingly used as a tool of warfare to destabilize communities, exert control over women and girls, and in some cases purposely impregnate them, as executed by Boko Haram in Nigeria and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in Syria and Iraq. Survivors are forced to carry pregnancies to full term because access to reproductive healthcare is not available following their assault. We cannot be bystanders to such gross violations of the human dignity of these women and girls. If the U.S. does not work to increase access to reproductive healthcare for vulnerable populations, particularly safe abortion services, there will be negative, long-term consequences. As such, we implore you to take the following actions to confront this crisis.

We request you take action to correct the overly constrained implementation of the Helms Amendment which serves as a critical barrier to safe abortion, particularly impacting women and girls fleeing conflict. Although the Helms Amendment prevents U.S. foreign aid from being used to perform abortions for family planning purposes, for over 40 years it has been incorrectly interpreted to prevent the use of foreign aid to fund safe abortions even in the cases of rape, incest, or life endangerment. These three cases clearly fall outside the restrictions enacted by the Helms Amendment. As such, we urge you to issue guidance to the relevant agencies, allowing them to support safe abortion services in at least the limited circumstances of rape, incest, or life endangerment, including for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

Subsequently, we urge you to exercise your existing authority to ensure U.S. foreign aid does not stand in the way of women and girls fleeing conflict who seek abortion services. The Helms Amendment restricts U.S. foreign aid from being used to pay for abortion even in countries where abortion is permissible by local law. For instance, although abortion remains illegal in Syria and Iraq, regional countries which receive U.S. foreign assistance—Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt—have welcomed millions of refugees and have varying legal exceptions or allowances for abortions related to rape, incest, or life endangerment, which are undermined by limitations imposed by this policy.

Finally, we applaud commitments made by this Administration to address these issues, including those made last year at the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict and those in the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (NAP). We request that you further strengthen actions taken under the NAP implementation plan. A high-level objective of the NAP is ensuring women's access to relief and recovery in a manner that recognizes the unique needs of women and girls in conflict-affected zones and the need to provide humanitarian services. As expressly noted in the NAP, women's access to relief and recovery can be addressed by ''support[ing] access to reproductive health in emergencies and humanitarian settings.'' As such, we encourage increased attention to this matter and request a report of the Administration's comprehensive review and update to the NAP, scheduled to be released this year. We also ask that the Administration provide an assessment of how the relevant agencies are fulfilling their respective duties to provide access to the full range of reproductive healthcare.

We look forward to working with you to ensure these actions are implemented. As the world's largest aid donor, the U.S. can and should endeavor to provide the reproductive healthcare that is desperately needed by some of the world's most vulnerable populations.

Sincerely,

Richard Blumenthal; Jeanne Shaheen; Kirsten E. Gillibrand; Barbara Boxer; Michael F. Bennet; Claire McCaskill; Mazie K. Hirono; Patty Murray; Edward J. Markey; Patrick J. Leahy; Al Franken; Sherrod Brown; Christopher A. Coons; Brian Schatz; Cory A. Booker; Elizabeth Warren; Maria Cantwell; Charles E. Schumer; Tammy Baldwin; Barbara A. Mikulski; Christopher Murphy; Richard J. Durbin; Ron Wyden; Bernard Sanders; Dianne Feinstein; Debbie Stabenow; Gary C. Peters; Amy Klobuchar.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, DC, December 7, 2015.

Hon. RICHARD BLUMENTHAL,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Thank you for your letter of October 22 to President Obama regarding your concern about access to reproductive health care in conflict settings. We have been asked to respond on the President's behalf.

The Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development take this issue very seriously. The Helms Amendment has prohibited since 1973 the use of U.S. foreign assistance to pay for the performance of abortion as a method of family planning or to motivate or coerce any person to practice abortions. We review our policies on an ongoing basis to ensure maximum effectiveness in improving health outcomes, including for those who are highly vulnerable to sexual violence because of conflict or other crises.

Through our policies and investments, we continue to demonstrate our commitment to rights and protection of women and girls worldwide. We do so by working with the international community, including the UN Population Fund, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and other development and humanitarian organizations. We work together to: respond to the challenges of increasing access to reproductive health services in crisis settings; strengthen global coordination to prevent sexual violence; promote justice and accountability; and provide health care, including sexual and reproductive health services.

The U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security outlines the United States' commitment to the protection and participation of women in a broad range of efforts to resolve conflict and sustain peace. The Department of State and other agencies are reviewing the NAP under the auspices of the National Security Council. This interagency review reflects our commitment to accountable implementation and rigorous learning of best practices. Upon completion of the review later this year, the Department would be pleased to brief you and your staff on relevant findings.

Your letter provides valuable input on these important issues. We welcome any additional input you or your staff may have, and look forward to continued dialogue.

Sincerely,

JULIA FRIFIELD,
Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. The letter very simply asks that the administration ''take action to correct the overly constrained implementation of the Helms amendment which serves as a critical barrier to safe abortion, particularly impacting women and girls fleeing conflict.'' The letter asks that the administration recognize that American foreign aid can be used to fund safe abortions even in the cases of rape, incest, or life endangerment. That is a very simple principle.

Preventing our foreign aid funds from being used for that purpose not only denies critical assistance to Yezidi girls and women, but also overly constrains the assistance of this great Nation to the victims of terror and horror abroad.

Today, the U.S. Senate will adopt S. Res. 310, and I have joined in supporting it. I am deeply disappointed that the administration has essentially denied even considering a change in policy. This action does not mean that the United States should be complacent regarding the dismal state of protection for the Yezidi girls and women.

The amendments I offered were rejected by my Republican colleagues,

and I understand my colleagues' goal of expressing concern for girls and women and others. Despite my reservation and profound disappointment with the administration's reaction to and the denial of these two amendments, I am supporting this resolution. I have withdrawn my amendments, recognizing the reality of our current situation on the floor of the U.S. Senate, but it remains essential that we recognize the full scope of the post-rape health care needed by survivors of rape. These victims have been hideously and gruesomely used as a tool of terrorism invoked by ISIL.

Fully countering ISIL's terrorist strategy means providing necessary and compassionate care for girls and women who have been victims and have been shunned by their families. They have been rejected by their communities. They have been victims many times over as a result of these heinous crimes committed against them.

I hope that my fellow Senators will join me as I continue to call on the administration to right this wrong. As the world's largest donor of assistance around the world, the United States can and should do better and do more to provide health care that girls and women vitally need when they become vulnerable and, in fact, victims of terror inflicted by these heinous criminal acts.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Lankford amendment to the resolution be agreed to; that the resolution, as amended, be agreed to; that the preamble be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 2931) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To define ''complicit'' for purposes of the resolution)

On page 3, line 4, insert ''by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria militants'' before the semicolon at the end.

On page 3, line 10, strike ''and''.

On page 4, line 2, strike the period at the end and inserting ''; and''.

On page 4, after line 2, add the following:

(4) defines ''complicit'', for purposes of this resolution, as having knowingly and willingly taken actions which have directly supported, promoted, enabled, aided, abetted, or encouraged crimes involving sexual violence against women and children from Yezidi, Christian, Shabak, Turkmen, or other religious communities by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria militants, including actively working to deny, cover up, or alter evidence of such crimes.

The resolution (S. Res. 310), as amended, was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 310

Whereas the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has publicly and systematically targeted communities on the basis of their religious identities, including Yezidis, Christians, Shi'a Muslims, Shabaks, Turkmens, and Kaka'i, in a campaign of violence that includes summary executions, beheadings, torture, arbitrary detainment, forced displacement, rape and sexual violence, and enslavement;

Whereas enslavement and sexual violence against women is a widespread practice among ISIS militants, who have, according to the Yezidi Affairs Directory, captured and enslaved as many as 5,500 Yezidis, including as many as 3,000 women, since August 2014;

Whereas ISIS has established a formal slave trade in which women and girls as young as 5 years old are systematically abducted, transported, categorized according to physical traits and perceived value, and traded among ISIS militants or sold for as little as $10;

Whereas the Research and Fatwa Department of ISIS has issued guidelines and directions for the enslavement of Yezidi women and children and has justified the actions on the basis of religious teachings;

Whereas the New York Times reported that ''the Islamic State has developed a detailed bureaucracy of sex slavery, including sales contracts notarized by the ISIS-run Islamic courts'';

Whereas according to various reports, including testimony before Congress by Khidher Domle, a Yezidi activist and Director of the Media Department at the University of Dohuk, the enslavement and sexual violence used against Yezidi women and children by ISIS militants in their attack on Mount Sinjar was premeditated;

Whereas ISIS has initiated the mass killing of Yezidi men and boys, the sexual violence and enslavement of Yezidi women and children, and the forced displacement of Christians and other religious communities;

Whereas the threat and reach of ISIS extends beyond Iraq and Syria into the rest of the world, as demonstrated by ISIS-affiliated attacks and recruitment of foreign fighters from the United States, Europe, Central Asia, and Africa;

Whereas, according to testimony presented before the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives on September 29, 2015, it is possible that one of the ISIS militants involved in the sexual slavery of Yezidi women and children is a United States citizen; and

Whereas the United States Government should investigate and urge prosecution of American citizens who are perpetrators of or complicit in such crimes: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the ongoing sexual violence against women and children from Yezidi, Christian, Shabak, Turkmen, and other religious communities by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria militants;

(2) calls on the Attorney General to commence the investigation and prosecution of any United States citizens alleged to be perpetrators of or complicit in these crimes and to report back to Congress what steps are being taken to investigate and urge the prosecution of those involved;

(3) calls on the Government of Iraq and the governments of other countries to identify individual perpetrators and individuals involved in these crimes and take appropriate measures to arrest and urge the prosecution of those individuals; and

(4) defines ''complicit'', for purposes of this resolution, as having knowingly and willingly taken actions which have directly supported, promoted, enabled, aided, abetted, or encouraged crimes involving sexual violence against women and children from Yezidi, Christian, Shabak, Turkmen, or other religious communities by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria militants, including actively working to deny, cover up, or alter evidence of such crimes.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Thursday, December 17; 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 6 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:52 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, December 17, 2015, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

THE JUDICIARY

PAUL LEWIS ABRAMS, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, VICE DEAN D. PREGERSON, RETIRED.

SUZANNE MITCHELL, OF OKLAHOMA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA, VICE DAVID L. RUSSELL, RETIRED.

SCOTT L. PALK, OF OKLAHOMA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA, VICE STEPHEN P. FRIOT, RETIRED.

RONALD G. RUSSELL, OF UTAH, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF UTAH, VICE BRIAN THEADORE STEWART, RETIRED.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 16, 2015:

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

THOMAS O. MELIA, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

GABRIEL CAMARILLO, OF TEXAS, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE.

MARCEL JOHN LETTRE, II, OF MARYLAND, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTELLIGENCE.

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be admiral

VICE ADM. KURT W. TIDD

NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

THOMAS EDGAR ROTHMAN, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 3, 2016.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

STEVEN MICHAEL HARO, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE TO CHUCK TURNER

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sorrow that I rise today to recognize Chuck Turner, a longtime Appropriations Committee professional staff member, who sadly passed away on December 8.

Chuck was a skillful appropriator, a beloved colleague, and a steadfast public servant. His 40-year career was dedicated to serving Congress, the Capitol Hill community, and the American people.

Chuck began his long career on Capitol Hill working for the Library of Congress, first in the U.S. Copyright Office, then in the Library's Financial Services Office, where he handled budget issues.

For the better part of the last 32 years, Chuck worked with the House Appropriations Legislative Branch Subcommittee: first on detail from the Library of Congress, and then—after proving himself to be invaluable—as senior staff for the Subcommittee.

His concern for and commitment to the Legislative Branch underscored everything he did. He consistently put the Committee and his work for the House before anything else.

He made sure that Members of Congress have the resources they need to do their legislative work on behalf of the American people. In particular, he maintained a deep affection for the Library of Congress—ensuring its work and collections remain available to the public and to the Members who rely on its information to do their jobs.

He also ensured that all who entered the Capitol Complex—be it staff, visitors, or the Members themselves—are safe—protected by a well-equipped Capitol Police force, in solid and secure facilities. His life's work can be felt each time you set foot in the Capitol Complex.

Chuck was recognized for his expertise and good work on more than one occasion. He was called upon to serve as a Special Investigator for the Select Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina. He took part in a staff delegation to Indonesia to help train members of the Indonesian parliament and their staff on the legislative budget process. And for several years, he not only worked with the House Legislative Branch Subcommittee, but he also helped the Senate with writing their Legislative Branch Appropriations bill.

Chuck was truly the epitome of a devoted public servant—he worked until the very end.

On a more personal level, Chuck was beloved by all those he worked with. His kindness, consideration, easy sense of humor, and loyal friendship is something that all could aspire to. The Legislative Branch, the House, and the Appropriations Committee will be a lesser place without him.

I want to thank Chuck for his decades of service, and for leaving his final mark on this institution—the Legislative Branch bill that will be a part of the final, fiscal year 2016 omnibus legislation. His presence will be deeply missed in the halls of the Capitol.

TRIBUTE TO KAY RAYMOND

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Kay Raymond, of Creston, Iowa, for being selected as Creston Volunteer of the Year for 2015.

Kay spent a number years teaching special education before retiring 12 years ago. After retirement, Kay decided to use her free time to continue giving back to her community. Now she volunteers numerous hours a week as a volunteer for Friends of the Library, as a member and volunteer at the YMCA, and also gives back as a member of her church and at other local organizations.

Mr. Speaker, Kay's dedication to her community and her fellow Iowans is a true testament to her character. Her efforts embody the Iowa spirit and I am honored to represent her and Iowans like her in the United States Congress. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Kay for her achievements and wishing her nothing but continued success.

RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF PHIL ROMANO

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, tonight I want to recognize the life and achievements of a brilliant and fascinating man—Phil Romano. Now, although Mr. Romano is not originally from Texas, he falls into the category of people who moved there as quickly as he could. A man that cannot easily be entertained, Mr. Romano bounced around the country before making Dallas his home, and bounced through multiple successful business projects before settling with a self-proclaimed and modest title: entrepreneur. However, Mr. Romano is much more than an entrepreneur. He is rich in character, and Dallas is proud to be his home.

Mr. Romano is best known for his successful career in the restaurant industry. His business ventures brought Texas as well as the nation beloved institutions such as Fuddruckers, Romano's Macaroni Grill, and Eatzi's. These business ventures solidified his status as a successful businessman, but Mr. Romano helped satisfy much more than people's appetites.

When Mr. Romano was working with a small venture capital firm SHD Management LLC, he had the keen eye to spot a good product. After talking to a cardiologist named Julio Palmaz, Mr. Romano agreed to invest capital and run the business operations for the balloon-expandable heart stent. It ended up becoming over a 10 million dollar invention, but more impressively than that, it saved countless lives, including Mr. Romano's, who now uses a heart stent after he helped invent it. When he worked in the restaurant industry he touched people's stomachs, and when he was a venture capitalist he touched people's hearts.

However, his success is most tangible in the impact he has on Dallas. His most recent project, Trinity Groves, will provide a community space for entrepreneurs to grow, businesses to invest, and people to enjoy. In addition to that, his affinity for art, embodied not only in his home but in his studio on Dragon Street in Dallas, will solidify his legacy as a brilliant and deep man.

Mr. Speaker, whether it was with a burger, a heart stent, a community, or a painting, throughout his life, Phil Romano has left a Texas-sized impression on Dallas, the city he loves that loves him back.

THE CHRISTIAN AND YEZIDI GENOCIDE

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, each day, our newspapers, magazines, radios and television screens are filled with images of people fleeing territory controlled by the Islamic jihadist group known as the Islamic State of al-Sham, or ISIS.

More than half of the 635,000 refugees—an estimated 53 percent—in Europe are from Syria alone, according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees or UNHCR.

While violence plays the major role in the impetus of Syrians to leave their homes, Shelly Pitterman of the UNHCR testified at a hearing I chaired on October 20th that the main trigger for flight from refugee camps or shelter in nations like Jordan is the humanitarian funding shortfall. In recent months, he told us that the World Food Programme cut its program by 30 percent, and the current Syrian Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan for 2015 is only 41 percent funded. The UNHCR expects to receive just 47 percent of the funding it needs for Syria over the next year.

One year ago this month, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs issued a report that detailed a worsening humanitarian situation in Syria. An estimated 12.21 million were in need of humanitarian assistance, including 7.6 million internally displaced people and more than 5.6 million children in need of assistance. An estimated 4.8 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance in hard to reach areas

and locations. Those numbers have not improved as the conflict has continued.

By the third international pledging conference on March 31, 2015, the crisis had become the largest displacement crisis in the world, with 3.8 million people having fled to Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt, in addition to those internally displaced. In support of the Syria Response Plan and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan, international donors pledged US$3.8 billion. However, according to the Financial Tracking Service at the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs or OCHA, only $1.17 billion of $2.89 billion in the plan had been received as of December 7th. This constitutes only 41% of what is considered necessary by OCHA.

Last week's hearing focused on the plight of persecuted religious minorities in Syria and Iraq, which constitutes genocide, and the failure of much of the international community to live up to their pledges of humanitarian assistance, factors which ''push'' refugees to Europe and beyond. In particular, we will examine violence targeting religious minorities such as Christians and Yezidis (a non-Islamic religious minority) in territory controlled by ISIS in Syria and Iraq.

This past September, the Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum undertook a ''Bearing Witness'' trip to northern Iraq to investigate allegations of genocide being committed by ISIS. In a report entitled ''Our Generation is Gone'' The Islamic State's Targeting of Iraqi Minorities in Ninevah,'' the report stated that: ''Based upon the public record and private eyewitness accounts, we believe the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) perpetrated crimes against humanity, war crimes, and ethnic cleansing against Christian, Yezidi, Turkmen, Shabak, Sabaean-Mandaean, and Kaka'i people in Ninevah province between June and August 2014. In our interviews, we heard accounts of the forcible transfer of populations, severe deprivation of physical liberty, rape, sexual slavery, enslavement, and murder perpetrated in a widespread and systematic manner that indicates a deliberate plan to target religious and ethnic minorities. Some specific communities—notably the Yezidi, but also Shia Shabak and Shia Turkmen—were targeted for attack.''

Mirza Ismail, Chairman and Founder of the Yezidi Human Rights Organization-International, testified that the Yezidis are on the verge of annihilation.

Chaldean Bishop Francis Kalabat testified that, ''There are countless Christian villages in Syria who have been taken over by ISIS and have encountered genocide and the Obama administration refuses to recognize their plight.''

Carl Anderson, Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus, calls on the Obama administration to publicly acknowledge that genocide is taking place against the Christian communities of Iraq and Syria. Mr. Anderson testified that ''vulnerable religious minorities fear taking shelter in the camps of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees because of religiously motivated violence and intimidation inside the camps.'' ''Syrian Christians'', he notes, ''and other vulnerable minorities are disproportionately excluded from the U.S. Syrian Refugee Resettlement Program due to reliance on a functionally discriminatory UNHCR program.''

Dr. Gregory Stanton, President of Genocide Watch and research professor at George Mason University, in his testimony entitled ''Weak Words Are Not Enough'', he states, ''Failure to call ISIS' mass murder of Christians, Muslims, and other groups in addition to Yazidis by its proper name—genocide—would be an act of denial as grave as U.S. refusal to recognize the Rwandan genocide in 1994.''

The administration reportedly is considering declaring the ISIS treatment of Yezidis to be genocide, but there is no indication that Christians will be included. That's absurd. Such an action would be contrary to the facts and tragically wrong. Last year, a United Nations resolution determined that both Yezidis and Christians were being particularly targeted by ISIS.

A group of Christian leaders recently wrote to Secretary of State John Kerry to present their case for treating Christians the same as Yezidis in this matter, but they have not received a reply thus far.

As we attempt to end the ISIS threat, we must consider how to help ensure religious pluralism in Syria and Iraq in the future. That will not be an easy task since animosities have grown during the conflicts in Iraq and Syria, exponentially so during the rise and reign of terror of ISIS. Nevertheless, unless we consider how to help make these lands safe for religious minorities, we will continue to see them chased out of their traditional areas even if there is no ISIS.

Our witnesses last week provided us a picture of the ongoing struggle faced by religious minorities in ISIS territory, and hopefully, they will help us to begin the discussion of making these areas safe for their people in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO GRACIE RUSSELL

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Gracie Russell for being selected as the Creston Youth of the Year. Gracie is the daughter of Rob and Julie Russell.

Gracie is a senior at Creston High School and is active in FFA, volleyball, basketball, tennis, and the National Honor Society. She's also active in the community, volunteering her time with the Appalachian Service Project, Union County Youth Council, St. Malachy Youth Group, Douglas Boosters 4–H Club, and Iowa Junior Beef Breeds Association. Gracie has also participated in Meals from the Heartland, roadside cleanup, Rectory Rerun time, painting at McKinley Park, decorating the restored Creston Depot for Christmas activities, Balloon Days pedal pull time, Halloween safety at Early Childhood Center, planting trees around the community, and Open Table.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by Gracie is one all Iowans should strive for. Her willingness to serve truly embodies the Iowa spirit and I am honored to represent her and Iowans like her in the United States Congress. I ask that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Gracie for this achievement and wishing her nothing but continued success.

HOUSTON'S BEST FROM TX–22

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Darius Anderson from George Ranch High School for being named the Touchdown Club of Houston's Offensive Player of the Year.

This running back sure can run. During his award winning senior year, Darius has rushed for over 1,700 yards and has 27 touchdowns. A young man of character and a strong work ethic, he no doubt makes his parents, coaches, and teachers proud. The next trophy in his sights? The football state championship trophy he and his teammates will compete for this weekend. Best of luck to Darius and his Longhorn teammates.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations to Darius for all of his success. We look forward to seeing where his football career takes him.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed Roll Call vote number 694. Had I been present, I would have voted aye on Roll Call vote number 694.

TRIBUTE TO CURT TURNER

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Curt Turner, of Creston, Iowa, for being selected as the Creston Citizen of the Year.

Curt Turner graduated from Diagonal High School as valedictorian and attended the United States Air Force Academy Preparatory School in Colorado Springs. He moved to Creston in 1978 and opened his own insurance agency, American Family Insurance, in 1986. By the time Curt retired in 2008, he had led the company nationally in farm sales for 10 consecutive years. During his 22 years of working in insurance, he was also a major contributor to the Creston community. He was a member of the Elks, served on the school board from 1990–1999, remains an active member of his church, and in his retirement, continues to serve the community as a local Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) volunteer.

Mr. Speaker, Curt's dedication to his community and willingness to serve represents all that is great with our state. His efforts embody the Iowa spirit and I am honored to represent him and Iowans like him in the United States Congress. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Curt for his achievements and wishing him nothing but continued success.

HONORING TED BEATTIE

HON. MIKE QUIGLEY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the President of Shedd Aquarium, Ted A. Beattie.

After more than two decades of leadership at a world renowned aquarium, Mr. Beattie is retiring with a career record dedicated to advancing conservation and education of animals and ecosystems. Mr. Beattie came to Shedd Aquarium in January 1994 as the third President/CEO. During his tenure, his leadership and vision for the aquarium have led to the development and opening of six permanent exhibits, including the addition of Wild Reef and the re-imagination of Shedd's Abbott Oceanarium marine mammal pavilion.

Beyond that, Mr. Beattie oversaw the establishment of the Daniel P. Haerther Center for Conservation and Research, which now includes a portfolio of eighteen global field research programs that span the world. He also added Shedd's onsite animal hospital and lab facilities within the A. Watson Armour III Center for Aquatic Animal Health and Welfare, introduced a Master Energy Road Map designed to cut the aquarium's energy consumption in half by 2020, opened the Shedd's Teen Learning Lab, and helped the aquarium earn a position in Chicago's top-attended paid cultural attraction for 17 of the last 21 years.

It is clear that Mr. Beattie's contributions to the aquarium have been extensive, but more broadly, he has contributed to the positive transformation of Museum Campus. This 57 acre addition to Grant Park is the heart of exploration and discovery for millions of visitors along Chicago's lakefront.

The impact of Mr. Beattie's leadership will be greatly missed by Shedd Aquarium and the City of Chicago. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring and celebrating his work and accomplishments.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, December 15, I missed votes due to being unavoidably detained as a result of weather-related flight delays. Had I been present, I would have voted in support of roll call vote Number 694.

TRIBUTE TO REV. OLLIE AND ALTHA ODLE

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Rev. Ollie and Altha Odle on the very special occasion of their 70th wedding anniversary. They were married on November 24, 1945 in Kansas City, Kansas.

Rev. Ollie and Altha's lifelong commitment to each other and their children, Terry, Ollie Jr. and Kathie, truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Odles 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.

THE GOLDMAN ACT TO RETURN ABDUCTED AMERICAN CHILDREN: ENSURING ADMINISTRATION ACTION

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, last month, I chaired the fourth oversight hearing this year on implementation of the Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act.

The Goldman Act empowers the executive branch with powerful new tools and a myriad of ways to successfully resolve parental child abduction cases. Like any law, however, it is only as good as its implementation.

Historically, 750–1,000 American children are unlawfully removed from their homes each year by one of their parents and taken across international borders.

International parental child abduction rips children from their homes and takes them away to a foreign land, alienating them from the love and care of the parent and family left behind.

Child abduction is child abuse. Its negative impact on the children and left behind families can last for years—even a lifetime.

Two of our witnesses at the hearing—like many who were there and are around the country—know first-hand the trauma, the tears, the excruciating pain, and the longing and heartbreak of parental child abduction.

David Goldman's son Sean was abducted to Brazil and unlawfully retained for approximately 5½ years. Mr. Goldman tenaciously pursued every legal means of return including expert counsel in his quest to bring Sean home. Today father and son are thriving.

Captain Paul Toland continues his heroic 12 year quest to bring his 13 year old daughter, Erica, home from Japan. Captain Toland refuses to quit or be deterred despite years of frustration and setbacks—such is this father's incredible love for his precious daughter.

Our first hope is to prevent, or at least mitigate the number of, abductions and the State Department is to be commended for implementing a provision of the Goldman Act that adds children that a judge has determined to be at risk of abduction to a "no fly" list. In 2014, we saw a decrease in the number of new abductions—150 fewer new cases than the previous year.

But I am concerned that the State Department has chosen not to impose any sanctions on any of those nations found to have engaged in a "pattern of noncompliance."

The Goldman Act, however, requires State Department action on individual cases that have been pending for more than a year if the foreign government has not been taking adequate steps to resolve the case.

The Goldman Act also requires action when, collectively, a country has high numbers of cases—30 percent or more—that have been unresolved for over a year; or if the government is failing in their duties under the Hague Convention or other bilateral agreement; or if their law enforcement fails to enforce return or access orders.

The Goldman Act not only shines a light on a country's record through the annual designation of countries showing a "pattern of noncompliance", it holds countries accountable and incentivizes systemic reform. Actions escalate in severity, and range from official protests through diplomatic channels, to public condemnation, to extradition, to the suspension of development, security, or other foreign assistance.

The Goldman Act was designed to raise the stakes on the foreign country's inaction or obstruction, and move the country to end the nightmare of abduction.

In July we reviewed the State Department's first annual report on abduction and access resolution rates around the world. The annual report had some major gaps and misleading information, some of which were corrected by the Supplemental Data posted by the State Department in August.

Tragically, in contravention of both the spirit and letter of the Goldman Act, the State Department failed to list Japan—with more than 50 abduction cases—among the 22 countries showing a "pattern of noncompliance" and therefore eligible for Goldman Act sanctions. This glaring omission sent the unfortunate signal that pre-Hague Japan cases were no longer a top priority—cases like that of Sgt. Michael Elias who has been denied any contact with his two young children, Jade and Michael, after they were abducted to Japan in 2008.

In September the State Department sent to Congress its first 90 day report on actions it took to bring the 22 most difficult countries to the resolution table.

Those actions included demarches, judicial rulings, and meetings—all of which are necessary and of value—but noticeably absent was the imposition of any number of meaningful sanctions prescribed by the Goldman Act.

I respectfully submit that this was a missed opportunity to convey to "pattern of non-compliance" nations that the United States is absolutely serious about resolving parental abduction. The imposition of sanctions says we mean business. (Sanctions are imposed on an entity to enforce civil rights laws and other policies of paramount importance)

Notwithstanding section 103 of the Goldman Act, the Report makes no mention of MOUs or bilateral agreements to resolve cases—including and especially cases that existed prior to Japan's ratification of the Hague.

I—and others—have raised this concern for several years, especially for victims of Japan's policies. Perhaps Assistant Secretary Bond can tell us if any bilateral agreements or MOUs are in the works.

The report details the State Department's efforts to persuade India to ratify the Hague Convention—a step that if not combined with an MOU to resolve current abduction cases, which number about 75, we risk replicating the extraordinary misery endured by left behind

parents after Japan ratified the Hague. If India ratified the Hague it will—like Japan—grandfather preexisting cases out of the convention resolution process.

Bindu Philips, mother of Albert and Alfred, has struggled with her ex-husband in Indian courts for the return of her sons for nearly nine years. Ravi Parmar has been fighting for his son's return for three years.

Section 201 of the Goldman Act also requires the State Department to conduct a review of individual cases pending 12 months or more to discern whether the foreign government has taken adequate steps to resolve the case or whether actions are warranted. This is the ''individual case'' trigger for actions (as opposed to the ''pattern of noncompliance'' country trigger). Despite a half-dozen Congressional letters from various members of Congress asking for Sec. 201 reviews of egregious cases, the State Department, to my knowledge, has not done a single review, much less applied actions.

I am encouraged by a press statement by Secretary of State John Kerry.

While noting that the Goldman Act provides ''additional tools to advocate for the return of abducted children'' he states ''there can be no safe haven for abductors. The Department of State will continue to use all the tools available to us to help those involved in international parental child abduction cases to resolve their disputes and move forward with their lives.''

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL LUIS VISOT

HON. DAVID W. JOLLY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Major General Luis R. Visot of the United States Army Reserve who will retire after more than 37 years of exceptionally distinguished service culminating in assignment as Chief of Staff, Army Reserve. As Chief of Staff, Major General Visot oversaw staff operations at both the United States Army Reserve Command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and the Office of the Chief of Army Reserve at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. He immediately set out to improve efficiencies within and between the staffs to improve the quality and speed of decision making processes through deliberate staff interaction both vertically and horizontally. I am grateful for his and his family's life of service to the Army Reserve and wish him well as he transitions into retirement.

Born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, MG Visot was commissioned as a 2LT in May 1978. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI and a Master's in Education from the University of Georgia in Athens, GA. MG Visot received a Master's in Strategic Studies from the United States Army War College. His military education includes: Infantry Airborne Basic Course, Quartermaster Officer Basic Course, Transportation Officer Advanced Course, Command and General Staff College, the Associate Logistics Executive Development Course, the United States Army War College, the Advanced Joint Military Professional Education (AJPME), the Joint Flag Officer Warfighting Course, and CAPSTONE.

Prior to assuming responsibilities as Chief of Staff, Major General Visot served as the Deputy Commanding General (Operations), United States Army Reserve Command from May 2012 to April 2014. During his tenure as DCG–O, he ably assisted the Chief of Army Reserve (CAR)/Commanding General, United States Army Reserve Command (USARC) in establishing and executing operational and strategic priorities consistent with those of Forces Command and Secretary of the Army. Major General Visot guided the Command as it provided continuous support to the war effort and executed multiple contingency deployments in support of the Global War on Terrorism. Major General Visot executed delegated Mission Command over sixteen USARC Operational and Functional (O&F) Commands (over 160K Soldiers and $282 million OMAR and $567 million RPA budgets) to synchronize/integrate ARFORGEN implementation and consolidate the readiness focus.

With more than 37 years of Active Duty in support of the Army Reserve, MG Visot's distinguished career is marked by tremendous accomplishments, impacting across the breadth and depth of the Total Army. He is a leader who genuinely cares for Soldiers, Civilians and Families. Nothing is more important to him than caring for our Nation's most precious resource—our Soldiers. As a Citizen Soldier himself, Major General Visot is acutely aware of the challenges and sacrifices of Army Reserve Soldiers as they balance the demands of service to the Nation, community, and family well-being. He enthusiastically fostered a command culture emphasizing ''Care for our Soldiers'' and held Leaders accountable for the wellbeing of our Soldiers on and off duty. Major General Visot has proven to be a pivotal leader in the Army Reserve. His impassioned leadership focus will have a positive influence on the Army Reserve for years to come.

As with all our Citizen Soldiers, it is important that we acknowledge the University of South Florida for their outstanding support as MG Visot's civilian employer. It is because of their cooperation and understanding during his many tours on Active Duty that he was able to make such a positive impact on the Army Reserve.

It is only fair and proper to acknowledge the tireless support of his wife, Dr. Cindy S. Visot, as her love and support enabled MG Visot to work tirelessly on his assigned duties. Dr. Visot is the Chief of Staff and the Director of Board of Trustees Operations at the University of South Florida. Let us thank her for all her sacrifices throughout their service. We congratulate MG and Dr. Visot on their many years of distinguished service and wish them continued success in the future.

UNDEFEATED COACH OF THE YEAR

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Coach Ricky Tullos for being named the Touchdown Club of Houston's Coach of the Year.

Coach Tullos has helped the young George Ranch Longhorn football program write quite a success story. Under Tullos' guidance, the Longhorns are 44–8 and undefeated this season. His players love the intensity he brings to the game and have great respect for him as a leader. This weekend, Coach Tullos will coach his team to victory in the state championship game. Coach Tullos, keep doing what you're doing and bring home the championship. Good luck to you and your team this weekend.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations to Coach Tullos for being named Coach of the Year. The Longhorns are lucky to have a leader and mentor like him.

TRIBUTE TO ZACK PEPPMEIER

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Zack Peppmeier, of Shannon City, Iowa for earning the American FFA Degree. Zack was recently awarded this degree at the National FFA Convention and Expo in Louisville, Kentucky, on October 31.

The American FFA Degree is awarded to members who have demonstrated the highest level of commitment to FFA and made significant accomplishments in their supervised agricultural experience. Zack had to meet certain requirements, such as studying agriculture for three years in high school, earning money in an agriculture field and investing that money into their business, as well as participating in community service and having a record of outstanding leadership ability and community involvement. Overall, Zack spent four years working towards and meeting these requirements, and his hard work and years of dedication has paid off.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to represent leaders like Zack in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize him today. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating him on receiving this esteemed designation, and in wishing him the best of luck in all his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING DARRIELLE KING OF DESOTO FOR BEING RANKED AS THE EIGHTH-BEST SENIOR RECRUIT IN THE NATION BY THE PREPVOLLEYBALL.COM

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I recognize Darrielle King. She is an Under Armour Second Team All American and a nominee for Gatorade Player of the Year.

King was an outstanding defensive player on the volleyball court, totaling 147 solo blocks and 124 block assists. The All-Stater had 243 kills and was named District 8–6A's outstanding blocker.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 30th Congressional District of Texas, I ask all of my distinguished colleagues to join me in congratulating Darrielle King for her outstanding recognition on and off the volleyball court.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, due to a funeral I attended in California, I was unable to cast my vote for Roll Call 694. Had I been present I would have voted:

YES—H. Res. 536, Supporting freedom of the press in Latin America and the Caribbean and condemning violations of press freedom and violence against journalists, bloggers, and individuals exercising their right to freedom of speech.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT AND EVELYN BIRKBY

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Robert and Evelyn Birkby of Sidney, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 69th wedding anniversary. They were married on November 3, 1946 at the Sidney Methodist Church in Sidney, Iowa.

Robert and Evelyn's lifelong commitment to each other and their family truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Birkbys that make me proud to represent our great state.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 69th 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.

CELEBRATING THE RETIREMENT OF MS. TERRI CROOK FROM THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate Ms. Terri Crook as she retires from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), after serving 37 years as a Revenue Officer in the Collection Function.

Terri received a Bachelor's of Science degree from Florida State University (FSU) in 1980. In 1991, she was selected as a Group Manager in the Collection Function. She later became an Analyst and served 401 Taxpayer Assistance Centers nationwide. In 2009, she was selected as the Local Taxpayer Advocate for South Florida and was ultimately selected to head an Innovative Training Team within the Taxpayer Advocate Service.

Terri's passion for advocacy and counseling to various taxpayers and organizations throughout South Florida is to be commended. She has devoted herself to serving as a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Volunteer every year during Filing Season. In this capacity, she has prepared tax returns for people living in low-income areas.

In her personal time, she co-wrote and directed a one woman show entitled, "Don't Be No Whole Fool Cause Life Ain't No Dress Rehearsal," and donated all the proceeds from the show to charity. Furthermore, she has also helped children at her local Boys and Girls Club develop their public speaking skills.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pride to recognize Ms. Terri Crook on her retirement from the IRS. I want to thank her for her years of service, and wish her all the very best as she embarks on a new chapter in her life.

PATENT NO LONGER PENDING

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate young Liliana Segura of Katy, Texas for recently being awarded a patent from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO).

While a student at Beckendorff Junior High, she was fortunate enough to enroll in a Gifted and Talented Independent Study with Mentorship course. During this course, Liliana brilliantly invented a new clipboard design and worked with her mentor to file a patent application with the USPTO as an eighth grader. Her design for the "Particulate Collecting Pad" was awarded a patent for her insightful and ingenious creation. Liliana's invention is a testament to the innovation and ideas our students are capable of achieving when given the opportunity.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Liliana on her now patented invention. Keep working hard and dreaming big.

HONORING 100TH ANNIVERSARY FOR 31ST STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the members of the 31st Street Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia on their 100th anniversary.

During the turn of the last century, African Americans continued to face significant oppression and discrimination. In 1895, despite the adversity facing the Black community, African American Baptist Churches came together to form the National Baptist Convention of the United States to strengthen and unify Baptist Churches. Today, it is the largest predominately Black Christian denomination in the United States.

The 31st Street Baptist Church grew out of this movement and was consecrated in 1915. The church quickly established itself as a leading voice in the Richmond community and its congregation rapidly grew. Members were active in the community and encouraged to attend the historic March on Washington in 1963. Sadly in 1966, the church structure was burned down. But out of the ashes, 31st Street Baptist Church persevered and its current sanctuary was built.

From 1982 to 2007, Reverend Darrel Rollins led the church. Under his leadership the church prospered even further. The congregation grew from 150 to 1,300 and the church added more than 50 new ministries. These ministries included assistance to seniors, nutrition assistance, and a consortium of three sister churches. Today, the Church feeds 70 to 250 people a day during the summer in the East End community. The physical building of the church has also grown and has become accessible to all.

More recently, the 31st Baptist Church was recognized by the Tricycle Gardens, a nonprofit working to expand access to healthy foods in Richmond, with the Golden Trowel award for the church's community garden that contributes to the food available at their soup kitchen. The garden has continued to grow under Rev. Dr. Morris Henderson's leadership and has even received a farm serial number from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The First Lady's Let's Move! Initiative has also recognized the church and its urban farm for its positive impact on the community. This unique garden is just one of the many ways that 31st Baptist Church has served and enriched the Richmond community.

Mr. Speaker, as the 31st Street Baptist Church of Richmond, Virginia celebrates this historic anniversary, the congregation can rejoice in 100 years of fellowship and service to the Richmond community. I wish them many more years of joy and dedicated service to the community.

TRIBUTE TO THE NORWALK HIGH SCHOOL DEBATE TEAM

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Norwalk High School Debate Team for winning State Debate Championship for the first time in 22 years.

I would like to congratulate each member of the team:

Varsity Debaters: Joe Oswald, Collin Kilgore, Melinda Klawonn, Alex Johnson, Liah Moeller, and Noah Percy

Coach: Jenipher Sutherland

Mr. Speaker, the success of this team and their coach demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. I am honored to represent them in the United States Congress. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating these young people for competing in this rigorous competition and wishing them all nothing but continued success.

MRS. SUZANNE WRIGHT

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I recently learned that Suzanne Wright, co-founder of Autism Speaks and a member of the organization's board, has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer Suzanne is taking a leave of absence from her work with Autism Speaks to focus on her medical care.

In 2005, Suzanne and Bob Wright co-founded Autism Speaks after their grandson Christian was diagnosed with autism. Over the last ten years, Autism Speaks has become a world leader in educating people about autism spectrum disorder and advocating for individuals with autism.

Since Autism Speaks' founding, Suzanne has led the organization's signature global awareness initiatives. She was instrumental in establishing April 2nd as World Autism Awareness Day by the United Nations, for example, and she launched the global Light It Up Blue campaign and established World Focus on Autism, Autism Speaks' annual meeting of First Ladies from around the globe.

Suzanne has been a tireless advocate for autistic individuals and their families. She is known to countless families for her personal notes and generosity, as well as for her leadership and support of many Autism Speaks Walks around the country. I urge my colleagues to keep Suzanne in their thoughts and prayers and to continue to be motivated by her example.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MIKE POMPEO

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. POMPEO. Mr. Speaker, on roll call votes nos. 690 through 693, on Friday, December 11, 2015, I was unable to cast my vote in person due to a previously scheduled engagement. Had I been present, I would have voted yes on roll calls 690, 691, and 693. I would have voted no on roll call 692.

TRIBUTE TO KATIE PATTERSON

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Katie Patterson for being named an Innovation Iowa—Women of Innovation award winner in 2015.

In November, the Technology Association of Iowa honored 10 Iowa women with innovation awards. This is an award that elevates and celebrates today's extraordinary women and recognizes women who are leaders in science, technology, engineering, and math. Katie was recognized as a Rising Star. She is the founder of Happy Medium, a digital media and advertising agency.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to represent leaders like Katie in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I congratulate her for utilizing her talents to better both the community of Des Moines and the state of Iowa. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Katie on receiving this esteemed designation, and in wishing her nothing but continued success.

CLASS 1A—ARCOLA HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM STATE CHAMPIONS

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the Purple Raiders of Arcola Jr. Sr. High School as the IHSA Class 1A high school state champions.

On November 27, 2015 Arcola defeated Stark County by 35–17 winning the Class 1A State Championship. I would like to recognize the effort of this amazing team and congratulate them on their historic season as they celebrate their first state championship title in 27 years.

I would also like to congratulate the Strader family. Brothers Clayton and Connor and their cousin Chase for contributing to six touchdowns and several tackles. Tommy Eddleman, Jim Fishel, Aldo Garcia, Chad Hopkins, Jarod Kiger, and John Lidy make up the coaching staff which supported Athletic Director and Head Coach, Zach Zehr to provide great leadership for these talented football players.

I look forward to the continued success of the Arcola Jr. Sr. High School. I extend my best wishes for another outstanding season next year.

The following are Arcola Purple Raider Varsity Football players: Conner Strader, Clayton Strader, Parker Ingram, Kollin Seaman, Martin Rund, Daniel Mendoza, Victor Gonzalez, Myles Roberts, Blake Lindenmeyer, Seth Still, Chase Strader, Mario Cortez, Sam Crane, Alec Downs, Tony Salinas, Wyatt Fishel, Giovanni Salinas, Brandon Lebeter, Cole Hutton, Rey Garza, Ethan Still, Mason Gentry, Javi Leal, Pablo Rodriguez, Kaleb Byard, Jonny Garza, Dalton Pantier, Gavin Coombe, Luke Spencer, Tito Garcia, Clayton Kuhring, Jack Spencer, Alex Kauffman, Aaron Dudley, Grant McPherson, Jorge Garza, and Jack Nacke.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 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 $18,775,084,981,439.86. We've added $8,140,759,141,496.86 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.

TRIBUTE TO CINDY THOMPSON

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Cindy Thompson of Council Bluffs, Iowa, for being honored with the Outstanding Individual Leader Award by the Iowa Tourism Office and the Travel Federation of Iowa.

Cindy has worked for the Pottawattamie County Conservation Board and the communities in southwest Iowa since 1989. She spends her time working on tourism projects throughout the area. The leadership skills she demonstrates has helped the tourism industry to grow and expand in southwest Iowa. Cindy contributes her success to the great people with whom she has had the privilege to work.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud and congratulate Cindy for earning this award. It is because of Iowans like her that I'm proud to represent the people of our great state. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Cindy for this outstanding accomplishment and in wishing her nothing but continued success.

IN RECOGNITION OF RETIREMENT OF DEBBIE LOCKE-DANIEL

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of Debbie Locke-Daniel and her many years of service to the City of Ypsilanti and Washtenaw County. Mrs. Locke-Daniel served as the President and CEO of the Ypsilanti Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (Visit YPSI) where she used her business acumen to help successfully market the Ypsilanti-Ann Arbor area as a destination for numerous meetings, events and conventions. Known for her relentless work ethic and leadership talents, Mrs. Locke-Daniel has enabled the Ypsilanti area to grow its economy and promote its strengths across Michigan and the nation.

Mrs. Locke-Daniel is a true community leader and has served on numerous boards including a leadership role as Past Chair of the MotorCities National Area Partnership which works to cultivate an appreciation for the rich heritage of Michigan's auto industry. Mrs. Locke-Daniel also served as Vice President of the Board for the Ypsilanti Wheels on Meals, which delivers prepared meals to homebound, disabled, and infirmed residents, and earned the 2012 Ypsilanti Kiwanis Community Service Award for her efforts. In addition, she has been a board member of both the Marnee Divine Foundation (Catholic Social Services in Washtenaw County) and the Michigan Firehouse Museum.

Visit YPSI is more than a tourism agency; it is a vehicle for economic and community development. For many years, this organization has awarded grants to small communities such as Manchester, Dexter, and Superior Township. These grants have been used to create town entry signs, public maps, and

landscaping alterations with the hope of increased tourism activity. Without Mrs. Locke-Daniel's vision and stewardship of funds, many communities would not have had the ability to further their own economic growth projects which is critical to the success of our region.

One of the remarkable achievements of Visit YPSI was its receipt of the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program designation. This international accreditation recognizes entities for their high level performance in destination marketing and management. To date, only one percent of convention and visitors bureaus within Michigan, and seven percent nationally, have earned this prestigious recognition.

Mrs. Locke-Daniel was largely responsible for forming a team which was able to create a body of work that met such stringent international standards. Described as the ultimate team player, the success of Visit YPSI has been attributed to her ability to empower staff to seek creative solutions and grow within their positions.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today to honor and congratulate Mrs. Debbie Locke-Daniel on her retirement and years of service to her community. Although she will be missed, her achievements will continue to have a positive impact on our community for years to come.

HONORING THE LIFE AND DEDICATED SERVICE OF NORTHWEST FLORIDA'S JAMES RANDELL ''RANDY'' STOKES, SR.

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is with profound sadness that I rise to honor the life and dedicated service of James Randell ''Randy'' Stokes, Sr. of Fort Walton Beach, Florida, who died on December 8, 2015.

Mr. Stokes was born in Andalusia, Alabama in the fall of 1932. During the Korean War, he left high school to join the United States Army and became an intelligence sergeant. Although only 18 years old, he graduated in the top eight from the Light Artillery Battalion Leadership School. In 1952, Mr. Stokes was honorably discharged and returned home to Andalusia to finish high school, where he lettered in football, basketball, baseball, and track. Following graduation, he attended Troy State University to play football and study engineering. Then, in 1954, he transferred to Auburn University where he received his Bachelor's degree in Architecture.

In 1959, Mr. Stokes moved to Fort Walton Beach, the city he would call home until his passing. Upon arriving in Florida, he began working at Ricks and Kendrick Architect, Inc. and became partner after 10 years. In 1988, he started his own firm—Stokes Architectural, Inc.

Mr. Stokes has been honored by the Florida Association of the American Institute of Architects for his leadership and community service benefitting the profession of architecture. His architectural work is on display in many Northwest Florida landmarks, including Saint Mary's School and Church in Fort Walton Beach, Niceville High School, Choctawhatchee High School, Fort Walton Beach High School, Northwest Florida State College, the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce building, the Walton County Chamber of Commerce building, White Wilson Medical Center, and Westwood Retirement Center, among others.

In addition to his architectural contributions, Mr. Stokes was a leader in Northwest Florida's civic society, serving as president of the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce, twice as president of the local YMCA, councilmember and Mayor of the City of Mary Esther, president of the Fort Walton Beach Rotary Club, and a member of the Krewe of Bowlegs.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the U.S. House of Representatives, I am proud to honor the dedicated service of Randy Stokes. Vicki and I will keep his entire family, especially his son, James Jr. and daughter-in-law, Andrea; daughter, Judy and son-in-law, Ken; daughter, Jennifer; daughter, Janet and son-in-law, Don; as well as his grandchildren Ross, Annie, Ryan, Christina, Drew, Conner, LylaKae, Bryna, Rand, and Champ; his nieces Terri and Mellie; and his siblings Betty, Tommy, Kevin, Jerry, and Silvia in our thoughts and prayers.

SUCCESS ON AND OFF THE FIELD

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Paddy Fisher of Katy High School for winning the Greater Houston High School Rotary Lombardi Award.

Each year the Rotary Lombardi Award is awarded to a player who displays talent, leadership, and respect on and off the football field. The award honors Vince Lombardi's legacy and recognizes talented Houston athletes. Paddy, a senior at Katy High School, was selected as this year's recipient for his outstanding talents on the defensive side of the ball and for being a leader on the team. Paddy's parents and coaches are no doubt proud of his talent and character.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Paddy for winning this prestigious award. We wish him continued success at Northwestern on and off the field.

RECOGNIZING ROBERT DICK DOUGLAS, JR. THE LONGEST SERVING EAGLE SCOUT IN BOY SCOUT HISTORY—90 YEARS AN EAGLE

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Congressional Scouting Caucus, I rise today to honor Robert Dick Douglas, Jr., the longest serving Eagle Scout in Boy Scout History, who on December 8, 2015, celebrated 90 Years as an Eagle.

Mr. Douglas joined the Boy Scouts July 23, 1923, on his 11th Birthday in Greensboro, NC, and earned his Eagle Award 2 years, 4 months and 15 days later, on December 8, 1925, at the age of 13 and has been active in Scouting ever since.

He was recently an honored guest at the History of Scouting Trail (HOST) Annual Congressional Gala and quoted from memory what he called ''His Guiding Star'' almost 90 years after his Father, Judge Robert Dick Douglas, Sr., Chairman of the Greensboro Council Court of Honor, penned it as the winning essay for a local Community Chest Contest in 1926, to describe Scouting's goals in 50 words or less.

''Scouting safeguards your boy by proper companionship, guides him by adult leadership and develops him with a well-considered program of activities for the purpose of making him more reverent to God, more loyal to his country, more helpful to his fellow man and more useful to himself.''

Following these words, Robert Dick Douglas, Jr. has enjoyed unparalleled Scouting success and adventure traveling to the far reaches of Africa and Alaska in the late 1920's and early 1930's, writing three bestselling accounts, which helped pave the way for an exemplary life as an Attorney & Community Servant.

As such, he recently received The Distinguished Eagle Scout Award (September 24, 2015) and 16 of my fellow Representatives who are Eagle Scouts joined together and signed a Special Letter of Congratulation to Mr. Douglas.

I know they would wholeheartedly join me again today in recognizing this Historic Achievement—90 Years an Eagle Scout and the Longest Serving Eagle Scout in Boy Scout History.

TRIBUTE TO STACIE EUKEN

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Stacie Euken, of Wiota, Iowa, for being selected as the 2015 Bob Joslin Award winner at the Iowa Farm Bureau annual meeting in December.

Stacie grew up on a hog farm in Cass County and studied Agriculture Education and Communications at Iowa State University. She now farms with her husband near Wiota and serves as the Cass County Farm Bureau president. Stacie takes every opportunity given to her to volunteer and promote agriculture, whether that's helping the local Pork Producers at a grill out, teaching kids about agriculture at community events, or going to Washington, D.C. to speak to legislators. She is a true Iowan, through and through.

Mr. Speaker, Stacie's dedication to advancing the agriculture community not only in Iowa but across the nation is truly commendable. Her efforts embody the Iowa spirit and I am honored to represent her and Iowans like her in the United States Congress. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Stacie for her achievements and wishing her nothing but continued success.

RECOGNIZING CHIEF WILLIAM ''TONY'' FARRAR

HON. NORMA J. TORRES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chief William ''Tony'' Farrar of the Rialto Police Department for his outstanding service to the community.

For 34 years, Chief Farrar has actively served in various capacities to lead officers in the Rialto Police Department. His work has been described as exemplary by colleagues on account of his extreme professionalism and compassionate nature. Among Chief Farrar's many accomplishments include his induction into the Evidence-Based Policing Hall of Fame for his scientific evaluation of policing practices. Throughout his tenure, he has received widespread commendation for his leadership and extensive knowledge of tactical operations.

As Chief of Police, Chief Farrar has been a major proponent of integrating new technologies into everyday police activities. In doing so, he is an advocate for ''evidence-based policing,'' which consists of implementing tactics that have demonstrated proven effectiveness. He understands the complexities of modern-day policing, and insists on officers continuing their education throughout their careers in order to gain a continual understanding of the field. Chief Farrar's outlook has been essential for maintaining an active police force that provides public safety to people in the region.

Most recently, Chief Farrar has been involved in researching Body Worn Video devices that are being implemented in police departments throughout the United States His work is contributing to the growing field of literature on the subject and is developing future police tactics. Last year, the Journal of Quantitative Criminology published an article written by him analyzing the effects of these devices on the use of force and citizens' complaints against police. His knowledge in this field is bolstered by the master's degree that he received from the University of Cambridge in 2013 along with the many fellowships that he has participated in throughout the years.

Chief Farrar is retiring from the Rialto Police Department, and on December 21, many members of the community will be participating in a walk of honor to celebrate his legacy. This momentous event will be a demonstration of the lasting impact that he has made on residents in the area. While he will surely be missed, I am excited to see how he will continue to be a part of the community.

For his heroic contributions to the Rialto Police Department, and for his many other achievements, I would like to recognize Chief Tony Farrar.

DRUG RESISTANT TB: THE NEXT GLOBAL HEALTH CRISIS?

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, last week, I convened a hearing on an extremely urgent issue, focused on addressing what may very well be the next global health crisis: drug resistant tuberculosis.

Just as Ebola surprised many at the ferocity with which it spread, all of us must be concerned that the world is not fully prepared to meet the threat from this highly contagious airborne disease which killed 1.5 million people last year alone. That translates to over 4,000 people a day—4,000 lives that ended prematurely, including young children.

The World Health Organization released its Global Tuberculosis report just over a month ago and appealed to the world to beef up efforts to combat TB, and yesterday, in Cape Town South Africa, the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease concluded its annual meeting, having gathered experts in fighting TB from all over the world. These are positive signs, showing that the global health community continues to surge toward ending TB by 2035—or sooner.

While most TB is curable if diagnosed and patients strictly adhere to a treatment regimen, some 6 million new cases of TB were reported to WHO in 2014. However it is likely that the number of people who contracted TB far exceeds this number—and may be as high as 9.6 million people. These people need to be diagnosed with a diagnostic that is fast and reliable and able to detect drug resistances, and treated, so they can lead healthy productive lives.

On a myriad of fronts there is reason for hope. For example the Expert MTB/RIF can diagnose TB and resistance to rifampicin within two hours, an amazing breakthrough. As CDC's Tom Friedman testified, this new diagnostic holds great promise. This new diagnostic holds great promise in enabling rapid detection of drug resistance, and the U.S. Government has led the global effort to scale up access to this test. The increase in the proportion of drug-resistant TB cases diagnosed and started on treatment over the past several years is largely attributable to the scale-up of this test.

Yet the tragic fact remains that some 480,000 new cases of hard-to-treat cases of multidrug resistant TB—a disease which often hits the poorest of the poor—are estimated to have occurred in 2014, yet only about 25 per cent of these, or 123,000 cases were detected and reported, leaving a whopping 75 percent undetected and untreated.

Given the ease at which TB can spread through the air—especially through coughing—and the fact that people with weakened immune systems are more susceptible, one can see how left untreated MDR TB and its even more pernicious cousin, XDR or Extensively Drug Resistant TB can be catastrophic to individuals and wreak havoc on public health and public health systems.

To illustrate how fragile health systems can be overwhelmed, a course of treatment for normal, drug susceptible TB costs roughly between $100 and $500, depending on the country. For MDR TB, the cost is roughly between $5,000 and $10,000 per patient.

To respond fully to the TB crisis, the WHO estimates that some $8 billion per year is needed. Unfortunately, there is a global budget shortfall of about $1.4 billion. We need to lead not only in terms of providing funding, but also in terms of encouraging others—other countries, but also the private sector and foundations—in meeting this need by closing this gap.

Now is the time for a significantly enhanced response. A sustained focus on tuberculosis prevention today will save lives and money tomorrow, helping people the world over as well as protecting the homeland from what otherwise could become a global pandemic.

Our 3 witnesses from the hearing are extraordinary leaders in the health field and experts on TB. They—like many on subcommittee—believe we can at least mitigate TB in the short term and eliminate this deadly infectious disease by 2035, just as we have successfully fought polio. It takes political will, however, and an investment of resources that will pay dividends for healthier people in the long run.

The subcommittee will continue to work hard on combatting TB, along with members of the House Tuberculosis Elimination Caucus, whose co-chair is my good friend from New York, Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL, who joined the hearing last week. We also had some very outstanding leaders in the global fight against TB who briefed us and gave testimony at the hearing.

TRIBUTE TO HONOR JAMES BELT, JR.

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I recognize the life and passing of James Belt, Jr. Mr. Belt, Jr. was a very prominent and well-respected leader in the community. As a activist, he also served our community by offering his words of wisdom and years of knowledge and experience.

For close to 40 years, he has served the community as a civil and criminal lawyer. He received his Bachelor of Business Administration Degree from Pan American University, Edinburg, in 1968. And went on to earn a Juris Doctorate from Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University in Houston in 1977. He opened his private practice in the heart of South Dallas, where he served those who needed him most. Mr. Belt, Jr. was also a Dallas Examiner co-publisher, sat on the board of the National Newspaper Publisher Association, the official Black Press of America and the NNPA Foundation Board.

During the early 2000s, he co-hosted Dallas Examiner Live on KNON Radio. He previously sat on the Texas Southern University Board of Regents in Houston, Dallas Area Rapid Transit Board and the Texas Rural Foundation Board.

He was the founder of the Dallas Black Criminal Bar Association—an organization of Black lawyers in the private practice of law in Dallas County. He was a member of the National Bar Association, Texas Bar Association, J.L. Turner Legal Association and the Inns of Court. He was also a lifetime member of the NAACP.

Mr. Speaker, it is in earnest respect that I recognize the memory of James Belt, Jr. before this body of Congress and this nation for the irreplaceable contributions he made to the community of Dallas and the State of Texas. My sincere condolences go out to his wife of 45 years, Mollie F. Belt; his children, James C.

Belt III, Melanie Belt, MD and Carlos Cavazos; 10 grandchildren, Brittany Cavazos, Jerry Cavazos, C.J. Cavazos, Joshua Cavazos, Michael Cavazos, Lejond Cavazos, Chloe Cavazos, Bryce Belt, Dylan Belt and Melania McDaniel; two daughter-in-laws, Melba Cavazos and Cherrese Belt; and one son-in-law, Demetrius McDaniel, Esq. While his loss will be deeply felt, the memory of his kindness and the recollection of his good deeds will transcend into future generations.

A DOZEN YEARS OF KEEPING PEARLAND SAFE

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Pearland Fire Chief Vance Riley for his 12 years of service on the Texas Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council (GETAC).

Chief Riley was first appointed to the Council in 2004 under Governor Rick Perry. After six years of dedicated service, he was appointed Chair of GETAC in 2010. GETAC reviews EMS and Trauma rules and recommends changes that need to be made. It also develops certification plans for emergency personnel and plans for emergency medical services. Now, after 12 years of service, Governor Abbott recently presented Chief Riley with a certificate of appreciation for his outstanding work and dedication. Pearland and all of Texas have benefitted from Chief Riley's leadership and commitment to keeping our communities safe.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, thank you to Chief Riley for his 12 years of service to our great state.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, December 17, 2015 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

JANUARY 20

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support

To hold an oversight hearing to examine Task Force for Business and Stability Operations projects in Afghanistan.

SR–232A

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate passed H.J. Res. 78, Further Continuing Appropriations.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S8689–S8732.

Measures Introduced: Four bills were introduced, as follows: S. 2406–2409. **Page S8725**

Measures Reported:

S. 329, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain segments of the Farmington River and Salmon Brook in the State of Connecticut as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, with an amendment. (S. Rept. No. 114–182)

S. 556, to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 114–183)

S. 782, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a bison management plan for Grand Canyon National Park. (S. Rept. No. 114–184)

S. 1583, to authorize the expansion of an existing hydroelectric project, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 114–185)

S. 1592, to clarify the description of certain Federal land under the Northern Arizona Land Exchange and Verde River Basin Partnership Act of 2005 to include additional land in the Kaibab National Forest. (S. Rept. No. 114–186)

S. 1694, to amend Public Law 103–434 to authorize Phase III of the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project for the purposes of improving water management in the Yakima River basin, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 114–187)

S. 1941, to authorize, direct, expedite, and facilitate a land exchange in El Paso and Teller Counties, Colorado. (S. Rept. No. 114–188)

S. 1942, to require a land conveyance involving the Elkhorn Ranch and the White River National Forest in the State of Colorado. (S. Rept. No. 114–189)

S. 2046, to authorize the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to issue an order continuing a stay of a hydroelectric license for the Mahoney Lake hydroelectric project in the State of Alaska. (S. Rept. No. 114–190)

S. 2069, to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to modify provisions relating to certain land exchanges in the Mt. Hood Wilderness in the State of Oregon, with amendments. (S. Rept. No. 114–191)

S. 2083, to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project. (S. Rept. No. 114–192)

H.R. 373, to direct the Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of Agriculture to expedite access to certain Federal land under the administrative jurisdiction of each Secretary for good Samaritan search-and-recovery missions. (S. Rept. No. 114–193)

H.R. 1324, to adjust the boundary of the Arapaho National Forest, Colorado. (S. Rept. No. 114–194)

H.R. 1554, to require a land conveyance involving the Elkhorn Ranch and the White River National Forest in the State of Colorado. (S. Rept. No. 114–195)

H.R. 2223, to authorize, direct, expedite, and facilitate a land exchange in El Paso and Teller Counties, Colorado. (S. Rept. No. 114–196)

Pages S8724–25

Measures Passed:

Eric Williams Correctional Officer Protection Act: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. 238, to amend title 18, United States Code, to authorize the Director of the Bureau of Prisons to issue oleoresin capsicum spray to officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons, and the bill was then passed. **Pages S8703–04**

Higher Education Extension Act: Senate passed H.R. 3594, to extend temporarily the Federal Perkins Loan program, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S8704–08**

Alexander Amendment No. 2929, in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S8707–09**

Further Continuing Appropriations: Senate passed H.J. Res. 78, making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2016. **Page S8723**

Securing Fairness in Regulatory Timing Act: Senate passed H.R. 3831, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend the annual comment period for payment rates under Medicare Advantage. **Page S8728**

Saving Federal Dollars Through Better Use of Government Purchase and Travel Cards Act: Senate passed S. 1616, to provide for the identification and prevention of improper payments and the identification of strategic sourcing opportunities by reviewing and analyzing the use of Federal agency charge cards, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S8728–29**

McConnell (for Carper) Amendment No. 2930, in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S8728–29**

25th Anniversary of Democracy in Mongolia: Senate agreed to S. Res. 189, expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the 25th anniversary of democracy in Mongolia. **Page S8729**

Peaceful Elections in Burma: Senate agreed to S. Res. 320, congratulating the people of Burma on their commitment to peaceful elections, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S8729–30**

135th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations with Romania: Senate agreed to S. Res. 326, celebrating the 135th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the United States and Romania. **Page S8730**

Violence Against Women and Children by ISIS: Senate agreed to S. Res. 310, condemning the ongoing sexual violence against women and children from Yezidi, Christian, Shabak, Turkmen, and other religious communities by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria militants and urging the prosecution of the perpetrators and those complicit in these crimes, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S8730–32**

McConnell (for Lankford) Amendment No. 2931, to define "complicit" for purposes of the resolution. **Page S8732**

Measures Indefinitely Postponed:

Adjournment Resolution: Senate indefinitely postponed H. Con. Res. 91, providing for a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives. **Page S8728**

Signing Authority—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the Majority Leader be authorized to sign duly enrolled bills or joint resolutions on Wednesday, December 16, 2015. **Page S8723**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

Gabriel Camarillo, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force.

Thomas Edgar Rothman, of Maryland, to be a Member of the National Council on the Arts for a term expiring September 3, 2016.

Thomas O. Melia, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

Marcel John Lettre, II, of Maryland, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence.

1 Navy nomination in the rank of admiral. **Page S8732**

Steven Michael Haro, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce. **Pages S8728, S8732**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Paul Lewis Abrams, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

Suzanne Mitchell, of Oklahoma, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma.

Scott L. Palk, of Oklahoma, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma.

Ronald G. Russell, of Utah, to be United States District Judge for the District of Utah. **Page S8732**

Messages from the House: **Page S8724**

Additional Cosponsors: **Page S8725**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S8725–26**

Additional Statements: **Pages S8723–24**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S8726–27**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S8728**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S8728**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 11:01 a.m. and adjourned at 6:52 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Thursday, December 17, 2015. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S8732.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

STRATEGY IN AFGHANISTAN

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the Administration's strategy

in Afghanistan, after receiving testimony from Richard G. Olson, Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Department of State; Donald L. Sampler, Assistant to the Administrator and Director of the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs, United States Agency for International Development; Ali A. Jalali, National Defense University Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, Department of Defense; and James B. Cunningham, Atlantic Council South Asia Center, and Jodi Vittori, Global Witness, both of Washington, D.C.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 18 public bills, H.R. 4262–4279; and 3 resolutions, H.J. Res. 78–79; and H. Res. 567, were introduced.

Pages H9373–75

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H9375–76**

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

H. Res. 566, providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 2029) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; providing for proceedings during the period from December 19, 2015, through January 4, 2016; and for other purposes (H. Rept. 114–382).

Page H9373

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Rear Admiral Margaret Grun Kibben, Chief of Chaplains for the United States Navy, Washington, DC. **Page H9331**

Resignation of the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives: Read a letter from Ed Cassidy, in which he submitted his resignation as Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives, effective upon the election of his successor. **Page H9332**

Administration of the Oath of Office to an Officer of the House: The Speaker administered the Oath of Office to William Plaster of the Commonwealth of Virginia to act as and to exercise the duties of Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives, effective December 31, 2015.

Page H9332

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Reauthorization Act of 2015: Concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 2820, to reauthorize the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 421 yeas with none voting ''nay'', Roll No. 695; **Pages H9333–35, H9339**

National Guard and Reservist Debt Relief Extension Act of 2015: H.R. 4246, to exempt for an additional 4-year period, from the application of the means-test presumption of abuse under chapter 7, qualifying members of reserve components of the Armed Forces and members of the National Guard who, after September 11, 2001, are called to active duty or to perform a homeland defense activity for not less than 90 days, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 419 yeas to 1 nay, Roll No. 696;

Pages H9335–37, H9339–40

Emergency Information Improvement Act of 2015: S. 1090, to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide eligibility for broadcasting facilities to receive certain disaster assistance, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 420 yeas to 1 nay, Roll No. 697;

Pages H9337–38, H9340–41

Further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2016: H.J. Res. 78, making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2016; **Page H9338**

Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015: Concur in the Senate amendments to H.R. 2297, to prevent Hizballah and associated entities from gaining access to international financial and other institutions, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 425 yeas with none voting ''nay'', Roll No. 698;

Pages H9341–46, H9356

First Responders Passport Act of 2015: H.R. 3750, amended, to waive the passport fees for first responders proceeding abroad to aid a foreign country suffering from a natural disaster, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 421 yeas to 2 nays, Roll No. 699;

Pages H9346–48, H9356–57

Tracking Foreign Fighters in Terrorist Safe Havens Act: H.R. 4239, amended, to require intelligence community reporting on foreign fighter flows to and from terrorist safe havens abroad, by a

⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 423 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 700; and **Pages H9349–52, H9357–58**

Strengthening Cybersecurity Information Sharing and Coordination in Our Ports Act of 2015: H.R. 3878, amended, to enhance cybersecurity information sharing and coordination at ports in the United States. **Pages H9352–55**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:43 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Pages H9355–56**

Suspension—Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measure which was debated on Tuesday, December 15th:

Combat Terrorist Use of Social Media Act of 2015: H.R. 3654, amended, to require a report on United States strategy to combat terrorist use of social media. **Page H9341**

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, December 17. **Page H9358**

Recess: The House recessed at 5:08 p.m. and reconvened at 7:34 p.m. **Page H9372**

Suspension—Proceedings Postponed: The House debated the following measure under suspension of the rules. Further proceedings were postponed.

Global Health Innovation Act of 2015: H.R. 2241, amended, to direct the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to submit to Congress a report on the development and use of global health innovations in the programs, projects, and activities of the Agency. **Pages H9348–49**

Senate Messages: Messages received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today and message received from the Senate appear on pages H9346, H9372.

Senate Referrals: S. 571 was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. S. 238 was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. **Page H9346**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Six yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H9339, H9340, H9340–41, H9356, H9356–57, and H9357–58. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 9 a.m. and adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Committee Meetings

EXAMINING THE CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU'S MASS DATA COLLECTION PROGRAM

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled "Examining the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Mass Data Collection Program". Testimony was heard from former Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich; and public witnesses.

THE FUTURE OF U.S.-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "The Future of U.S.-Pakistan Relations". Testimony was heard from Richard Olson, Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Department of State.

EGYPT TWO YEARS AFTER MORSI, PART II

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa held a hearing entitled "Egypt Two Years After Morsi (Part II)". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD, OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT ETHICS, AND OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNCIL REAUTHORIZATION

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Government Operations held a hearing entitled "Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB), Office of Government Ethics (OGE), and Office of Special Council (OSC) Reauthorization". Testimony was heard from Walter M. Shaub, Jr., Director, Office of Government Ethics; Carolyn N. Lerner, Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel; and Susan Tsui Grundmann, Chair, Merit Systems Protection Board.

SENATE AMENDMENT TO THE MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on Senate amendment to H.R. 2029, the "Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016". The committee granted, by record vote of 9–2, a rule that provides for consideration of the Senate amendment to H.R. 2029. The rule makes in order a motion offered by the chair of the Committee on Appropriations or his designee that the House concur in the Senate amendment with two House amendments: Amendment #1 (consolidated appropriations) consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 114–39 modified

by the amendment printed in the Rules Committee report; Amendment #2 (tax extenders) consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 114–40. The rule provides one hour of debate on House amendment #1 equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. The rule provides one hour debate on House amendment #2 equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the motion and provides that the Senate amendment and the motion shall be considered as read. The rule provides that the question shall be divided between the two House amendments. No further division of the question is in order. The rule provides that either portion of the divided question may be subject to postponement as though under clause 8 of rule XX and shall be considered in the order specified by the chair. The rule provides that clause 5(b) of rule XXI shall not apply to the motion. In section 4, the rule provides that if only House amendment #2 is adopted, that amendment shall be engrossed as an amendment in the nature of a substitute to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2029. In section 5, the rule provides that the chair of the Committee on Appropriations may insert in the Congressional Record at any time during the remainder of the first session of the 114th Congress such material as he may deem explanatory of the Senate amendment and the motion. In section 6, the rule provides that on any legislative day of the first session of the 114th Congress after December 18, 2015: the Journal of the proceedings of the previous day shall be considered as approved; and the Chair may at any time declare the House adjourned to meet at a date and time to be announced by the Chair in declaring the adjournment. In section 7, the rule provides that on any legislative day of the second session of the 114th Congress before January 5, 2016: the Speaker may dispense with organizational and legislative business; the Journal of the proceedings of the previous day shall be considered as approved if applicable; and the Chair may at any time declare the House adjourned to meet at a date and time to be announced by the Chair in declaring the adjournment. In section 8, the rule provides that the Speaker may appoint Members to perform the duties of the Chair for the duration of the period addressed by sections 6 and 7. In section 9, the rule provides that each day during the period addressed by sections 6 and 7 of the resolution shall not constitute calendar days for the purposes of section 7 of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1546). In section 10, the rule provides that each day during the period addressed by sections 6 and 7 of the resolution shall not constitute a legislative day for the purposes of clause 7 of rule XIII (resolutions of inquiry). In section 11, the rule provides that it shall be in order at any time through the legislative day of December 18, 2015, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules and that the Speaker or his designee shall consult with the Minority Leader or her designee on the designation of any matter for consideration pursuant to this section. Finally, in section 12, the rule waives clause 6(a) of rule XIII (requiring a two-thirds vote to consider a rule on the same day it is reported from the Rules Committee) against any resolution reported from the Rules Committee through the legislative day of December 18, 2015. Testimony was heard from Chairman Rogers of Kentucky, Chairman Brady of Texas, and Representatives Lowey, Levin, Amash, Carney, Griffith of Virginia, Tonko, Lummis, and Mulvaney.

Joint Meetings

KHADIJA ISMAYILOVA

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: Commission concluded a hearing to examine Azerbaijan's persecution of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty reporter Khadija Ismayilova, after receiving testimony from Shelly Han, Policy Advisor, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; and Nenad Pejic, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Delphine Halgand, Reporters Without Borders, and T. Kumar, Amnesty International USA, all of Washington, D.C.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2015

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the status of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action implementation and related issues, 9:30 a.m., SD–419.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Terrorist Travel: Vetting for National Security Concerns'', 9 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Thursday, December 17

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will be in a period of morning business until 6 p.m.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 a.m., Thursday, December 17

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Consideration of the Senate amendment to H.R. 2029—Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016 (Subject to a Rule).

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

Coffman, Mike, Colo., E1806
Dingell, Debbie, Mich., E1806
Doyle, Michael F., Pa., E1806
Hastings, Alcee L., Fla., E1805
Johnson, Eddie Bernice, Tex., E1801, E1804, E1808
Jolly, David W., Fla., E1804
Miller, Jeff, Fla., E1807
Olson, Pete, Tex., E1802, E1804, E1805, E1807, E1809
Pompeo, Mike, Kans., E1806
Quigley, Mike, Ill., E1803
Rogers, Harold, Ky., E1801
Scott, Robert C. ''Bobby'', Va., E1805
Sessions, Pete, Tex., E1807
Shimkus, John, Ill., E1806
Slaughter, Louise McIntosh, N.Y., E1802
Smith, Christopher H., N.J., E1801, E1803, E1808
Thompson, Mike, Calif., E1805
Torres, Norma J., Calif., E1808
Valadao, David G., Calif., E1803
Young, David, Iowa, E1801, E1802, E1802, E1803, E1804, E1805, E1805, E1806, E1806, E1807

Congressional Record

The *Congressional Record* (USPS 087–390). The Periodicals postage is paid at Washington, D.C. The public proceedings of each House of Congress, as reported by the Official Reporters thereof, are printed pursuant to directions of the Joint Committee on Printing as authorized by appropriate provisions of Title 44, United States Code, and published for each day that one or both Houses are in session, excepting very infrequent instances when two or more unusually small consecutive issues are printed one time. ¶Public access to the *Congressional Record* is available online through the U.S. Government Publishing Office, at *www.fdsys.gov*, free of charge to the user. The information is updated online each day the *Congressional Record* is published. For more information, contact the GPO Customer Contact Center, U.S. Government Publishing Office. Phone 202–512–1800, or 866–512–1800 (toll-free). E-Mail, *contactcenter@gpo.gov*. ¶To place an order for any of these products, visit the U.S. Government Online Bookstore at: bookstore.gpo.gov. Mail orders to: Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 979050, St. Louis, MO 63197–9000, or phone orders to 866–512–1800 (toll-free), 202–512–1800 (D.C. area), or fax to 202–512–2104. Remit check or money order, made payable to the Superintendent of Documents, or use VISA, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, or GPO Deposit Account. ¶Following each session of Congress, the daily *Congressional Record* is revised, printed, permanently bound and sold by the Superintendent of Documents in individual parts or by sets. ¶With the exception of copyrighted articles, there are no restrictions on the republication of material from the *Congressional Record*.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Superintendent of Documents, *Congressional Record*, U.S. Government Publishing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, along with the entire mailing label from the last issue received.