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House of Representatives

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

PRAYER

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

God of mercy, thank You for giving us another day. Give us the resolve to bring an end to hunger in our world.

Quicken our spirits so that we will know the blessings of living together in unity and peace. We all have our personal aspirations and ideas of what is best. Grant that we might know the satisfaction of sharing our common concerns and experience the joy of mutual accomplishment.

Bless the Members of the people's House with success in bringing fruition to all efforts to work toward common solutions to the issues facing our Nation, solutions which often seem so distant.

During the days of the coming week, may the American people be able to communicate their hopes for the efforts of their Congressmen and -women. May they understand as well that a unified Nation is equally the work of each of us where we live.

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

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. 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. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. WELCH led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

KLAMATH DAM REMOVAL SECRET MEETINGS

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, a government for, by, and of the people cannot hold its most basic deliberations in secret. I am not talking about matters of national security, but basic, everyday government deliberations.

Yet the Department of the Interior, the State of California, and the State of Oregon are meeting with select groups in private in places like Portland, Sacramento, and even proposed San Francisco, to make public policy decisions affecting my district in the north end of California and south Oregon without public or legislative input. In order to be invited to join these meetings, individuals are required to sign confidentiality agreements and agree to a predetermined outcome.

The issues involving the Klamath River water and possible removal of the hydroelectric dams are indeed of concern to the public. The decisions regarding whether these dams should be removed and what water and environmental policy should govern the region are fundamentally a public policy decision. The deliberations should be made in public and free for all to be involved, yet long-distance locations an hour or a full day's drive away don't make that possible, especially when they are held in secret.

These secret meetings have been happening for years, and they are wrong. The agencies of the government are meeting in secret to create a 501(c)(3) dam removal entity called the Klamath River Renewal Corporation. This new corporation will be the recipient of taxpayer and utility rate dollars.

These meetings need to be held in public where the people can meet and hear what they are planning to do.

TRUTH IN LABELING

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

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, this is pure Vermont maple syrup made at a family farm, Maverick Farm, by friends and neighbors Arthur and Anne Berndt. People love it. Sugar makers from Maine to Michigan, it is a labor of love and real additional income in small farm economies.

Big companies have figured that out. They know that consumers love maple syrup. But instead of buying maple syrup from those farmers, they provide fake labels to mislead consumers.

Printed on recycled paper.

These are some of the biggest companies in the world.

Take a look at some of these companies and the products that they claim have maple in them. Quaker, Kellogg's, Hood, Bakery on Main. They say they have maple, but there is not a trace of maple in it. The ingredients include rice syrup, artificial flavor, caramel color, gelatin, molasses. That is not maple syrup.

We who represent farmers producing maple syrup are writing the FDA telling them to have truth in labeling. Let's have real syrup, not fake labels.

VERA HOUSE WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN

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

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about an important issue that faces our society: domestic violence and sexual abuse. Violence against women is a worldwide but underexamined problem. Sadly, we are still far from a world where women are free from the threat of harassment, battering, and sexual assault.

Consider some of these statistics: according to the FBI, a woman is battered every 15 seconds; 2 to 4 million American women are abused each year; up to 50 percent of homeless women and children in this country are fleeing domestic violence.

Our country has a moral obligation to stand up against those who exploit their power to commit violence against women and children.

In an effort to raise awareness and put an end to domestic violence and sexual abuse, the Vera House in Syracuse will be kicking off the White Ribbon Campaign. This campaign is one of the largest efforts in the world to prevent and end domestic violence and sexual assault. The campaign will begin Friday, March 4, and run through March 31.

During this month, thousands of my constituents in central New York will be wearing a white ribbon or white wristband to raise awareness about domestic violence and sexual abuse. Wearing the white ribbon demonstrates a personal pledge to never commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women or children.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in this effort.

CONGRATULATING RIVERSIDE CITY COLLEGE ON THEIR CENTENNIAL

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 100th anniversary of Riverside City College, one of the oldest and most respected community colleges in California. Since 1916, RCC has provided thousands of students with an engaging and affordable educational experience that prepares them for successful careers.

The college boasts of many great alumni who have gone on to lead remarkable lives, but the one I admire most is my father. He attended RCC to build up credits for a degree in business administration, and with that degree he was able to earn a good-paying job that secured my family's place in the middle class.

I was honored to serve on RCC's board of trustees for 22 years, and I take pride in what the school continues to do for thousands of students every year.

Congratulations to Riverside City College on your centennial. Thank you for the incredible impact you have had on our community.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS STATE FLOOR HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

(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 in recognition of the 10th anniversary of the Pennsylvania State Floor Hockey Tournament at Bald Eagle High School, located in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District. This Special Olympics tournament is scheduled for this Saturday and Sunday.

Each year more than 300 Special Olympians and more than 100 coaches from across Pennsylvania compete in this event, which includes teams from a large number of the Commonwealth's counties.

I congratulate the athletes participating in this week's tournament in advance for their hard work and perseverance, rising above the challenges to excel in athletics. I look forward to seeing them in person at Bald Eagle High School this weekend.

I also commend Special Olympics of Pennsylvania for its work in planning this annual event.

Mr. Speaker, the Thompson family has a special connection to these games. My younger son, Kale, who is now a music teacher, was the first student director when the floor hockey tournament moved to the Bald Eagle Area site.

Along with the annual floor hockey tournament, Special Olympics holds its summer games each year at Penn State University in State College. This is a great organization which helps so many people across Pennsylvania and our Nation.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF ISABELLA GREENWAY

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

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as part of Women's History Month to recognize and celebrate the life of Isabella Greenway, the first female Member of Congress from Arizona.

Congresswoman Greenway was a trailblazer, social activist, and dedicated public servant. She worked tirelessly to serve the people of Arizona and the Nation through the Great Depression and many years after.

Congresswoman Greenway was particularly committed to ensuring that those who served the Nation in World War I were taken care of after they returned home. Following the war, she opened Arizona Hut, a furniture manufacturer focused on employing disabled veterans and their families.

During her time in Congress, she was known for her willingness to fight for the rights of veterans, including acting as a vocal defender of veterans' pensions and introducing legislation to expand the VA in Arizona.

Congresswoman Greenway was an inspiration for women in our State and throughout our country. She refused to be limited or defined by her gender, instead devoting her life to serving and protecting the most vulnerable members of our society.

I hope my colleagues will join with me in honoring the lasting legacy of Isabella Greenway.

TEXAS LAWMAN—OFFICER DAVID HOFER

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, he was a son, a brother, and a soon-to-be groom. David Hofer's life was ripped from this world on March 1, 2 days ago, leaving behind his family and his fiancee.

Officer Hofer was 29. He was from Fort Worth, Texas. He was shot and coldly murdered after a gunfire exchange with an outlaw in a nearby park. The criminal who gunned him down was a 22-year-old drug addict who had been released from prison that very day.

Officer Hofer served with the Euless, Texas, Police Department. He had been serving there for 2 years. He had previously served with the NYPD for 5 years. He dedicated his life to protecting the rest of us.

Mr. Speaker, hundreds of blue lights from patrol cars lit the way as Officer Hofer's body was transported from the hospital.

Mr. Speaker, this is the 16th police officer killed this year. In fact, two officers now have been murdered in 2 days.

Mr. Speaker, we must always honor and respect and mourn the life of such valiant men and women. The thin blue line stands strong in the face of evildoers that live among us.

The men and women who wear the badge are America's best—men such as Officer David Hofer. They sacrifice their lives to keep the homefront safe

from the dregs of society, misfits, and bandits who wish to do the rest of us harm.

Back the blue, Mr. Speaker. Back the blue.

And that is just the way it is.

IT IS TIME TO ACT ON IMMIGRATION

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I want to give a little history about the efforts of the Democratic Party to secure our Southern border.

We had an immigration bill last session. In that bill that passed the Senate with bipartisan support—not only every Democrat, but also many Republicans, like JOHN MCCAIN and MARCO RUBIO—we had $40 billion to secure our Southern border. Talk about a secure wall—security, making sure that illegal products and illegal people do not cross across that border—we had that.

Thanks to the Republicans' failure to take action in this body, the House of Representatives, and simply pass the Senate bill, there is still no security on the Southern border. There are people, illegal drugs, and illegal products sneaking across every day because this body hasn't acted.

Now, it is pie in the sky to think that some other country is going to pay for a wall to protect America. It isn't going to happen.

What we did is we actually had fines for people who were here illegally. So people who are here illegally were actually the very ones who contributed money back into our coffers to help secure our Southern border, not to mention the additional economic benefit and taxes that they would pay going forward.

It is time to act on immigration and secure our border.

□ 0915

TRIBUTE TO COACH JIM BELDEN

(Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a beloved member of the Hamilton County, Indiana, community, Jim Belden.

Jim was a dedicated public servant and a devoted husband, father, and grandfather. Sadly, he passed away after a battle with cancer. He will be dearly missed by the Hoosier community, but what a legacy he left.

Jim left his mark as a family man, a teacher, a U.S. Navy veteran, and a 23-year member of the Hamilton County Council, but he is best known for being one of the best football coaches in Indiana, an Indiana Football Hall of Fame coach. I am the daughter of a high school football coach as well.

For more than 30 years, Jim coached and mentored young men in Westfield, Noblesville, and Carmel High Schools. He led Carmel High School to four State championship titles and is the 12th winningest coach in Indiana State history.

I attended his memorial service just last weekend. There were hundreds of players there. I heard from those whose lives had been touched. There were those he coached who were now not quite so young, because he coached in the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and the 2000s.

I also heard from the students he taught, the assistant coaches, the faculty he worked with, the community he served, and, most importantly, his family, who loved him so dearly.

I offer my deepest condolences to his family, especially his wife Bev. They had just celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. We all mourn his loss and cherish his memory. What a legacy lives on in Jim Belden.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4557, BLOCKING REGULATORY INTERFERENCE FROM CLOSING KILNS ACT OF 2016, AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM MARCH 4, 2016, THROUGH MARCH 11, 2016

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 635 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 635

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4557) to allow for judicial review of any final rule addressing national emission standards for hazardous air pollutants for brick and structural clay products or for clay ceramics manufacturing before requiring compliance with such rule. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. On any legislative day during the period from March 4, 2016, through March 11, 2016—

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

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KELLY of Mississippi). The gentleman from Alabama is recognized for 1 hour.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 635 provides for consideration of H.R. 4557, the Blocking Regulatory Interference from Closing Kilns Act of 2016. The resolution provides for a closed rule. No amendments are made in order, as none were filed with the Rules Committee. Additionally, the rule also provides for standard adjournment authority.

H.R. 4557 is an important piece of legislation. It is a bipartisan bill that addresses an unfortunate recurring theme: overreach by the EPA that takes jobs away from hardworking Americans.

Last September the EPA finalized the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants for Brick and Structural Clay Products and Clay Ceramics, commonly known as Brick MACT. Only in the Federal Government would we string that many words together and think it makes sense.

In that rule, the EPA set stringent standards for brick industry emissions of mercury and nonmercury pollutants as well as health-based standards for acid gases.

EPA previously promulgated Brick MACT standards in 2003. That rule was vacated by a Federal court in 2007, but, by that time, many brick manufacturers had already spent millions of dollars in irreversible compliance costs.

Now, let's be clear. Those aren't just costs that are borne by those businesses. Those get passed along to the American consumers, raising the price of brick to each and every one of us.

The brick industry faces again the uncertainty of having to spend millions of dollars to comply with revised Brick MACT while the fate of the rule makes its way through the court system.

Mr. Speaker, the brick industry employs thousands of Americans at more than 70 brick plant and supporting facilities nationwide. These facilities are located in 38 States. Alabama, my home State, is one of the top five States for brick manufacturing capacity and faces some of the largest job losses.

Unlike other industries targeted by EPA's overreach, the brick industry is dominated by small, family-owned businesses that have been struggling in our current economy.

EPA estimates industry-wide annual compliance in Brick MACT will cost

$25 million annually. The industry estimates that the costs may be as much as $100 million per year. For a facility with two kilns, which is the industry average, costs are estimated to be $4.4 million.

Remember, those costs get passed along to us consumers in the cost of bricks. These costs will likely cause many of these small facilities to shut their doors and are, of course, over and above the millions of dollars already spent by the industry to comply with the earlier rule that was vacated by the D.C. Circuit.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4557 ensures that the brick industry will not again have to make millions of dollars in expenditures before Brick MACT works its way through the courts.

H.R. 4557 would implement a legislative stay to Brick MACT and block the rule until all related court challenges have been resolved by the Federal courts.

Opponents of this bill argue that a legislative stay is unnecessary because the brick industry can request a judicial stay in Federal court; however, as an attorney, I can tell you that the standard to receive such a stay is incredibly high and such stays are rarely granted.

The recent case of Michigan v. EPA provides a great example of why this legislation is necessary. In that case, the Supreme Court found the EPA's Utility MACT rule to be legally flawed and remanded the case; however, by that time, utility companies had already been forced to spend billions of dollars to comply with Utility MACT. Remember, that gets passed along to the consumers in our utility bills.

EPA Acting Administrator Janet McCabe stated that, although EPA lost, the Supreme Court's decision was of limited practical effect because the majority of power plants were already in compliance or well on their way to compliance. Thus, the EPA was, in practicality, able to evade any meaningful judicial review, which makes a mockery of this process.

The EPA should not get to do the same again to the brick industry while Brick MACT makes its way through the court system. Thousands of American jobs should not be put at risk due to a rule which has already been vacated once. Again, the consumers of America should not be penalized for the same reason.

I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 635 and the underlying bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the rule and the underlying bill. The Blocking Regulatory Interference from Closing Kilns Act—certainly, a mouthful to say—is yet another of the endless list of attempts by this body—and it will not become law—to block implementation of an administrative rule or regulation that some people don't like, rather than tackling the issues that this country cares about and that I hear from voters back home when I have townhall meetings or I am at the grocery store.

I hear about fixing our broken immigration system and securing our border. I hear about balancing the budget deficit. I hear about making sure that Medicare and Social Security are solvent and there for the next generation. I hear about making sure we create jobs, that housing is affordable, and that our roads and bridges are safe so traffic can flow safely and quickly.

Yet, here we are again, spending an entire legislative day debating a bill that won't become law, which you will certainly hear about over the next couple of hours, regarding a series of regulations around brick kilns.

Once again the Republicans are approaching a complex rulemaking process with a knee-jerk reaction in a nontransparent process with a closed rule, not even allowing a debate for a single amendment.

Not only is this bill not transparent and not necessary, in this particular case, it sets a bad precedent because the courts already have the authority to issue a stay of compliance on a final rule.

As we saw through the recent delay of the Clean Power Plan, our judicial and legislative systems are separate for a reason.

Let the courts do their work and let us do ours. Let us not preempt the courts from their normal process. Our judicial and legislative systems are separate. Individuals, organizations, and companies have plenty of recourse and options through the court system to address this matter.

The floor of the House is not the place to be requesting a stay. If there was something done that was illegal or wrong, the place to request a stay is the courtroom.

But time and time again legislation like this has come to this floor, disposing of the judicial process and shortcutting the justice system that we have to delay a rule until all legal challenges are completed, which effectively means that frivolous lawsuits can jam up the rule indefinitely and forever.

Over the past 45 years, it is proven that clean air regulations are important to protect the public health and consistent with growing a strong economy.

Of course, I understand the pressure requirements placed on brick and clay ceramic makers. They have legitimate reasons to provide input to question or contest the rule.

The judicial avenue is and will be available to them. That is the appropriate venue to request a stay, not the floor of the House of Representatives.

There are several brick and clay companies in my State of Colorado, such as the Summit Brick & Tile Company in Pueblo, Colorado. I know these companies updated and changed their industry after the 2004 rule.

But, unfortunately, like so many rules under the administration of George Bush, the rule is written so poorly that it was vacated by the courts in 2007, which means there is no rule under the authority of the Clean Air Act, which this Congress has made the law of the land, that sets standards for eliminating air pollution in this industry. Not only is that unacceptable, but, of course, it needs to be rectified urgently.

There is nothing special about brick kilns. Like anything else, of course, they affect air quality. I have a picture of what we are talking about here.

Of course, like any other economic activity that creates issues regarding air quality, we need a nuanced and thoughtful rule that ensures that the economic activity continues, subject to maintaining the public health.

In fact, the EPA has a responsibility under section 112 of the Clean Air Act to control pollution from stationary sources of pollution, like brick kilns.

Let me repeat that. The EPA was actually required by Congress to implement a rule that covers this industry because, according to the judiciary, President Bush enacted the rule incorrectly.

If Congress wants to get at the underlying statutes, let's have that debate. Let's talk about what the EPA should and shouldn't do.

I believe that we should close down loopholes that exempt fracking from regulation under the Clean Air Act. We have a series of bills that would do that—the BREATHE Act and the FRESHER Act—to ensure that the small site exemption does not occur, does not exist with regard to fracking activities that, in the aggregate, can have a considerable impact on air quality.

We have seen areas of our State and our neighboring State of Wyoming have worse air quality than downtown Los Angeles because of the extraction and fracking-related activity, which is largely exempt from the clean air law.

That is the debate I would be happy to have. Let's debate the appropriate jurisdiction of the EPA. If there is something we got wrong in that with regard to brick kilns and their authority or responsibility, that is the place to have the debate.

□ 0930

It is not to give an indefinite stay to simply implement what is the law of the land and the will of Congress, which is the EPA's responsibility.

Congress has told the EPA, through the Clean Air Act, that they have the responsibility under section 112 to control pollution from stationary sources of pollution. They tried to do it under President Bush. It was tossed out by the courts because it was improperly constructed, and they are doing their job.

Yet, Congress is trying to use something that is normally a judicial procedure, a stay, to get around the very

mandate that Congress gave the Environmental Protection Agency. So it is simply the wrong way to go about it.

Brick and clay plants, if left unregulated, which is why they are covered under the Clean Air Act, can be major sources of toxic air pollutants, like hydrogen fluoride, hydrogen chloride, and hazardous metal, heavy metal pollutants that can endanger people with everything from asthma to cancer.

Now, I don't know about you, but I would rather have my children running around a playground of a town where plants that put out hazardous pollutants are regulated in a thoughtful and responsible way, which is what this rule attempts to do.

That is why opponents of this legislation include the Center for Biological Diversity, League of Conservation Voters, League of Women Voters, National Resource Development Council, the Sierra Club, and the Union of Concerned Scientists.

All of these experts understand that, for 15 years, Congress has expected air pollution from these facilities to be covered by the Clean Air Act standards, and that delaying the process further is irresponsible, prevents the EPA from doing their mandate that Congress has given them, sets a dangerous public health precedent, and will endanger lives of American citizens.

Not only is this a treacherous pattern but, again, it is a waste of time. This bill won't become law. It came out of committee on a party-line vote. The majority knows that, even in the off chance that the Senate were to consider this legislation, which I highly doubt, the President would veto the bill.

It was indicated in the Statement of Administration Policy that I will include in the RECORD, Mr. Speaker, which reads, in part, H.R. 4557 would create ''an incentive for parties to litigate this rulemaking and the related corrections notice for as long as possible in order to delay air pollution reductions.''

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 4557—BLOCKING REGULATORY INTERFERENCE FROM CLOSING KILNS ACT OF 2016—REP. BILL JOHNSON, R–OH, AND SEVEN COSPONSORS

The Administration strongly opposes H.R. 4557, which could extend indefinitely deadlines for the brick and structural clay industry to limit mercury and other hazardous air pollution. Specifically, H.R. 4557 would extend compliance deadlines for the Brick and Structural Clay National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants until all litigation on the final rule is complete, thereby creating an incentive for parties to litigate the rulemaking and the related corrections notice for as long as possible in order to delay air pollution reductions. In the meantime, H.R. 4557 would undermine the public health protections of the Clean Air Act (CAA) by allowing further emissions of approximately 30 tons per month of toxic air pollution from brick and clay products production facilities. These toxic emissions include mercury, gases, and other hazardous metals which are associated with a variety of acute and chronic health effects, including cancers.

The CAA required the Environmental Protection Agency to finalize pollution standards for toxic air pollution from all industrial sectors by 2000. Since then, sources in many other sectors have been complying with standards that limit their emissions of cancer-causing toxic air pollutants. The subject rule reflects CAA requirements while providing flexible compliance options and the maximum time allowed by law for compliance. It also makes distinctions between requirements for small and large kilns in order to reduce the impacts on small businesses.

Since its enactment in 1970, and subsequent amendment in 1977 and 1990—each time with strong bipartisan support—the CAA has improved the Nation's air quality and protected public health. Over that same period of time, the economy has grown over 200 percent while emissions of key pollutants have decreased nearly 70 percent. Forty-five years of clean air regulation have shown that a strong economy and strong environmental and public health protection go hand-in-hand.

Because H.R. 4557 threatens the health of Americans by allowing more toxic air pollution, if the President were presented with H.R. 4557, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto the bill.

Mr. POLIS. Again, so long as even there are the most frivolous lawsuits and anybody could continually file a lawsuit, and so long as any one of them is pending, the rule does not take effect. It is indefinitely stayed.

So, yet again, we are debating something on the floor going nowhere. We are not debating improving our roads and bridges. We are not debating securing our southern border. We are not debating balancing our Federal budget deficit. We are not debating making America more competitive and bringing jobs from overseas and China back home here and creating a growing middle class. Instead, we are wasting time on legislation that won't become law, that shouldn't even become law because it is the inappropriate role of this body.

There are so many things that we could be talking about even within the energy realm and the EPA realm that would be productive discussions. I will give you an example.

I have had the opportunity in hearings in the Natural Resources Committee to bring up a bipartisan bill that I have with Mr. GOSAR twice this week, and this is the third time. It is a bill that would create jobs and create renewable energy. It is called the Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act.

Why don't we have a rule on that bill or bring it up on suspension?

Mr. GOSAR and my bill would incentivize renewable energy development by streamlining the permitting process on public lands for renewable energy projects.

Isn't that something we can come together about, making sure that we can find a way to expedite siting for renewable energy products on public land, creating jobs and creating clean energy?

Or we could be discussing the need for a permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, something that just last week was offered as a bipartisan amendment by myself and Mr. GRIJALVA and Mr. SANFORD of South Carolina.

But, of course, that amendment was not given an hour of debate, 2 hours of debate, like this. We have the rule, we have the bill. The entire legislative day is discussing a stay on brick kilns. It should be in a courtroom, not in the U.S. House.

We weren't even given 10 minutes. We weren't even given 1 minute to discuss that bipartisan amendment from Mr. GRIJALVA and Mr. SANFORD and myself.

Look, the list goes on and on of what we could be doing. It has been said that politics is the art of the possible.

When the American people look at our proceedings on the floor and what the Republican majority is doing with Congress, is it any wonder that the approval rating of Congress is 8 percent?

The people look at Congress and say, look, you are spending an entire day debating a stay on kiln rules. First of all, why are you talking about it? It should be in a courtroom.

Second of all, aren't there critical national priorities that you need to be debating right now to create jobs, make America more competitive overseas, improve our schools, make college more affordable, balance our deficit, fix our broken immigration system, improve our roads and bridges, make America more competitive and grow the middle class? Aren't there?

That is what 92 percent of the American people are crying out. There is still time for this Congress to listen. I hope that we begin.

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN).

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Alabama for his important work on this issue, and also the gentleman from Ohio.

I rise today in support of H.R. 4557, the BRICK Act. This legislation delays an unnecessary EPA rule that imposes overly strict emission standards on American brick kilns.

Manufacturers shouldn't have to deal with the hassles of an overzealous regulator in the first place, but they should at least get to have their day in court fighting this unreasonable regulation before incurring millions of dollars of expense to comply.

Since 2003, brick manufacturers have reduced emissions from kilns by 95 percent. However, EPA decided to impose another Washington mandate on small businesses, which they may not even be able to meet.

Shuttering U.S. brick factories will lead to higher costs for American consumers, making it even more expensive to open a business or raise a family.

Additionally, manufacturers will shed good-paying jobs in places like Malvern, Arkansas. And, once again,

our manufacturing needs will move offshore to a place that pollutes much worse than we do here.

Not only is the EPA out of touch with reality on this issue, they exhibit no common sense when they regulate jobs away from America and send them to countries that pay sub-par wages and have sub-par pollution control technology. They have a lose-lose proposition.

Mr. Speaker, this is the same EPA that negligently released millions of gallons of toxic mine water into the Animas River, tried to cover up and minimize their actions, refused to take responsibility, and resisted being held accountable.

If anyone needs more regulation, it is this out-of-control Federal agency, not hard-working Americans.

Mr. Speaker, for the sake of our environment and economy, I urge the House to pass the BRICK Act to keep the air cleaner and to save good-paying jobs here at home.

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

I want to talk a little bit more about when we say this bill will never become law what exactly we mean and I mean when I indicate that.

There have been an enormous number of bills that have passed the House of Representatives. As an example, repealing the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare, taking health care away from tens of millions of Americans—that has passed this House in one form or another 64 times. So 64 times the House of Representatives has voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act. That is clearly what people who have been elected to the House have decided to do.

The House of Representatives alone, however, doesn't get to make the law. We have the United States Senate and we have a President. The United States Senate usually requires, as a procedural matter, 60 votes to move legislation forward. And of course, even after a bill in the same form passes the House and the Senate, for it to become law, the President needs to sign it. If the President vetoes it, it immediately comes back and will require two-thirds to override the veto.

So what we are talking about with this bill around kilns, like this one here, we are talking about a bill that probably will pass the House. I expect that that is what we are spending a whole day on. I don't think the Republicans would want to spend a whole day on it if it was going to fail. So let's assume it passes.

I have heard no indication whatsoever that the Senate is going to take this up in any way, shape, or form. In the unlikely event that the Senate takes it up, they have the challenge of getting 60 votes.

The bill had no bipartisan support in committee. It is hard to see how they would get enough Democratic support in the Senate to get the 60 votes to pass the bill. Even if they somehow did, President Obama and the administration is, of course, against providing a stay against their own rule that they promulgated. Therefore, we are spending an entire day doing nothing, talking about brick kilns, fiddling while Rome burns.

The American people are upset, Mr. Speaker. The American people want this Congress to tackle the issues that affect them and their family around their kitchen table: rising rents and mortgage prices; maybe the mom or the dad or the kids lost their job and need to get back to work; making sure that they have a way to commute to work every day, and that our roads and bridges are strong, and they spend a minimal amount of time in traffic so they can spend more time with their family or at work earning money; balancing our budget deficit to secure a strong financial future for our country; making sure that Medicare and Social Security are there and safe, not only for today's retirees, but for the next generation and the next generation of American retirees; securing our southern border and replacing our broken and nonsensical and costly immigration system with one that works for America to make us more competitive, generate more revenues, unites families, and reflects our values as a Nation of immigrants.

We could be doing any of those things. We could be debating any of those things. No one says they are easy. It starts with time to debate here on the floor of the House. What a great way to spend a day, a Thursday.

By the way, Speaker RYAN and the Republicans don't even have us working Friday, tomorrow. They are sending us all home on Thursday, after spending a day debating brick kilns. We are not even debating anything tomorrow, Friday, or Monday or Tuesday or Wednesday or Thursday or Friday of next week.

I mean, look, the American people would love this kind of job which the Republican majority has given themselves with the congressional calendar where we have worked 3½ days this week, get Friday off, all of next week off, and spend a whole day debating brick kilns, rather than the issues that the American people care about.

That is what is going on here. That is why Congress has such a low approval rating.

Well, look, let's begin by debating the issues that people care about. They are hard. I get that. Fixing our broken immigration system, balancing our budget deficit, securing Medicare and Social Security, are not easy issues.

But why don't we spend a day doing that, today, all day, having ideas from both sides of the aisle, having Members speak about their plans to make America better and stronger, rather than debating a court procedure, a stay on brick kilns, all day, and then rewarding ourselves with a day off tomorrow.

Job well done, Congress. We did a court procedure on brick kilns as our work product and, for that, we deserve a week and a half off.

That is the job that Congress has defined for itself, and it is why the American people are so outraged.

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule that would require the Republicans to stop their partisan games and hold hearings on the budget proposal, the President's budget.

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, if we pass this previous question motion that I am making, we can actually begin the important discussion of how we can bring our budget into balance and restore fiscal responsibility.

Let's have hearings on the President's budget proposal. Let's talk about the tradeoffs around investments and savings. Let's have those meaningful discussions, rather than to spend an entire day on brick kilns, and then giving ourselves a week and a half off.

We can still salvage this Congress for the American people. We can restore trust in the integrity and the desire of the American Government to do good and tackle the big issues we face. I am confident we can.

That can begin by passing my previous question motion and getting to debate about the budget and balancing our budget and the tradeoffs and investments in our future, rather than debating kilns and giving ourselves a week and a half off.

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

□ 0945

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

I was very interested to hear my colleague talk about what makes the American people frustrated and angry right now. I have just come through a primary campaign for my seat in Alabama. I spent a lot of time with the citizens of the United States in my district. They are indeed frustrated and angry, and let me tell you why. They are frustrated and angry because we have a government in the Federal sphere that is out of control, and it is taking away their jobs.

This regulation will take away jobs from people in Alabama. It will take away jobs from people in 38 States. That is what makes them angry: a Federal Government that cares so little about them that they would put out a regulation like this that kills jobs, that raises the price of bricks on those of us who buy them to build our homes, and the Federal Government thinks that is necessary. But we have to do this today because we have a Federal Government that doesn't understand that its role is not to do that.

So let's get back to what this really means. This is not a partisan issue. Two of the sponsors of this bill are from the other party. My colleague from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) is a sponsor of this bill and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) is a sponsor of this bill because they understand it is going to hurt their constituents. It is going to hurt the average working person in this country.

My colleagues on the other side don't get that, and because they don't get that, there is no job too small for them, in their minds, to kill. There is no business too small for them to put out of business. There is no amount of money that they are going to increase what we consumers have to pay that is too much for them. They would kill every job, and they would hold back every consumer's ability to get a home at a decent price to get some little, small, almost nothing benefit.

There were no amendments offered as part of this debate today because none were offered in committee and none were offered to the Rules Committee. So this is not a closed debate because we are trying to close off amendments. There aren't any amendments.

Now, I heard a lot about a judicial stay. I said this in my initial remarks: saying that there is a ''possibility'' for a judicial stay says nothing about the practicality of it. I addressed that in my opening remarks. Let me just tell you, as a practical way, it is almost impossible to get this stay. Yet, when they got a stay several years ago, it was so late in the game that the brick industry had to go ahead and make all the changes, which cost jobs and increased the price of bricks for the rest of us.

Here is the truth. My colleague said that there is an obligation to have a rule here. There is already a rule on particulate matter, and most of the benefits in the rule that has been proposed here are to particulate matter. It is already regulated.

And, oh, by the way, when that prior regulation that was turned back by the Supreme Court was put out there and the industry had to go ahead and comply with it, they had already reduced emissions by over 90 percent.

So what we are talking about in this regulation is another effort to get at some small, little, almost imperceivable benefit at the cost of hundreds, if not thousands, of American jobs. I am astonished that this administration is so insensitive to that. The people of America are angry and frustrated because of that.

Now, I know that we are going to be having debates about some of the issues that my colleague talked about, and I am looking forward to those debates. But to the people who work in the industry, this is an important issue. It may not be important to other people in this House, but it is important to people that work for these brick businesses. It is important to me as a consumer looking at what it is going to cost me for buying new bricks.

So I would hope that there would be greater sensitivity from this administration for my colleagues in this House to people who are being hurt by this rule, and I hope that we will all take this very seriously as the important issue that it is.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to, first of all, congratulate the gentleman from Alabama. He had a recent election and triumphed, and, of course, we will be excited to continue to serve with him.

When we run, it is difficult. We have our ear to the ground, and we hear people. The gentleman mentioned that people were angry back home. I think there are a lot of people in my district that are angry, too. But again, I want to ask the gentleman: Is what they were angry about this brick kiln rule, or were they angry about the failure of Congress to secure our borders and the failure of Congress to balance our budget, all those things? I want to ask whether what you heard about in that anger was about brick kilns, or was it about other issues.

I yield to the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, they are angry about a Federal Government that is overreaching and hurting them. That is what they are angry about.

Mr. POLIS. Did anybody who was angry bring up brick kilns as something they were angry about?

I yield to the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, they brought up the EPA over and over again. I hear about the EPA everywhere I go.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, as I indicated, it would be an appropriate discussion for us to talk about the statutory obligations of EPA. We might have differing opinions. I think they should have the authority, we should remove the small site exemption, and they should look at emissions from the fracking industry and the extraction. But that is a valid discussion to have.

Instead of that, we are saying you are doing what we told you to do, but we want to grant a stay. So Congress, under the EPA in section 112, directed the EPA under the Clean Air Act to promulgate these regulations. President George Bush did so. They were tossed out, and now there is a new set of regulations going forward to implement what Congress wanted the EPA to do.

Now, if the gentleman from Alabama doesn't want the EPA to do that, let's have that discussion about EPA's authority. I am happy to do it. I have ideas. Maybe there are some areas the EPA shouldn't have that mandate authority. There are other areas, like making sure we look at emissions from fracking where we need enhanced authority because there is something called the small site exemption in the Clean Air Act, where, even though each particular fracking pad has a very small contribution to air quality, when you start having thousands of them in a limited area—which we do—it starts looking a lot less like a couple automobiles and a lot more like a large industrial factory. So they shouldn't be exempt just by nature of being small, because when you have a lot of small things, it equals not only one big thing, it equals 10 big things and 100 big things.

We have over 40,000 active wells in the greater Weld-Larimer County area alone, and there is an enormous impact on our air quality, which is exempt under the small site exemption.

So again, section 112 directs the EPA to promulgate these rules. If we want to open up the mandate that Congress has given the EPA, let's have that discussion.

As an individual legislator, I might trade you this brick kiln authority if we can close the small site exemption. I would say, fine; my constituents care more about closing that small site exemption than they do if there are two brick kilns in our entire State. So I think, in general, my constituents and Coloradans care more about making sure our air quality is good and protected with regard to the emissions from the fracking activity than from the two brick kilns. So I would be open to that as a legislative compromise. That is how legislation is made. But we are not allowed to have that debate.

The gentleman mentioned, oh, no amendments were brought forward. Guess what? We did a motion in the Rules Committee—I am sure the gentleman from Alabama remembers—yesterday to do an open rule on this. If that had passed—and it failed on a partisan vote. Not a single Republican voted to allow an open rule on this bill. If that had succeeded, if that had passed, that open rule the Democrats wanted, we could then introduce amendments like the ones that I mentioned to talk about the authority of the EPA or other issues that we have to improve the statutory requirements in charge of the EPA. Right on the floor, we would have the opportunity to do that. Instead, we have an entire day on brick kilns without even being allowed to introduce amendments that affect our clean air and water in any way, shape, or form. I think we can do better.

The gentleman also asked what the impact of the brick kilns on this is. The EPA estimates that the brick and clay rule would reduce national air toxins by approximately 375 tons in 2018. Again, that is what Congress has told the EPA to do under the Clean Air Act.

If Congress wants the EPA to do something different, let's have that discussion, section 112, other sections of the Clean Air Act, of the mandate that Congress has given the EPA. Let's not use a court procedure, a stay, that

won't become law to short-circuit something that Congress has told the EPA to do. It is positively schizophrenic for Congress to require an agency to do something and then say we are not going to allow you to do what we told you to do.

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, if I heard the gentleman correctly, he wants an open rule. Let me restate: we had no amendments offered at the committee of jurisdiction and no amendments offered before the Rules Committee, so that would fly in the face of our desire here to have regular order. What he has proposed is not regular order. He is proposing chaos, and I don't think the American people want us to be in chaos around here.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from the great State of Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS), a great conservative leader.

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the time to speak on the rule.

Our process for a bill to get to the floor is it has to go through the Rules Committee. This was a very, very important bill. It was interesting in the debate, listening to the sides, because there is an argument by constituents of having clean bills: one bill, one issue, simply understood, vote on it, instead of this horse trading that sometimes gets proposed: you give me this for my giving you that. I can tell you one thing, I know in my district they really don't like this. They want us to be accountable for a bill.

I also get frustrated with how easy it is to throw away jobs: I only have blank kilns in my State. Those are good-paying jobs for families, and they are important to the fabric of those communities. Just to say, ''Look, I have only got two. I don't really worry about them. Let's trade them off'' is really troublesome, and I am sorry we fall into that type of debate.

This is really part of a bigger debate in that the courts have already done this with the Clean Power Plan, the climate change bill. The debate is, ''Okay. EPA, you can do the regulation. Do the regulation.'' What the EPA likes to do is do the regulation; and they play this game: ''We know it is not legal, so we will impose the regulation. We know it is not legal. We are going to force industry to comply,'' and then when the courts say it is not legal, they have already gone too far, and the jobs have been lost.

That is factual. That is what happened in 2003. That is what happened when the EPA promulgated the MACT rules in 2003. The rules were vacated by the Federal court in 2007—vacated—which means you can't do it. But the industry already was forced to do it, either to spend millions and millions of dollars, or they had to close.

So fast-forward. Where are we today?

The courts have done this on the Clean Power Plan, the big climate change rule. What the Court just said for the first time, the Supreme Court said: No, we are not going to force the States to implement the Clean Power Plan until it is litigated in the courts. They put a stay on everyone and said: Don't do anything. Let's have the legislative-judicial debate and fight.

That is what this bill does. Let's just have the litigation on the legality of this new rule. If it comes up that it is legal, then the industry is going to have to comply. But if it comes out that it is not legal, guess what. We are going to save jobs. We are going to save communities, and we are going to save the family income for two kilns in a State or maybe more, depending upon the brick-producing capability of individual States.

So I am down here just to thank the Rules Committee for bringing this bill to the floor.

I look forward to the debate. It is much more than brick kilns. It is about when can the EPA force a company to do something. We would hope they could only do it after it has been ruled legal by the courts if someone challenges a rule, and that is what this does.

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

□ 1000

There is a way that our process works around here. If a rule is illegal, it will be tossed out by the courts. George Bush's attempt to implement the Clean Air Act, section 112, around brick kilns was tossed out.

What this bill does is says that, so long as there is a court challenge, there is some sort of presumption that the rule be tossed out and, therefore, an indefinite stay.

Now, there can be challenges all the time. The minute one fails, another one can be launched. No bones about it. This would indefinitely prevent this rule from ever taking effect with regard to brick kilns.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, I haven't heard from a single constituent on this issue. Like the gentleman from Alabama, my constituents are angry. They are angry at Congress and worried about the direction of the country.

They want Congress to replace our broken immigration system with one that works and secure our southern border. They want Congress to return to fiscal responsibility and balance our budget. They want to make sure that college is affordable for the next generation. They want to make sure they have good jobs here at home.

They want to make sure that we encourage companies to locate and grow here in America rather than take tax advantages for relocating overseas or inverting their headquarters to occur overseas, as occurs with today's Tax Code. Those are some of the many issues that my constituents want me to talk about here.

I just had a townhall meeting last week in Fort Collins, Colorado, the biggest city in my district. About 100 people came. Not a single person was angry about brick kilns.

But, yes, there was a lot of anger there about some of the issues I indicated: people frustrated with why Congress refuses to act on making college more affordable, why Congress has refused to act in making sure that Medicare and Social Security are there for the next generation, and why Congress doesn't put our country on the course of fiscal responsibility and reduce our debt-to-GDP ratio.

But, instead, we are debating a bill that won't become law without allowing amendments here on the floor. That is what a closed rule means. If it was an open rule, I would be able to offer my amendment to close the small site exemption with regard to fracking, but I can't.

We are debating a bill that won't become law, attacking a rule that is merely implementing what Congress has told not just this President, but any President, to do. George Bush tried. Obama tried.

It is because Congress, under the Clean Air Act, tells the executive: You have to do this under section 112. And then, when they do it, there is the issue that went through the courts.

That is appropriate. That is their role. But when they implement what Congress has told them to do, we are saying: No. There is an indefinite stay.

That is what this bill would do.

I know, Mr. Speaker, regardless of what they think about any of the policies or rules put out by this administration or any administration, it is not the place of Congress to issue stays on rules. It is the role of the courts.

The Constitution established three branches in our government for a reason under our Constitution. It is the courts' job, not Congress' job, to interfere with the legal process.

It is not Congress' job to take that responsibility away from the judicial branch, especially with a bill that would actually encourage more frivolous litigation by rewarding frivolous litigation and endless appeals when we already have too much of that in our court system.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' to defeat the previous question, which, if we succeed on that vote, we can immediately get to hold hearings on the President's budget proposals.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the rule as well, again, a closed rule, not allowing amendments here on the floor of the House.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The American people are sick and tired of a Federal Government that is out of control. I can't imagine the Founders of this country in that constitutional convention in Philadelphia in 1787 saying: Now, let's think about a

government agency established under our Constitution that is going to regulate bricks.

No wonder the American people look at the Federal Government and say: Have you lost your mind? What are you doing?

These other issues that my colleague talked about are important. But we have to stop here in this Congress to deal with another out-of-control Federal agency—and the EPA is one of the most out-of-control Federal agencies—to protect the American people and, yes, to protect their jobs, to protect the consumers of America from unreasonable increases in the cost of things like bricks because another agency has done something to them.

Yes, I think the American people are sick and tired of that, and I do think it is the role of this Congress to do something about it.

The EPA would have no power except for the fact that this Congress has delegated its own legislative power to the EPA. Indeed, it is our role to not only provide oversight to that power but, on particular occasions, to take it back.

Frankly, in my judgment, we don't take it back enough. If we took it back more, we would be protecting the American people more and their jobs and the cost of things that they buy every day.

I understood what my colleague just said. I heard it. But once again I don't think he is thinking about those people who work for these brick companies and I don't think he is thinking about the consumers of America, who are ready for the Congress to do its job to protect them. This is one way that we can do that.

Mr. Speaker, I again urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 635 and the underlying bill.

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

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 635 OFFERED BY MR. POLIS OF COLORADO

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

SEC 4. Immediately upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the resolution (H. Res. 624) Directing the Committee on the Budget to hold a public hearing on the President's fiscal year 2017 budget request with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget as a witness. The resolution shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the resolution and preamble to adoption without intervening motion or demand for division of the question except one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Budget.

SEC. 5. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of House Resolution 624.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

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

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

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

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

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RIBBLE). The question is on ordering the previous question.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on ordering the previous question will be followed by 5-minute votes on adopting the resolution, if ordered, and suspending the rules and passing S. 1826, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 233, nays 174, not voting 26, as follows:

[Roll No. 106]

YEAS—233

Abraham
Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin

NAYS—174

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Becerra
Bera
Beyer

Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meng
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—26

Allen
Bass
Beatty
Cárdenas
Costa
Engel
Franks (AZ)
Graves (LA)
Green, Gene
Griffith
Harris
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
McCaul
Meeks
Moore
Mulvaney
Napolitano
Pascrell
Pitts
Roybal-Allard
Sanchez, Loretta
Smith (WA)
Wagner
Westmoreland
Zinke

□ 1026

Mrs. DINGELL, Messrs. WELCH and COOPER changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 106, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

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

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 235, noes 173, not voting 25, as follows:

[Roll No. 107]

AYES—235

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Cooper
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin

NOES—173

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—25

Beatty
Bishop (UT)
Black
Cárdenas
Costa
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hinojosa
Love
McCaul
McDermott
Moore
Mulvaney
Napolitano
Pascrell
Perry
Pitts
Roybal-Allard
Sanchez, Loretta
Smith (WA)
Wagner
Westmoreland
Zinke

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1033

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 107, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 107, I was detained and missed the vote. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAMES ''MAGGIE'' MEGELLAS POST OFFICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1826) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 99 West 2nd Street in Fond du

Lac, Wisconsin, as the Lieutenant Colonel James ''Maggie'' Megellas Post Office, 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 Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 406, nays 1, not voting 26, as follows:

[Roll No. 108]

YEAS—406

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
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
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
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
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
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
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins
Hill
Himes
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
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
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
McClintock
McCollum
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Rangel
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
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)
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
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin

NAYS—1

Young (AK)

NOT VOTING—26

Beatty
Blumenauer
Byrne
Cárdenas
Cole
Costa
Green, Gene
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
McCaul
McDermott
Moore
Mulvaney
Napolitano
Pascrell
Pitts
Quigley
Roe (TN)
Rokita
Roybal-Allard
Sanchez, Loretta
Smith (WA)
Wagner
Welch
Westmoreland
Zinke

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1039

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.

Stated for:

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and not present for rollcall vote No. 108. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on final passage of S. 1826, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 99 West 2nd Street in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, as the Lieutenant Colonel James "Maggie" Megellas Post Office.

BLOCKING REGULATORY INTERFERENCE FROM CLOSING KILNS ACT OF 2016

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 635, I call up the bill (H.R. 4557) to allow for judicial review of any final rule addressing national emission standards for hazardous air pollutants for brick and structural clay products or for clay ceramics manufacturing before requiring compliance with such rule, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 635, the bill is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4557

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 ''Blocking Regulatory Interference from Closing Kilns Act of 2016''.

SEC. 2. EXTENDING COMPLIANCE DATES (PENDING JUDICIAL REVIEW) OF RULES ADDRESSING NATIONAL EMISSION STANDARDS FOR HAZARDOUS AIR POLLUTANTS FOR BRICK AND STRUCTURAL CLAY PRODUCTS MANUFACTURING OR CLAY CERAMICS MANUFACTURING.

(a) EXTENSION OF COMPLIANCE DATES.—

(1) EXTENSION.—Each compliance date of any final rule described in subsection (b) is deemed to be extended by the time period equal to the time period described in subsection (c).

(2) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term ''compliance date'' means, with respect to any requirement of a final rule described in subsection (b), the date by which any State, local, or tribal government or other person is first required to comply.

(b) FINAL RULES DESCRIBED.—A final rule described in this subsection is any final rule to address national emission standards for hazardous air pollutants (NESHAP) for brick and structural clay products manufacturing or clay ceramics manufacturing under section 112 of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7412), including—

(1) the final rule entitled ''NESHAP for Brick and Structural Clay Products Manufacturing; and NESHAP for Clay Ceramics Manufacturing'' published at 80 Fed. Reg. 65469 (October 26, 2015);

(2) the final rule entitled ''NESHAP for Brick and Structural Clay Products Manufacturing; and NESHAP for Clay Ceramics Manufacturing: Correction'' published at 80 Fed. Reg. 75817 (December 4, 2015); and

(3) any final rule that succeeds or amends the rule described in paragraph (1) or (2).

(c) PERIOD DESCRIBED.—The time period described in this subsection is the period of days that—

(1) begins on the date that is 60 days after the day on which notice of promulgation of a final rule described in subsection (b) appears in the Federal Register; and

(2) ends on the date on which judgment becomes final, and no longer subject to further appeal or review, in all actions (including actions that are filed pursuant to section 307 of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7607))—

(A) that are filed during the 60 days described in paragraph (1); and

(B) that seek review of any aspect of such rule.

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

The gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. WHITFIELD) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous materials on H.R. 4557.

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

There was no objection.

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

Today, we have the important opportunity to protect the American brick manufacturing industry and the ceramic kiln industry and its 7,000 employees from a costly regulation that has yet to survive a judicial scrutiny.

At this time, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP), one of the original sponsors of this bill.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I certainly appreciate the opportunity to speak on this bill.

I rise today in support of H.R. 4557, the Blocking Regulatory Interference from Closing Kilns Act, or the BRICK Act. This legislation is important to preserving the viability of brick manufacturing facilities all across the country.

Simply put, the BRICK Act pauses the EPA's 2015 National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants until court challenges of the rule are resolved. I am very concerned that brick manufacturers in my district, as well as those in the districts of my colleagues, may be required to spend hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars to satisfy an EPA requirement similar to the EPA's 2003 rule, a rule, it should be noted, that was vacated by the Federal courts.

□ 1045

For example, Cherokee Brick & Tile from Macon, Georgia, spent over $1.5 million to install controls in order to comply with the EPA's invalidated 2003 rule.

Cherokee is a small, family-owned business, and as my colleagues with small businesses in their districts can attest, $1.5 million is a very substantial sum that can cut heavily into a bottom line. This rule impacts more than just Cherokee Brick & Tile in my State, but also General Shale and Pine Hall Brick, among others.

A basic material for home building and construction, bricks are more than just a figurative cornerstone in the United States construction industry. Passing this legislation would guarantee the EPA would wait until its 2015 emission standards are reviewed by the courts before implementing the rule and before manufacturers across the country are needlessly required to spend millions of dollars.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support H.R. 4557, the BRICK Act.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4557 is an unnecessary bill that would set a terrible precedent.

As the Statement of Administration Policy, which outlines the justification for President Obama's veto threat, states:

''H.R. 4557 would undermine the public health protections of the Clean Air Act by allowing further emissions of approximately 30 tons per month of toxic air pollution from brick and clay products production facilities. These toxic emissions include mercury, gases, and other hazardous metals which are associated with a variety of acute and chronic health effects, including cancers.''

Mr. Speaker, the statement from President Obama goes on to say:

''Because H.R. 4557 threatens the health of Americans by allowing more toxic air pollution, if the President were presented with H.R. 4557, his senior advisers would recommend that he veto the bill.''

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4557 is the wrong remedy at the wrong time. Mr. Speaker, this bill is premature.

While I understand that the industry feels that it has been penalized for complying with the 2003 rule, that is not sufficient reason in itself to set up a unique process that incentivizes all parties that object to this rule to file endless challenges to the rulemaking.

The Brick and Clay Maximum Achievable Control Technology, or MACT, regulations that are the subject of this legislation are the subject of ongoing legal actions by industry and by public health communities across this Nation.

The courts already have the ability to grant a stay on this rule, yet for some reason the industry has not yet made that request to the court. But there are a number of pending cases filed by the industry on this very rule.

This week, Mr. Speaker, it was reported that the industry petitioned the court to put four suits on hold until the EPA decides whether to grant their requests to reconsider the regulations.

The pending decision by the court and by the EPA indicate that there is no need for H.R. 4557, as there are ample remedies available under the Clean Air Act to address concerns about this rule. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4557 does not actually address the merits or the faults with the Brick and Clay MACT rules.

Instead, what this bill does is takes these rules and this rulemaking outside of the process in the Clean Air Act that allows the EPA to issue final rules with deadlines for their implementation, without waiting for the conclusion of all the appeals and all the reviews.

Mr. Speaker, this bill would also delay any subsequent rule issued that is similar in scope and similar in objective until any legal challenges to it were completed as well. In other words, Mr. Speaker, this bill allows an opportunity for endless lawsuits on this very issue.

I fear, Mr. Speaker, that if H.R. 4557 were to become law, we would end up in a situation where we would never, ever control air polluting emissions from these facilities, no matter how cost-effective or how necessary that rule might be. Mr. Speaker, this is a policy that we must reject.

As the Statement of Administration Policy also noted, if rules cannot go forward until all legal actions are complete, there is a strong incentive to use frivolous legal challenges to prevent any rules from being implemented.

Under that scenario, we never would have achieved the improvements in air quality and in public health that have been accomplished under the Clean Air Act. We know, Mr. Speaker, that the Clean Air Act has delivered many cost-effective health benefits to the American people over the years.

It has been demonstrated many times that we do not have to make a choice between healthy air and jobs in this Nation. We can have both.

We cannot agree, Mr. Speaker, to setting this precedent and establishing a process that will delay important public health protections and encourage, at the same time, frivolous legal challenges to our clean air rules.

The brick, clay, and tile industries would be better served by pursuing the options available to them right now under the Clean Air Act.

For all of these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I must urge all of my colleagues to oppose this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOHNSON) for introducing this important bill. This is an industry that has been hard hit by the recession. It has lost 45 percent of its jobs. There are 70 of these plants around the country, and they employ 7,000 people.

I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOHNSON), the sponsor of the legislation.

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the BRICK Act would simply allow for the consideration and completion of any judicial review regarding the

EPA's 2015 National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants for the brick, clay, and tile industries before requiring compliance.

So why is this important? Because this rule needlessly jeopardizes good-paying jobs all across America, as the chart right here next to me clearly demonstrates.

And for what reason? Why are they jeopardizing these jobs? The EPA itself concedes in the rule: ''We do not expect that the combined emissions . . . would result in substantial cumulative health and environmental impacts.''

Instead, the real health impacts due to this rule will be felt by the workers who lose their jobs, their health benefits, and even the education and training opportunities offered by their employers.

The brick industry primarily consists of small, family-owned businesses. They are often located in small communities that depend on the plant for good-paying jobs.

To comply with the EPA's requirement, these small businesses will be forced to borrow millions of dollars to pay for the required control technology. Many brick companies are already struggling to find the capital for plant modernization. I can't imagine how difficult it will be for these companies to secure the needed investments to pay for new control equipment, equipment that provides zero return on investment.

And let's not forget that the brick industry has already been through this before. The EPA finalized a similar rule in 2003 that required brick companies to spend millions of dollars on control equipment. A few years later, a Federal court vacated that rule.

Unfortunately, the brick industry couldn't roll back the clock and recover the investments they had made. Worse yet, the EPA's new emission rules use the reductions achieved by the vacated rule as the baseline for further reduction requirements, so the industry essentially got no credit for the hard work that they had already done.

This history further underscores why this legislation is so important. It also baffles me when I hear some of my colleagues say the BRICK Act is not needed because parties can already seek a judicial stay.

However, the EPA has effectively indicated, in a statement for the RECORD submitted to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, that they would oppose any requests to stay the rule.

Further, while the EPA's Clean Power Plan was recently stayed, the parties were only able to obtain relief by going to the U.S. Supreme Court. Here, the EPA's rule threatens the very existence of small brick and tile companies. These companies do not have unlimited resources to litigate against the Federal Government, and their jobs should not be put at risk due to a rule which has been vacated once already and has yet to be reviewed by the courts.

Mr. Speaker, the brick industry is part of our American culture. It has helped build some of the most iconic buildings, cities, and towns in existence in our country today. We must make certain our regulations and laws preserve this industry, not destroy it. The BRICK Act will do that.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers right now.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

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

I rise in favor of this very important, I think, legislation sponsored by my colleague from Ohio (Mr. JOHNSON). I want to thank him for his leadership on this bill because it is a very pro-growth jobs bill. I think it is very important that we pass this.

I happen to be the chairman of the House Committee on Small Business, and our Nation's brick industry is primarily made up of small, family-owned businesses that employ thousands of workers. In Ohio alone, brick companies directly employ more than 700 workers and ensure the livelihoods of thousands of other workers.

□ 1100

Brick is used to construct, as we all know, residential homes and has been used to build some of our country's most iconic landmarks, such as Independence Hall, the birthplace of this great Nation.

With the severe downturn in construction during the Great Recession, the brick industry suffered significantly and still has not fully recovered. The industry is operating at about 50 percent of its capacity and suffered a 45 percent job loss from 2005 to 2012.

Now, small brick manufacturers are facing a costly new EPA regulation that may make it impossible for them to keep their doors open. That means those jobs would go away.

Compliance will require many companies to remove and replace costly air pollution control equipment with new devices that may not be able to meet the new, stringent emissions standards.

It is estimated to cost $4.4 million to retrofit two kilns—the average number of kilns in a facility—with the new pollution control equipment. While the regulation is being challenged in Federal court, it just makes common sense to delay the compliance deadlines until that matter is resolved.

As chairman of the Small Business Committee, I urge my colleagues to stand up for small brick manufacturers and support this bill. This is a jobs bill.

Again, I want to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOHNSON) for his leadership in moving this bill forward.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois). The gentleman from Illinois has 21½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Kentucky has 22½ minutes remaining.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), the ranking member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the BRICK Act.

I agree with my colleagues that the brick, clay, and tile industries are in a tough position. The Bush administration issued final brick and clay emission standards—or Brick and Clay MACT standards—in 2003, 3 years after they were supposed to be completed.

Unfortunately, the rule was flawed and, when challenged, the court vacated those standards as unlawful. As a result, the EPA Administrator was able to redo the brick and clay rule.

I am sympathetic to the fact that the brick, clay, and tile industries have been facing some real challenges since 2007, when the housing market began to decline, but some proponents of this bill will have you believe that all of the challenges are a result of the improvements the industry must make to meet the 2015 Brick and Clay MACT rule. What they refuse to acknowledge are the real health benefits that will come with the reduction of several major air pollutants.

I understand the industry stakeholders' reluctance to make further investments in pollution control technology to comply with this rule, given their previous experience with the 2003 rule, but the Clean Air Act provides a number of remedies that are available to them.

The courts are the proper venue for resolving issues with the Brick and Clay MACT. To date, industry groups have filed lawsuits on the merits of the rule, but none of the interested parties have actually asked the court to stay the rule's compliance dates.

The industry can also ask EPA to reconsider the rule, which I understand has already happened. In fact, earlier this week industry groups asked the D.C. Circuit Court to postpone consideration of their pending lawsuits until EPA makes a decision on whether to reconsider the rule. Neither of those remedies require action by Congress, but a legislative quick fix is the only remedy the proponents of this bill appear to care about.

H.R. 4557 does not resolve the ongoing issues with this rule. In fact, it is far more likely to create a drawn-out rulemaking process fueled by an endless stream of court challenges. That wouldn't resolve any of the industry's problems with the Brick and Clay MACT rule.

The bill also sets, in my opinion, a terrible precedent by delaying all of the rule's compliance requirements until all legal actions are complete.

If this remedy sounds familiar, that is because it is. The majority included a similar provision in a bill we considered earlier in this Congress: H.R. 2042,

the Ratepayer Protection Act. I opposed that bill, and I oppose this one for the same reasons.

If we had included a litigation delay policy in the Clean Air Act, we would never have achieved the improvements in air quality and public health that we now enjoy.

The Clean Air Act provides ample opportunities for industry and the public to influence the development and implementation of regulations. These tools should be used in this case.

Finally, I do not support legislation to resolve the issues being raised by the bill's supporters. These issues can and should be resolved by the courts.

So I urge my colleagues to reject this attempt to get around the courts. I ask that they vote ''no'' on H.R. 4557.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL), one of the original cosponsors of this legislation.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to voice my support for H.R. 4557, the BRICK Act.

I want to tell a story about a small company in my hometown of Selma, Alabama. Henry Brick Company has been a family-owned business since 1945, providing jobs and economic support to the Black Belt of Alabama.

In 2003, the EPA passed a rule requiring Henry Brick Company, along with all other brick and structural clay manufacturers, to reduce their air pollutant emissions.

In order to meet these new regulations by 2006, Henry Brick Company of Selma, Alabama, spent $1.5 million to come into compliance with the rule. This was a major financial burden for this small company, but Henry Brick Company is a good corporate citizen and understands the importance of protecting our environment.

However, 1 year after they spent $1.5 million, the courts vacated the EPA's 2003 regulation. So the EPA went back to the drawing board to create a new rule, but they did not give these brick companies credit for emission reductions achieved under the previous rule.

On the contrary, in their new rule, the EPA actually used the emission reductions achieved under the vacated rule as a baseline for further reduction requirements.

Now, Henry Brick Company faces a new brick and clay manufacturing rule with even stricter emissions requirements and must come into compliance by December 2018.

This time the small company may have to spend up to $8 million to comply with the new emissions standards, leaving Henry Brick Company one step closer to being forced to close their doors.

I am supportive, Mr. Speaker, of reducing emissions, and I am also in favor of protecting our environment. But this must be done in an economically viable way. It is simply unfair for regulators to continue to move the goalposts on small brick manufacturers like Henry Brick Company.

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

Mr. WHITFIELD. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. That is why I support this legislation to delay the enforcement of the new EPA rule until all of the legal challenges have been concluded.

This is a necessary and commonsense bill. I ask my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on final passage.

I want to thank Representative JOHNSON of Ohio and all of those that are working hard to make sure that small brick companies, like Henry Brick Company of Selma, Alabama, do not have to close its doors.

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4557, the BRICK Act.

Once again American businesses find themselves facing millions of dollars in compliance costs due to burdensome EPA regulations.

It is estimated that the EPA's Brick MACT rule may cost the brick and ceramics industry up to $100 million per year, with the cost of compliance for the average facility at approximately $4.4 million.

In addition, the industry will not be able to meet the requirement deadlines imposed by the rule, which is currently being challenged in Federal court.

The EPA's first attempt at a Brick MACT rule was judicially vacated, but not before the industry spent millions in compliance measures ultimately found to be invalid.

Small brick and ceramics businesses have been the hardest hit by the first rule, and if this situation repeats itself, many of these businesses will be forced to close their doors for good.

H.R. 4557 would provide much-needed regulatory relief to brick and ceramic businesses by stating that no additional compliance measures shall be mandated by the EPA until judicial review of the rule is completed.

I encourage my colleagues to support this bill, which will protect a vital industry and its thousands of jobs from potentially devastating regulatory uncertainty.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. KELLY).

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of the Blocking Regulatory Interference from Closing Kilns Act, or the BRICK Act.

Rules handed down by the EPA have real-world consequences on businesses and our economy. You have heard the backstory today regarding the 2015 Brick MACT standards and the impact it will have on the brick manufacturing industry.

In my district, Columbus Brick Company, a fifth-generation, family-owned small business, will be forced to spend millions of dollars in compliance costs and significantly downsize or go out of business and tell 85 dedicated employees to find a new job. What is even more disappointing is that Columbus Brick has been forced to navigate this decision before.

The EPA promulgated Brick MACT standards in 2003, and then the rule was vacated by a Federal court in 2007, but not until a significant monetary investment had been made by Columbus Brick in an attempt to be in compliance. That is why it is imperative that we pass the BRICK Act today.

Companies like Columbus Brick aren't asking for zero regulation, but they are asking to be regulated fairly, to have a seat at the table in determining new rules, and some certainty when it comes to making future business decisions.

The American people deserve better. They deserve a government that can ensure citizens have clean air to breathe without eliminating essential industries.

That is why I urge you to support the BRICK Act. Let's wait until judicial review is complete so our businesses aren't forced to make unnecessary, costly decisions with minimal or unknown environmental benefits.

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

Mr. Speaker, I don't know why we are even here debating this issue, which is an important issue, but not a prevailing issue. This is an issue that concerns one industry.

It is a concern that is already under consideration by the courts and by the administration. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is a problem that is more appropriately addressed by those branches of government than by this Congress.

There are many other issues that this Congress has before it that it is our job to address. Yet, Mr. Speaker, we are not spending ample time on those things that are closely tied to the economic benefits and jobs for all Americans.

Our water infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, is in dire need of repair and maintenance. We spend little to no time on our water infrastructure and the problems associated with it.

We have Superfund sites and brownfield sites that need to be cleaned up and put to productive use. No time, no energy, no congressional resources are used to address these vital issues.

Our States need support for modernizing and hardening the electricity grid. We are AWOL on these issues.

And still, Mr. Speaker, many Americans are underemployed, unemployed, and underpaid for the work that they are doing.

□ 1115

Where is the time allocation, the resource allocation? Where are our efforts on behalf of these people?

All of these things, Mr. Speaker, particularly and especially the infrastructure issue, must be addressed by the Congress. There is no other place that

can address these issues as appropriately, as effectively, as efficiently, except this Congress. And these issues, these infrastructure issues affect every industry, every State, every American in our Nation.

So, Mr. Speaker, let us use this body's time and efforts on the critical issues that are of great importance to the American people. Mr. Speaker, our time could be better served if we would just address some of these prevailing issues of the day.

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

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

I will conclude my remarks over on this side. I was listening to the debate on the rule about this bill, and some people did make the comment that this was not a particularly important issue.

I might say to the 7,000 people employed in this industry, to the owners of the companies, this is very important because some of them may very well lose their business, may very well lose their jobs.

So we have two goals with this legislation. One is simply to say this regulation coming out of EPA needs to be considered by the courts before these companies are required to invest significant sums of money.

In fact, the industry itself has said that the average plant has two kilns, and a plant with two kilns would have to spend roughly $4 million to meet the requirements of this regulation.

Now, remember, in 2003, EPA came out with a regulation for this industry and, by 2006, the industry had to comply. They did comply and they reduced emissions of the regulated substance by 96 percent.

We see a pattern developing at EPA. They know full well that this President would veto any legislation that changes in any way anything coming out of EPA, so the only avenue left to the regulated parties is to file a lawsuit.

So just as the brick industry filed a lawsuit in 2003 on that extreme regulation, they had to comply by 2006; and then the Court, in 2007, after they had already complied, ruled that the regulation was illegal, but the money had already been spent.

Now, the money has already been spent, 96 percent reduction has occurred, and now the EPA is coming back with a new regulation.

So these people involved, they have no avenue. I mean, they are talking to EPA, pleading with EPA, and EPA, as usual, is not responsive.

So all this legislation does is say, we are not trying to reverse the regulation, change the regulation. We are simply saying, let the Court decide.

And guess what?

A pattern is also developing over at EPA because they are losing these court cases.

Now, on the Clean Energy Plan, which was one of the most extreme regulations ever to come from EPA, 3 days before Judge Scalia died, the Supreme Court issued a stay on the Clean Energy Plan, saying that you cannot implement this plan until the judicial remedies have been exhausted.

Then, even under Utility MACT, that also went to the Supreme Court, and the Court said, well, you didn't consider certain costs; we are remanding this. But most of the industries have already spent the money, met the requirements, and some of them have closed as well.

So the question becomes, are we going to let an EPA adopting extreme rules under this administration make all the decisions?

Or will the Congress of the United States try to stand up and pass some legislation, not reversing, not changing, but simply saying, since lawsuits have been filed, let's give the Court the opportunity to determine if the regulation is legal or not legal?

So that is all we are doing here.

I want to thank those who introduced this legislation, both the Democrats and Republicans. And I would urge our colleagues to pass this legislation, to simply provide some commonsense balance, and let the courts make a decision before we require the companies to spend all this money and, in many cases, lay off employees and, in some cases, even close the business.

So I would urge the passage of H.R. 4557.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I voted against H.R. 4557, the Blocking Regulatory Interference from Closing Kilns Act of 2016, yet another bill in a series of Republican attempts to block EPA's ability to effectively regulate pollution in a way that protects our health and the environment.

H.R. 4557 would delay the enactment of an important rule limiting mercury and other hazardous pollution from clay and brick products production facilities. I was disappointed to see it pass the House, but I know that President Obama and Democrats in the Senate will ensure that this misguided bill does not become law this year.

The Clean Air Act requires the EPA to establish standards for pollution from all industrial sectors, and many other sectors are already complying to improve air quality. There is no reason to further delay this rule, and no reason for this legislation.

I am hopeful that House Republicans will drop its obsession with pro-pollution bills and allow us to get to work on a budget and bills that will improve the lives of Oregonians.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, we have the opportunity today to help many struggling small businesses and the jobs they support by voting yes on H.R. 4557, the BRICK Act.

How did we get here? Last October, the EPA finalized an extremely stringent new rule for the brick making industry. Most of the companies that find themselves threatened by this rule are small businesses—many are family-owned—and the industry is still dealing with the effects of the recession and the weak recovery that continues to suppress demand for bricks and other building materials. Few, if any, brick makers can easily afford the estimated $4.4 million dollars it will take to bring a typical facility into compliance and the industry is currently challenging the rule in federal court.

The BRICK Act simply extends the compliance deadlines for the rule until after judicial review is complete. This commonsense step would prevent brick makers from having to initiate costly and potentially irreversible compliance steps—and in some cases shut their doors entirely and lay off workers—over a rule whose legality is still in question.

This is far from a hypothetical concern. EPA's last set of Brick standards in 2003 were vacated by a federal court in 2007, but by that time the industry had already been forced to spend millions on compliance. None of us want to see that happen again. It's a matter of fairness. It's a matter of commonsense.

For the sake of brick makers and their thousands of employees across the country, including nearly 2,000 in Michigan I urge my colleagues to vote yes on the BRICK Act.

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

Pursuant to House Resolution 635, the previous question is ordered on the bill.

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

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

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

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on passage of the bill will be followed by a 5-minute vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 238, nays 163, not voting 32, as follows:

[Roll No. 109]

YEAS—238

Abraham	Cole	Flores
Aderholt	Collins (GA)	Forbes
Allen	Collins (NY)	Fortenberry
Amash	Comstock	Foxx
Amodei	Conaway	Franks (AZ)
Ashford	Cook	Frelinghuysen
Babin	Cooper	Gibbs
Barletta	Costello (PA)	Gibson
Bilirakis	Cramer	Gohmert
Bishop (GA)	Crawford	Goodlatte
Bishop (MI)	Crenshaw	Gosar
Bishop (UT)	Cuellar	Gowdy
Black	Culberson	Granger
Blackburn	Curbelo (FL)	Graves (LA)
Blum	Davis, Rodney	Graves (MO)
Bost	Denham	Griffith
Boustany	Dent	Grothman
Brady (TX)	DeSantis	Guinta
Brat	DesJarlais	Guthrie
Bridenstine	Diaz-Balart	Hanna
Brooks (AL)	Dold	Hardy
Brooks (IN)	Donovan	Harper
Buchanan	Duffy	Harris
Buck	Duncan (SC)	Hartzler
Bucshon	Duncan (TN)	Heck (NV)
Byrne	Ellmers (NC)	Hice, Jody B.
Calvert	Emmer (MN)	Hill
Carter (GA)	Farenthold	Holding
Carter (TX)	Fincher	Hudson
Chaffetz	Fitzpatrick	Huelskamp
Clawson (FL)	Fleischmann	Huizenga (MI)
Coffman	Fleming	Hultgren

Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—163

Adams
Aguilar
Bass
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Honda
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—32

Barr
Barton
Beatty
Benishek
Burgess
Cárdenas
Chabot
Cleaver
Costa
Edwards
Garrett
Graves (GA)
Green, Gene
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Hoyer
Kirkpatrick
McCaul
Moore
Mulvaney
Napolitano
Pascrell
Price, Tom
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Sanchez, Loretta
Scott, David
Smith (WA)
Speier
Thompson (PA)
Westmoreland

□ 1140

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Messrs. MARCHANT and ZELDIN changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 109, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 109, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I was absent on Thursday, March 3, 2016. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following ways:

Vote "no" on rollcall No. 106—Motion on Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 4557.

Vote "no" on rollcall No. 107—H. Res. 635—Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 4557—Blocking Regulatory Interference from Closing Kilns (BRICK) Act of 2016.

Vote "yes" on rollcall No. 108—S. 1826—To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 99 West 2nd Street in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, as the Lieutenant Colonel James "Maggie" Megellas Post Office.

Vote "no" on rollcall No. 109—Passage of H.R. 4557—Blocking Regulatory Interference from Closing Kilns (BRICK) Act of 2016.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I was absent for votes due to official business outside of Washington, D.C.

If I were present, I would vote in the following manner on the following votes:

(1) Previous Question—"yes."

(2) Adoption of the Rule—"yes."

(3) S. 1826—To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 99 West 2nd Street in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, as the Lieutenant Colonel James "Maggie" Megellas Post Office—"yes."

(4) H.R. 4557, Blocking Regulatory Interference from Closing Kilns Act—"yes."

THE JOURNAL

The unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, which the Chair will put de novo.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 217, noes 154, answered ''present'' 1, not voting 61, as follows:

[Roll No. 110]

AYES—217

Abraham
Adams
Allen
Ashford
Barletta
Barr
Becerra
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonamici
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Buchanan
Bustos
Butterfield
Calvert
Capps
Carson (IN)
Carter (TX)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clay
Cleaver
Cole
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Cooper
Cramer
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
Dent
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duncan (SC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fortenberry
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Graham
Griffith
Guthrie
Hahn
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Himes
Huffman
Hultgren
Issa
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Kaptur
Katko
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
King (NY)
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Latta
Lipinski
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Lowenthal
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Maloney, Carolyn
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McClintock
McCollum
McHenry
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meeks
Meng
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Palmer
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Ratcliffe
Ribble
Roby
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rooney (FL)
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schiff
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Sinema
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stutzman
Takai
Takano
Thornberry
Titus
Torres
Tsongas
Upton
Van Hollen
Wagner
Walden
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yarmuth
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOES—154

Aderholt
Aguilar
Amash
Babin
Barton
Bass
Bera
Blum
Bost
Brady (PA)
Brownley (CA)
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Capuano
Carney
Carter (GA)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Chaffetz
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Costello (PA)
Crowley
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
Delaney
Denham
DeSantis
Dold
Duffy
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Foxx
Fudge
Gibson
Gosar
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Guinta
Gutiérrez
Heck (NV)
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Honda
Huizenga (MI)
Hurd (TX)
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kilmer
Kind
Kinzinger (IL)
Knight
Lance
Langevin
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
LoBiondo
Love
Lowey
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Matsui
McDermott
McGovern
McKinley
McSally
Meehan
Messer
Miller (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
Nugent
Pallone
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Price, Tom
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rokita
Ros-Lehtinen
Rouzer
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Smith (MO)
Speier
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walker
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Westerman
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

Tonko

NOT VOTING—61

Amodei
Beatty
Benishek
Blumenauer
Boyle, Brendan F.
Byrne
Cárdenas
Collins (GA)
Cook
Costa
Courtney
Crawford
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Gibbs
Gohmert
Granger
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Grothman
Hanna
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Hinojosa
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Hunter
Hurt (VA)
Keating
King (IA)
Kirkpatrick
Larsen (WA)
Loebsack
McCaul
Mica
Miller (MI)
Moore
Mulvaney
Napolitano
Palazzo
Pascrell
Payne
Pittenger
Pitts
Pompeo
Quigley
Rangel
Reed
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roskam
Roybal-Allard
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Simpson
Sires
Smith (WA)
Trott
Westmoreland

□ 1148

So the Journal was approved.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present in the House Chamber for certain rollcall votes on February 26th and the week of February 29 through March 3, 2016.

Had I been present on those dates, I would have voted "yea" for rollcalls 100, 102, 103, 104, 105, 108, and 110 and "nay" on rollcalls 101, 106, 107, and 109.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on Thursday, March 3, 2016, due to important events being held today in our district in Houston and Harris County, Texas.

If I had been able to vote, I would have voted as follows:

On the Motion on Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 4557, the Blocking Regulatory Interference from Losing Kilns Act, I would have voted "no."

On H. Res. 635, the Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 4557, I would have voted "no."

On S. 1826, To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 99 West 2nd Street in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, as the Lieutenant Colonel James "Maggie" Megellas Post Office, I would have voted "yea."

On passage of H.R. 4557, the Blocking Regulatory Interference from Losing Kilns Act of 2016, I would have voted "no."

On the Journal Vote, I would have voted "yea."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I was absent due to illness and was not present for roll call votes on Thursday, March 3, 2016. Had I been present, I would have voted in this manner:

Rollcall Vote No. 106—Ordering the Previous Question on H. Res. 635—the rule providing for consideration of H.R. 4557—Blocking Regulatory Interference from Closing Kilns Act of 2016—"no."

Rollcall Vote No. 107—Adoption of H. Res. 635—the rule providing for consideration of H.R. 4557—Blocking Regulatory Interference from Closing Kilns Act of 2016—"no."

Rollcall Vote No. 108—S. 1826 To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 99 West 2nd Street in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, as the Lieutenant Colonel James "Maggie" Megellas Post Office Office—"yes."

Rollcall Vote No. 109—Passage of H.R. 4557—Blocking Regulatory Interference from Closing Kilns Act of 1016—"yes."

Rollcall Vote No. 110—Journal—"yes."

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, February 29; Tuesday, March 1; Wednesday, March 2; and Thursday, March 3, 2016, I was on medical leave while recovering from hip replacement surgery and unable to be present for recorded votes. Had I been present, I would have voted:

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 102 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 4238).

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 103 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 136).

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 104 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3735).

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 105 (on passage of H.R. 3716).

"No" on rollcall vote No. 106 (on ordering the previous question on H. Res. 635).

"No" on rollcall vote No. 107 (on agreeing to the resolution H. Res. 635).

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 108 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 1826).

"No" on rollcall vote No. 109 (on passage of H.R. 4557).

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 110 (on approving the journal).

ADJOURNMENT FROM THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2016, TO MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2016

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 4 p.m. on Monday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Michigan). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

BLOCKING REGULATORY INTERFERENCE FROM CLOSING KILNS 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 President has a history of legislating through government agencies, and his flavor of the week continues to be the EPA.

Using faceless EPA bureaucrats, this administration issues new rules and regulations daily, passing them out like candy. Not only are they costly and time-consuming, these rules affect the heart of America's prosperity and economic growth: our small businesses.

I rise today in support of legislation that works to block the overreaching hand of this administration and protects Americans and American businesses from more burdensome regulations.

The BRICK Act delays a harmful EPA rule from being implemented until all judicial review has been completed. To me, this legislation is plain common sense.

Congress needs to stand up to this administration, which continues to legislate outside its jurisdiction, and increasingly, the courts confirm my claims. The legislative process begins and ends with Congress. I commend my colleagues today for passing the BRICK Act to prove we will stand up to Washington agencies that overstep their boundaries.

NO BUDGET, NO PAY

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

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I ran for Congress on the idea of no budget, no pay. If Congress can't do its job and pass a budget, they don't deserve a paycheck. No hardworking American gets paid for not doing their job. So why should we?

Just a few months ago we passed a bipartisan 2-year budget agreement that moved us away from the harmful sequester. Now many of my colleagues

on the other side of the aisle are threatening to go back on that agreement and keep us from having a budget at all. That is what gridlock looks like, and that is what people hate about Congress.

What are we going to do to fix it? Come in to work 10 days in the entire month of March. Maybe if we came to work, we could debate and pass a budget and spending bills that will spur economic growth and create high-quality jobs.

But, instead, we have 2 months on the calendar this year where we don't come to work at all, even once. A 5-day workweek is expected from most Americans. Why should Congress be any different?

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate March as Women's History Month. As this month is also Red Cross Month, I want to recognize one woman in particular: Clara Barton.

Ms. Barton was a nurse during the Civil War and a teacher before founding the American Red Cross in 1881. She then served as the organization's first president. Her compassion and accomplishments are truly inspiring, and her work has literally helped millions.

Unfortunately, in our society today, women make up less than 5 percent of CEOs and are equally underrepresented in other areas. As a father of two daughters, ensuring that young women can achieve anything that they set their mind to is personal for me.

In the 10th Congressional District, we run a Young Women's Leadership Academy. This program is designed to help young women develop the leadership skills necessary to overcome any and all challenges thrown their way.

This unique program gives young women the opportunity to learn from other inspiring female leaders, such as our own colleague, Congresswoman ELISE STEFANIK, the youngest woman ever elected to the United States Congress.

I encourage all of my colleagues to start similar programs in their district so that we can all do our part to help inspire young women to become leaders in their chosen fields.

Of course, this is just a small part of the solution. As we celebrate the inspiring achievements of women this month, we must rededicate ourselves to doing more to tear down barriers and ensure gender equality in our country.

HONORING EDWARD CHOW, JR.

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

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of Captain Edward Chow, Jr., a decorated Army veteran who was awarded the Bronze Star for his selfless service in the Vietnam war.

True to his character, Ed's service to our great Nation did not end after the war. Out of uniform, Ed has continued serving his fellow Americans, dedicating his life to supporting fellow vets.

Ed's illustrious public service career culminated in leading the State of Maryland's Department of Veterans Affairs. Under Secretary Chow's leadership, the Department enhanced claims processing and improved the quality of its veterans' homes.

As Ed's friend, I witnessed his dedication and passion for helping the men and women who defended our country. Ed never hesitated to help whenever I called him on behalf of a veteran needing assistance.

I, like so many others, thank Ed for his admirable career of military and public service and want him to know his legacy will endure.

M&M's 75TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 75th anniversary of an iconic American candy first made in the great State of New Jersey.

On March 3, 1941, in Newark, New Jersey, Mars began producing M&Ms as military rations for those serving in World War II. Over the 75 years since their founding, M&Ms grew to become an internationally recognized brand and a symbol of American innovation and quality.

To this day, Mars continues to produce M&Ms in my district in Hackettstown, New Jersey. New Jersey is also home to Mars Global Chocolate headquarters, and they operate four facilities in a State employing over 1,700 associates.

Mars has remained active in New Jersey communities over the years, and I applaud their philanthropic endeavors and their commitment to our local towns. No doubt New Jersey is a sweeter place because of M&Ms.

On behalf of the Fifth District of New Jersey, I am pleased to have the opportunity to recognize this extraordinary anniversary for M&Ms.

HONORING JAMES V. KIMSEY

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

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, America and the world lost an indefatigable champion, a distinguished gentleman, and a charismatic friend with the death of James V. Kimsey this past Tuesday.

Jim was larger than life. Everything Jim touched has become part of the history and culture of our community. From Bullfeathers to AOL, from his home above the Potomac to the orphanages in Vietnam, from the Kennedy Center to the International Commission on Missing Persons, Jim Kimsey has been a transformational leader.

Despite his too-short life, Jim's résumé is long and deep: founder and CEO of AOL, chairman of Refugees International, Library of Congress Trust Fund Board, Executive Committee of the National Symphony Orchestra, Kennedy Center Board of Trustees, West Point Board of Visitors, an Army tour in the Dominican Republic and two in Vietnam, the Army Ranger Hall of Fame, and so much more.

But for Jim's myriad of friends, he was so much more than a list of achievements. He was visionary, strategic, generous, mischievous, and always had a smile on his face.

Who else could be tossed out of Gonzaga College High School 2 months before graduation, graduate from our archrival St. John's College High School, and still be a generous and loyal Gonzaga friend for decades to come?

Jim's funeral will be this Saturday at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle in Washington, D.C.

We will all miss you for a long time.

□ 1200

WHEN WEAKNESS IS PROVOCATIVE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS).

PLANNED PARENTHOOD

Mr. ROTHFUS. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, this week, the House Select Investigative Panel on Infant Lives began hearings to look into Planned Parenthood's harvesting and trafficking of human body parts, which was revealed in a series of undercover videos last year. These were videos that even Democrat Presidential frontrunner Hillary Clinton, in her words, ''obviously found disturbing.''

Since the release of the videos last year, some have rushed to defend the organization, and Planned Parenthood and its allies have been in full damage control mode. Among the more bizarre defenses has been that the videos were heavily edited, as if the statements made by Planned Parenthood officials and a worker who harvested body parts really aren't what they appear to be.

I do not serve on this select committee, but if I did, I would really want to take a hard look at that defense. The term ''heavily edited'' suggests that important, qualifying context may have been omitted in these videos;

but I struggle, Mr. Speaker, with trying to understand any context that would soften the language in these tapes.

For example, in what context is this okay?

''We have been very good at getting heart, lung, liver, because we know that, so I am not going to crush that part.''

What about: ''A lot of people want intact hearts these days,'' or ''always as many intact livers as possible''?

Do the defenders of Planned Parenthood think that they are talking about chicken hearts or livers at a butcher shop as opposed to baby body parts?

Just in what context does this sound right?

''Yesterday was the first time she said people wanted lungs.''

How about: ''Some people want lower extremities, too''—that would be legs. ''I don't know what they're doing with it. I guess they want the muscle''?

Again, Mr. Speaker, what is the situation in which these statements would not shock a sensitive conscience?

What about this line? When is this an acceptable statement?

''Using a 'less crunchy' technique to get more whole specimens.''

In that phrase, the context is you have a Planned Parenthood official who is talking about a ''less crunchy'' type of abortion, which begs the obvious question: What does that even mean?

Can anyone who defends Planned Parenthood give me the context in which this sounds good?

''I know I've seen livers; I've seen stomachs; I've seen plenty of neural tissue. Usually you can see the whole brain, usually, come out.''

What about: ''I don't think it would be as war torn'' when discussing what fetal remains look like during a second trimester abortion? What would that sentence sound like in an unedited video?

At one point in a video, a clinic worker brings in another fetal body, saying, ''And another boy.'' A boy. In another context, you might hear ''and another boy'' if a mom is giving birth to twin sons, but that is obviously not the context of these videos.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, can someone please tell me the context in which this dialogue does not mean what it says?

''This is a really good fetus, and it looks like we can procure a lot from it . . . we're going to procure brain.'' Further: ''So she gave me the scissors and she told me I have to cut down the middle of the face; and I can't even, like, describe, like, what that feels like. And I remember picking it up and finishing going through the rest of the face and just picking up the brain and putting it in a container . . . and I'm just sitting there, like, what did I just do?''

What is the context in which these words might not be what they seem?

I can think of one: perhaps if you had a screenwriter who was talking about a new horror film she was writing.

But this is no horror film, Mr. Speaker. These words are direct quotes from a technician who is engaged in a real-world practice that is appalling, barbaric, and indefensible—the harvesting of fetal body parts for money.

It is not easy to come to the floor of the House to speak these words. I would prefer not to. It is uncomfortable to listen to these words, and many people would prefer not to hear them. If that is the case, Mr. Speaker—if I don't like talking about this and if people don't like hearing about it—why, for goodness sake, are we allowing hard-working taxpayers' dollars to go to the organization that is responsible for them?

We are a better nation than what is revealed in these videos. There are 13,000 other health clinics that are capable of providing health care for women, clinics which do not perform abortions. It is past time that the $500 million in Federal dollars that Planned Parenthood receives every year be redirected to those clinics.

I thank the gentleman from Texas.

WHEN WEAKNESS IS PROVOCATIVE

Mr. GOHMERT. I thank Mr. ROTHFUS, my friend from Pennsylvania. He is exactly right. We have so many people across this Nation who understand the tragedy of taking a child's life before it is fully born.

Mr. Speaker, I know there are some people, like our friend Donald Trump, who say Planned Parenthood has done a lot more good; but the trouble is, so often, Planned Parenthood takes money from the Federal Government and then just refers the women out. Of course, that has been perpetuated by this administration in its making it sound like Planned Parenthood does mammograms and other things that they don't do. They refer people to other people.

Why not have that money not get held up at Planned Parenthood? Why not have that money go directly to the thousands of healthcare providers that actually provide the care that the women are seeking and not have it go to Planned Parenthood so that they can get money from the government and then keep their abortion business going?

That also leads right into this article today from the National Review, Jim Geraghty, regarding ObamaCare. Headline: ''Deductibles Increased in 41 States under ObamaCare.''

It reads:

> Freedom Partners unveils a new 'Deductibles Tracker' showing how much deductibles have increased, on average, in each State. I know this will shock you, but most people are finding their deductibles are going up and, in some cases, way up.
>
> Their analysis shows deductibles have increased in 41 States under ObamaCare—in some States, like Mississippi, by over $1,000. Seventeen States, representing over half of total exchange enrollment, are seeing double-digit spikes. The largest increases were in Mississippi, which went up 39 percent; Washington State went up 31 percent; South Carolina went up 26 percent; Louisiana went up 24 percent; Florida went up 23 percent; Minnesota and Vermont went up 22 percent; Arizona went up 21 percent; North Carolina went up 20 percent.

Mr. Speaker, what makes it so incredibly difficult is knowing there are Federal dollars that are being used for abortion and being used for purposes that are against the religious beliefs of so many Americans. When we think that the whole object we were told for having ObamaCare and passing it against the will of the majority of the American people was so that we could make sure everybody had insurance, now it appears that there has not been much change in the net number of people covered under insurance.

Oh, yes, it is true. There are some people who were paying for their insurance who no longer have it—they can't afford it anymore. It is true that we have some people who were not paying for it who are having it provided now, but it really appears to have been more a transfer of working people's money to people who were not working.

It appears that we have been moving into a socialist agenda for some time, and that goes back to what President Obama said when he first ran, telling ''Joe the Plumber'' that he wanted it to be about spreading the wealth around. The pilgrims found out that, at least in this world, if you try to share and share alike—the Early New Testament tried it, and it didn't work—and if you start allowing people who are not working to have the same benefits as those who work, you will have more and more people who are not working.

I hear from so many of my constituents—I know I hear from others of my friends here in Congress—that constituents are hurting. Their insurance is costing more, and like this article points out, the deductibles have gone higher. Ask one of my staff, who is not making very much.

If you make $30,000 and if you have a deductible of $6,000 as a healthy young person, what that basically means is that every dime you are paying into health care is not going to help your health care whatsoever. You are paying for the new IRS agents, the new navigators, and the new government union workers who will never spray Bactine on anybody's cut, who will never put a Band-Aid on. They will just keep adding forms, adding requirements, taking more time away from the true healthcare providers and more money away from the true healthcare providers for bureaucrats.

I know, back when I was an exchange student in the Soviet Union and when I went and toured some of the most up-to-date facilities in what was the Soviet Union at the time, I thanked God that I lived in America. I thanked God that we had such incredible health care and that I didn't have to rely on what appeared to have been 30- or 40-year-old antiquated healthcare methods and equipment for my health care.

Even living in the small town of Mount Pleasant, as I did, I knew we

had a lot better healthcare facilities in my hometown where I was growing up than they did in one of the largest cities—well, the largest city in Ukraine—Kiev, where I toured facilities. I toured a medical school and I couldn't believe how far behind our medical schools that they were.

It is what happens when you continue moving towards socialized health care. I know Mr. Trump, initially, wanted the government to provide everybody's health care, but apparently in his being informed that conservatives don't like that, he is now saying no, that that is not where he is going.

We know that President Obama, back before he was President, was caught on video saying that we want to go to single payer—in other words, socialized medicine—where the government is in charge of everybody's health care.

I know I have got conservative friends who say, LOUIE, we don't have to worry. We don't have to fight ObamaCare, because socialized medicine always fails. They are wrong. Socialism always fails. As Margaret Thatcher said, eventually, you run out of other people's money.

You incentivize not working and penalize working, and that is what we are doing here in America now. We are moving in that direction, toward socialism. The only time true capitalism, true free liberty, entrepreneurism in the marketplace fails is when it starts moving into socialist tendencies and adopting socialist ways. Then that can spell doom for capitalism, those who want to have a dictatorial Federal national government. That is where they want to see things go.

□ 1215

But it is ironic that when a free market society struggles, it is when they start incorporating socialist tendencies and rewarding improper conduct or nonworking. Then you have a lot more people not working.

You incentivize people not to hire. You penalize people for hiring. You penalize people for hiring more than 50 people, like ObamaCare does.

I have talked to people that still say that they could hire more, but they are not going to because of ObamaCare.

That means there are people walking around today going from business to business, looking for a job that will not find that business that will hire them because of ObamaCare.

When you have young people with 5-, 6-, $7,000 deductible health insurance, they are paying for the bureaucracy. They are not paying for health care.

Apparently, some religious beliefs dictate against birth control. Mine doesn't, my Christian beliefs. But I absolutely respect the religious beliefs of those who are against it. They should not have to pay for people to violate their religious beliefs.

That used to be the way this country grew and was blessed by God. But as we turn further and further away from what was a blessing to America, then the world hurts. I have seen it in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, South America.

When we are not strong—as I have said numerous times, quoting a South African gentleman: When you get weak, we suffer. Please tell people in Washington to quit getting weaker. We suffer when you are weaker.

These kind of programs, ObamaCare, make us weaker. When we provide the resources, the ability for the largest supporter of terrorism in the world to have over $100 billion, which they say some of it is for sure going to be spent on more terrorism, that is the kind of activity that will not be blessed. That is the kind of activity that brings a nation's demise.

So health care is costing more. Deductibles are going up. People are paying more for higher deductibles, less coverage. Yes. There are some who, because of the government subsidies, are saying: Well, mine's a little less than it was before. But the people that are working are paying more, and it is devastating.

Mr. Speaker, it is critical that those of us who have a voice in this city make our voices heard for those in our districts. You can't be listening to the talking heads in this town and think you have heard from America.

I mean, look at Politico. Last week they said I had a close race. Tuesday, with one opponent spending tremendously more than I did, two opponents, I won with 82 percent. So that is what Politico calls a close race.

Mr. Speaker, I know that I didn't win with 82 percent because of my looks and certainly not because of the way I sound.

It is because I make my voice heard for the huge majority of people in east Texas with all the common sense they have got. That is what I am hearing from them.

They are outraged that we have allowed ObamaCare to last as long as it has. They are suffering. They are outraged that this administration has turned on our friend, Israel, and seeing that Iran is rewarded for their massive misconduct, as they have continued to be the largest supporter of terrorism in the world, with this administration as an accomplice, as an enabler. There are consequences to nations and governments that enable crime and misconduct and terrorism and abuse.

For those who believe in the Bible, it was Hosea. God was explaining why he was about to come down on the children of Israel. I love the rather loose translation when he says that it is because they have selected leaders who were not my choice.

So people around the country can say all they want: Well, this President is not my President. This Governor is not my Governor. This person is not my elected representative.

I don't agree with them. But everyone in the country will suffer the consequences of poor choices as leaders. That is the way self-government works.

Now, I have been reporting, Mr. Speaker, from this very podium for years about the misuse and abuse and providing our security by Homeland Security.

I am very grateful to Judicial Watch. In their lawsuit against Homeland Security, they have been able to obtain records that verify what some of us have known to be true because of whistleblowers providing us information. While some, whether CNN and other places, belittle what we have said, we knew what we were talking about, but we couldn't give the sources.

Judicial Watch. This headline says: ''Homeland Security Records Reveal Officials Ordered Terrorist Watch List Scrubbed.''

It says: ''Judicial Watch announced today that it obtained 183 pages of documents from the Department of Homeland Security revealing that the Obama administration scrubbed the law enforcement agency's 'Terrorist Screening Database' in order to protect what it considered the civil rights of suspected Islamic terrorist groups. The documents appear to confirm charges that Obama administration changes created a massive 'hands off' list. Removed data from the terrorist watch list could have helped prevent the San Bernardino terrorist attack.''

Mr. Speaker, I would also submit that we have seen the email—I believe Senator GRASSLEY requested more information about it.

To my knowledge, we have not seen additional explanations or information about the email about a person's terrorist ties, indication that he was a radical Islamist. The email response was: Oh, this guy's on the Secretary of Homeland Security's hands-off list.

We have read stories about the White House allowing at least one or more individuals with terrorist ties to come to the White House. There are consequences for ignoring the law, ignoring the lawbreakers, and not protecting our homeland.

The article says:

''The new documents were produced in response to a Judicial Watch February 2015 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit filed back on February 13, 2015.''

It should be noted, I mean, that that is over a year ago. The Freedom of Information Act request should have been answered promptly, but this administration is too caught up in trying to cover up their own tracks.

That is why we haven't even gotten the Attorney General to provide Members of Congress the documents showing support for terrorism, the boxes of documents that were provided to people who were convicted of supporting terrorism.

The Justice Department provided it to them. I have asked repeatedly, and the most I have gotten is reference to a few Web sites.

They covered up their own wrongdoing. They have covered up ties to terrorism. They have covered up for

people who have supported terrorism. And there are consequences for that. You learn more when you leave this town, Washington, D.C.

But when you have people in Africa, Egypt, Jordan, UAE, India, and Afghanistan telling you that your administration in America is supporting violence by not standing up against radical Islam and when you hear that from Muslim leaders who recognize the failures of this administration, then you know that the whole world is seeing what is going on and it is only here that people have become so blind.

I know there are people in the Republican establishment that just cannot believe that a man like Trump, who has spent his whole life taking one position, could be leading so big in different contests.

And, yes, my friend TED CRUZ is doing quite well. It is nice to see somebody that has been consistently doing well. But around the world they see what is going on.

The Republican establishment doesn't seem to understand. People are furious. They are furious about ObamaCare. They are furious that we turned on our friend, Israel. They are furious that we have enabled Iran to continue their terrorist ways.

All of this at the same time—of course, this was—Donald Trump's big issue that shot him to the top is border security.

This article from today from KRWG News, ''Border Crime Taking A Toll On Residents In Southwest New Mexico, Arizona,'' says: ''Residents of New Mexico's Bootheel and parts of southern Arizona say human smuggling and drug trafficking is taking its toll on the region.

''The Deming Headlight reports that residents are scheduled Thursday to express their concerns to Federal officials during a meeting at the Animas Community Center in Animas, New Mexico.

''Judy Keeler, a longtime resident of the rural border region, says her home was recently burglarized and it's not an unusual episode for other residents.

''Residents have said State Highway 80 has become a favorite for Mexican cartel drug runners who manage to navigate out of the Peloncillo Mountains along the Arizona-New Mexico border. They want an even more increased presence from the U.S. Border Patrol.''

Apparently, they are not going to get it.

We still hear people say there is no way to secure our entire border, but this brings back a recollection in history.

One of my least favorite Presidents, Woodrow Wilson, secured the border after Pancho Villa had some of his thugs come across the border and kill American families. Americans back then with good sense said: We can't have that.

They spurred the President on until he sent tens of thousands of what we call National Guard troops now, and they secured the border. Nobody came across our border that we did not want to come across. He did it back in the early 1900s, and we can't do it now.

Well, the truth is, Mr. Speaker, we could do it now, but you have to have an administration with the will to provide for the common defense of the American people.

Instead, we have enabled a massive amount of crime across the border regions that is spilling into other areas of the country. Drugs are spreading around the country.

We have heard, also, from the FBI Director himself. There are ISIS cells, and there are ISIS investigations in every State in the Union. So when are they going to be triggered?

We know that, when they are triggered with reports like we have just read here, the administration has continued to cleanse our Homeland Security records to purge training material for the FBI, for Intelligence, for Homeland Security so they don't actually learn exactly what radical Islam is. They don't actually learn the verses in the Koran that are relied upon by radical Islamists.

When we do finally have a Muslim leader like President Sissi in Egypt, who stands up in front of a room of Muslim imams and demands that they take back their region from the radical Islamists, this administration chooses to try to punish him and not help him, like this administration did, and wanted to do more for the Muslim Brotherhood.

□ 1230

I am tired of hearing from foreign Muslim leaders their question: Why is your country still helping the Muslim Brotherhood? Don't they know? Don't you know? The Muslim Brotherhood has been at war with you since 1979, and you keep helping them.

Well, that is the way you lose a country. You lose it. We have got our choice. Fiscal irresponsibility, which is immoral. Instead of doing like all preceding generations in this country, which have always had as their theme, ''we want to make our country better for our children than we had it,'' now we have gone through a couple of generations who have said: You know what? Forget the future generations. We want future generations' money spent on us now.

Fifty years ago, seventy-five years ago, one hundred years ago, even when cars were first invented, you would not have seen a bumper sticker like is not uncommon today, retired persons say, ''We are spending our children's inheritance.'' You wouldn't see that because they wanted to make the country better than they had it.

Mr. Speaker, I know you personally, and you and I and our colleagues, we talk about it. We have talked about it today—heated conference—because we want a better country even than we have had with more opportunity, more freedoms, as we see freedom slipping away.

Adam Kredo has a story here:

''The flow of illegal immigrant children into the United States is expected to rise to record-breaking numbers in 2016 as deportations decrease, according to leading members of the Senate's Judiciary Committee.

''At least 20,455 unaccompanied minors have been caught during fiscal year 2016 along the U.S.-Mexico border as of last month, according to Committee Chairman Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY, who warned that if this trend continues, the number of illegal minors could eclipse a massive 2014 surge that strained the resources of the Department of Homeland Security and prompted investigations into the Obama administration's handling of the issue.''

Now, one of many problems is you have people that are coming to America because there are more opportunities here, which begs the question: Why are there more opportunities here than there are in their home country?

When you analyze the situation, what you find is the reason they don't have businesses booming in their home country is because of graft or corruption or a corrupt government or a dictatorship because, as the old saying goes, ''capital is a coward.''

Money to capitalize or invest always goes to where it feels safest—that is why it is ''capital is a coward''—and it is not very safe in countries where the government is corrupt, the rule of law is not applied across the board, and the laws are not enforced across the board.

One of the great ironies in the world right now is that people are leaving countries where there is violence and the rule of law is not enforced. They are coming to America where, for most of our history, we have done a better job than most any country ever in enforcing the law across the board.

Once here illegally, those same people are saying: Now that we are here, we want you not to enforce the law across the board. We want you to ignore your law on immigration and law on becoming citizens. Ignore it.

If we do that, it will make us like the corrupt countries they came from and make us a land of no opportunity, where people will have to go to some other country where they enforce the law.

I have had even Members of Congress say: Well, if it all goes bad, we will all pack up and head to Australia. But I was talking to some people from Australia this year, and I mentioned that to them, and they didn't laugh. They looked very somber.

They said: You know, if something happens to the United States, you are not going to be coming to Australia, because China will take us over like that. If the United States is not standing strong, they said, our country, Australia, will be gone. China would grab us up in a heartbeat.

It is important that America stand strong. You can't stand strong when

you are financially bankrupt. You can't stand strong when you are morally bankrupt. We seem to have our choice of ways we could meet our demise.

Our military is being degraded under this administration, the Navy going back to its size back in—was it?—the early 1900s before World War I. Weakness is provocative. I haven't heard anybody else notice. Maybe there is no correlation; maybe there is.

It seems historically, from my study of history, that when a nation's enemy sees that nation's biggest friend pulling away and not being as good a friend, then that enemy is provoked to attack. But it was in May of 2010 when this administration sided with Israel's enemies in demanding that Israel disclose all their weapons systems, including any potential nukes. I was shocked by that. The United States had never sided with all of Israel's enemies like that before.

I thought about the Bible story of King Hezekiah when the Babylonian leaders had come to visit and schmoozed with him, and Isaiah asked him: What have you done with the Babylonian leaders? Of course, this is a Texas paraphrased version, but he bragged about: I have taken them and shown them all of our treasure. The most literal translation from the Hebrew says: And I showed them all the defenses we have in our arsenal, our armory.

Isaiah explained: You are going to lose the country.

You don't show your enemy—you don't even show your friends—all of your defenses, and yet we were demanding that of Israel. Within 48 hours, Israel's enemies launched a flotilla to go challenge the lawful blockade of the Gaza Strip. All that Israel was doing was trying to prevent more rockets from going in because the rockets were being launched at them every day—totally legal. They were trying to defend themselves against rocket attacks and created a terrible situation at the blockade.

But as America continues to help fund Iran's desire to support terrorism, and as this administration has turned its back on nations like Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, I hear from leaders in those countries where they say: You know, all we wanted was a little help against our enemy.

Of course, in Nigeria, having been there and having met with so many of the parents of girls who were kidnapped by Boko Haram, radical Islamists, we then hear that our administration here says: Oh, yeah, we will give you some help, but you have got to change your religious beliefs. You have got to change your laws so it supports same-sex marriage and you fund abortion, and then we will give you more help.

The President in Kenya basically said at a news conference, in effect: You take care of your country. You are not going to come tell us what our religious beliefs and laws should be.

As a Nigerian Catholic bishop stated: Our religious beliefs are not for sale—not to President Obama, not to anybody.

But there are consequences in world history when one nation tries to destroy the religious beliefs of another country—their closely, firmly held religious beliefs. There are consequences when a nation forgets to say: Thank You, God, for all of our blessings. Thank You, God, for protecting us. Thank You for allowing us to live in the greatest country, a country in which there is more opportunity, more assets per person than anywhere in the world.

This is the one country where the number one health problem for our Nation's poor is obesity. It is a terrible problem that we need to deal with. But where in history do you have a country where the nation's poor have, as their number one health problem, obesity?

This Nation has been blessed beyond anything that people could have ever dreamed when this Nation was founded. But the Founders did see one thing. They saw the threat of giving more and more power to a Federal Government.

I was fortunate to call Justice Scalia a friend. A group of seniors from my hometown of Tyler, Texas, from my church, Green Acres Baptist, came up to Washington, D.C. They said: Hey, you are supposed to be friends with Justice Scalia. We would love to meet him. That is one thing we really want to do in Washington.

So I called over, and Justice Scalia, bless his heart, he said: Sure, come on over.

So they arranged it. We had the meeting. He walks in. They are all seated there, the seniors from my church, and Justice Scalia could be very talkative. I treasure meals with him, exchanging jokes and stories. It made you feel good about the world. He walks in and leans up against the table at the front: So, you want to meet me. What is your question? What questions have you got?

It kind of took them by surprise. One said: Do you think we are the freest Nation in history because of our Bill of Rights?

Justice Scalia, in his inimitable style, said: Oh, gosh, no. No. The Soviet Union had a better Bill of Rights than we did.

I had forgotten. I made an A on a paper in college that I did about the Bill of Rights and the Constitution of the Soviet Union. Yeah, they were promised all kinds of rights, but the government was given the power to erode all of the rights that were said to be protected.

He said: No. The reason that we are the freest country in history is because our Founders did not trust government, and so they wanted to make it as hard as possible to pass laws. See, the Founders thought that gridlock was a blessing, gridlock was a great thing, because it meant that, as people anticipated passing laws, it would be tough because many laws regulate what you can and can't do.

The more laws you pass, just as this administration has shown the American people, as it has set all-time records for the most pages of regulations—there are over 79,000 new pages of regulations every year. How can anybody make a living with that kind of regulation coming out year after year, certainly for the last 7? Incredible.

The Founders knew that. They wanted to make it hard for any governmental agency, any government bureaucracy to create laws that took away freedom because they had some libertarian tendencies.

Justice Scalia, said: So they wanted it hard to pass laws, so what do they do? They create a legislature with two Houses, and certainly that was part of the compromise. But in England, the House of Lords is not particularly powerful, but they wanted both houses with the power to stop what the other one was doing. They wanted it very difficult in one house to pass a law.

I think they would cringe if they saw all the bills that are just passed with unanimous consent or on suspension that we do more and more and more, because they wanted it tough to pass laws.

I have friends say: You guys should be in session more often.

I say: You don't know what you are asking for, because every day we are in session, we pass some new bill, we pass some new law.

□ 1245

Many of those laws take away freedoms of Americans. The Founders knew that. That is why, Justice Scalia said, they created two Houses. If one House got a law through it, the other one could stop it cold. But that wasn't enough to protect our freedom.

We want an executive, but not one like a prime minister. The prime minister is elected by the legislature. We don't want that. We want it tough.

We want independence. So we are going to have a chief executive, a President, that is elected totally separate from the legislature.

Even if the House and Senate finally agree on something, we will give him the power to just say: No. I am not going to let it happen.

But that is not enough. We want more gridlock. So let's create a judicial branch, as they did in Article III, that could turn around and say: No. The House, Senate, and the President may have agreed, but we don't agree.

It is not consistent with the Constitution. Justice Scalia said that is why we are the freest Nation in history: because our Founders did not trust government.

So, Mr. Speaker, it concerns me when I see voters begin to think that our hope is going to arrive on Air Force One. One of my greatest thrills was becoming friends with Chuck Colson.

As Chuck Colson said: Our hope will not arrive on Air Force One.

The old saying, the axiom, is true: democracy ensures a people are governed no better than they deserve.

If you want a good President, you have got to be a good country. An immoral country is not going to elect a great leader. They are going to elect an immoral leader.

When you see Christians who believe that the only way to the saving grace of Jesus is to ask for forgiveness and, as the Bible says, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, it is amazing to see Christian leaders saying they are going to put their faith in a guy that says he has never had to ask for forgiveness. But that was modified later to: Well, I don't think God's concerned with trivial things like that.

If I were God, I wouldn't be. But thank God I am not God. He seems to care about every individual. If you believe the Bible, that is what it says.

And then, if there is not enough bad news, this comes from KPNX today: ''Attorney General Report: Possible smuggling trail between the Middle East and Arizona border.''

We have talked about that before. Long before, the Attorney General indicated that there appeared to be a trail between the Middle East and the Arizona border.

We have this story this week from Stephen Dinan from The Washington Times: ''Top border chief to agents who object to Obama amnesty: 'Look for another job.' ''

There you are, Mr. Speaker. When the head of the border agency says they are not going to enforce the laws that exist, then one of two things, either that is what the country deserves because it has become immoral and lawless or the country rises up and says: We will never have another administration like this. As long as we are alive, we are going to make sure we have an administration that enforces the law, no matter who it is.

Apparently, since people govern no better than they deserve, we now find out that Hillary's highly paid IT guru at the State Department had no actual national security experience.

So, apparently, we elected an administration that ensured people were governed no better than they deserve and, apparently, they felt like we didn't deserve a State Department with national security experience.

Is it any wonder—I thank God—that there have been more Benghazis under that kind of attitude? One was too many.

We see yesterday that the Justice Department grants immunity to the staffer who set up the Clinton email server. I have been a prosecutor. I have been a judge. I have been a chief justice. When someone grants immunity, they are closing in on a prosecution. That is the intent.

You don't grant immunity to someone and someone doesn't normally seek immunity unless they are concerned that they may have violated the law. They seek immunity because they violated the law.

Immunity is granted when, with the prosecution, the investigators—in this case, the FBI—feel that laws are being violated. So we are going to grant immunity to this person so that we can get the person further up.

But I still maintain that, as long as Hillary Clinton does not condemn or expose the Obama administration to any of the truth about what went on in Benghazi and about the hands-off list of terrorists and homeland security, I do not see her getting indicted. It is a good insurance policy.

Another article from the New York Times: ''As Campaign Unfolds, So Do Inquiries Into Hillary Clinton's Emails.''

So many voters don't seem to care. Why? Because people are governed no better than they deserve. If they are more concerned about themselves than their children, they are going to get what they deserve.

Well, we had Mitt Romney come out today just before we voted condemning Donald Trump as phony and a fraud. Everybody knows that people across this country are furious with the establishment.

So if that idea was Donald Trump's—to get Mitt Romney to come out and condemn him—it was a brilliant plan. Because that is like asking Marv Levy to tell you how to win the Super Bowl, after he lost four of them.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, this country is in grave danger. I was all over the 12 counties that I represent. This country has so many great citizens. They deserve better than what they are getting.

I hope and pray the majority in the country will wake up and see the dangers to our own national defense, to our own national security, from government intrusions into our private lives, from drugs that are coming in through Mexico, and from terrorists that are coming into this country. The FBI Director himself says we have got them in every State.

We are in big trouble. It is time the American people woke up and said, as our parents did: We don't care what has happened before. We are going to make sure this country is left in better shape, with more opportunity, than we had growing up.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to have to hurry. The clock is ticking.

I yield back the balance of my time.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS AS CONGRESSIONAL ADVISORS ON TRADE POLICY AND NEGOTIATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 161(a) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2211), and the order of the House of January 6, 2015, of the following Members on the part of the House as Congressional Advisors on Trade Policy and Negotiations:

Mr. BRADY, Texas

Mr. REICHERT, Washington

Mr. NUNES, California

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of illness.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 1596. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2082 Stringtown Road in Grove City, Ohio, as the ''Specialist Joseph W. Riley Post Office Building''.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 54 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, March 7, 2016, at 4 p.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

4551. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Air Plan Approval; Illinois; Base Year Emission Inventories for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard [EPA-R05-OAR-2014-0664; FRL-9943-33-Region 5] received March 2, 2016, 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 Energy and Commerce.

4552. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; Ohio; Regional Haze Glatfelter BART SIP Revision [EPA-R05-OAR-2014-0362; FRL-9943-29-Region 5] received March 2, 2016, 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 Energy and Commerce.

4553. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Air Plan Approval; Wisconsin; Base Year Emission Inventories for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard [EPA-R05-OAR-2014-0860; FRL-9943-31-Region 5] received March 2, 2016, 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 Energy and Commerce.

4554. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Disapproval; Georgia: Disapproval of Automatic Rescission Clause [EPA-R04-OAR-2010-0816; FRL-9943-35-Region 4] received March 2, 2016, 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 Energy and Commerce.

4555. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental

Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Alpha-[2,4,6-Tris[1-(phenyl)ethyl]phenyl]-Omega-hydroxy poly (oxyethylene) poly(oxypropylene) copolymer; Tolerance Exemption [EPA-HQ-OPP-2015-0485; FRL-9942-48] received March 2, 2016, 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 Energy and Commerce.

4556. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval of Arizona Air Plan Revisions; Phoenix, Arizona; Second 10-Year Carbon Monoxide Maintenance Plan [EPA-R09-OAR-2015-0645; FRL-9942-17-Region 9] received March 2, 2016, 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 Energy and Commerce.

4557. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Fluensulfone; Pesticide Tolerance for Emergency Exemption [EPA-HQ-OPP-2015-0475; FRL-9942-10] received March 2, 2016, 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 Energy and Commerce.

4558. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Pendimethalin; Tolerance Actions; Corrections [EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0194; EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0397; FRL-9942-24] received March 2, 2016, 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 Energy and Commerce.

4559. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Penoxsulam; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0879; FRL-9940-36] received March 2, 2016, 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 Energy and Commerce.

4560. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Rulemaking to Affirm Interim Amendments to Dates in Federal Implementation Plans Addressing Interstate Transport of Ozone and Fine Particulate Matter [EPA-HQ-OAR-2009-0491; FRL-9943-36-OAR] (RIN: 2060-AS40) received March 2, 2016, 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 Energy and Commerce.

4561. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Zoxamide; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0922; FRL-9942-18] received March 2, 2016, 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 Energy and Commerce.

4562. A letter from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Expanding Consumers' Video Navigation Choices [MB Docket No.: 16-42]; Commercial Availability of Navigation Devices [CS Docket No.: 97-80] received March 1, 2016, 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 Energy and Commerce.

4563. A letter from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Expansion of Online Public File Obligations to Cable and Satellite TV Operators and Broadcast and Satellite Radio Licensees [MB Docket No.: 14-127] received March 1, 2016, 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 Energy and Commerce.

4564. A letter from the Secretary, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Automotive Fuel Ratings, Certification and Posting (RIN: 3084-AB39) received March 1, 2016, 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 Energy and Commerce.

4565. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final NUREG — Chapter 11, Radioactive Waste Management [SRPs: 11.1; 11.2; 11.3; 11.4; 11.5] received March 1, 2016, 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 Energy and Commerce.

4566. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final NUREG — Probabilistic Risk Assessment and Severe Accident Evaluation for New Reactors [SRP Section 19.0] received March 1, 2016, 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 Energy and Commerce.

4567. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final NUREG — Chapter 11, Radioactive Waste Management [SRPs: BTP 11-3; BTP 11-5; BTP 11-6] received March 1, 2016, 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 Energy and Commerce.

4568. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser, Office of Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report 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.

4569. A letter from the Board Members, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting the Board's calendar year 2015 annual report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552b(j); Public Law 94-409, Sec. 3(a); (90 Stat. 1241); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4570. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's determination on a petition filed on behalf of workers who were employed at Battelle Laboratories at the King Avenue site in Columbus, Ohio, to be added to the Special Exposure Cohort, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 7384q(c)(2); Public Law 106-398, Sec. 1 (as amended by Public Law 108-375, Sec. 3166(b)(1)); (118 Stat. 2188); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

4571. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's interim rule — Regulated Navigation Area; Reporting Requirements for Barges Loaded with Certain Dangerous Cargoes, Inland Rivers, Eighth Coast Guard District; Expiration of Stay (Suspension) and Administrative Changes [Docket No.: USCG-2013-0760] (RIN: 1625-AA11) received February 29, 2016, 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 Transportation and Infrastructure.

4572. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Safety Zone; Pleasure Beach Bridge, Bridgeport, CT [Docket No.: USCG-2015-1088] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received February 29, 2016, 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 Transportation and Infrastructure.

4573. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's notice of enforcement of regulation — Safety Zone; Circle Line Sightseeing Fireworks, Liberty Island, Upper New York Bay, Manhattan, NY [Docket No.: USCG-2015-1048] received February 29, 2016, 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 Transportation and Infrastructure.

4574. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Safety Zone; Navy UNDET, Apra Outer Harbor, GU [Docket No.: USCG-2015-1096] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received February 29, 2016, 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 Transportation and Infrastructure.

4575. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Safety Zone; Upper Mississippi River and Illinois River, MO and IL [Docket No.: USCG-2015-1121] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received February 29, 2016, 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 Transportation and Infrastructure.

4576. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Regulated Navigation Area, Kill Van Kull and Newark Bay; Bayonne, NJ, NY [Docket No.: USCG-2014-0002] (RIN: 1625-AA11) received February 29, 2016, 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 Transportation and Infrastructure.

4577. A letter from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of the Lamorinda Viticultural Area [Docket No.: TTB-2015-0007; T.D. TTB-133; Ref: Notice No.: 151] (RIN: 1513-AC17) received March 2, 2016, 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.

4578. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Regulations Governing Organization of the Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries [TD 9749] (RIN: 1545-BM81) received February 26, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); jointly to the Committees on Ways and Means and Education and the Workforce.

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. CAPUANO (for himself, Mr. KEATING, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. NEAL, Mr. MOULTON, Ms. TSONGAS, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mrs. LAWRENCE, and Ms. BROWNLEY of California):

H.R. 4677. A bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to

provide death benefits for campus police officers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ROYCE (for himself, Mr. YOHO, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, and Mr. SALMON):

H.R. 4678. A bill to prohibit modification, abrogation, abandonment, or other related actions with respect to United States jurisdiction and control over United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, without congressional action; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. DENT (for himself and Mr. CUELLAR):

H.R. 4679. A bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to eliminate straight-party voting from any voting system used for Federal elections; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. BISHOP of Utah:

H.R. 4680. A bill to prepare the National Park Service for its Centennial in 2016 and for a second century of promoting and protecting the natural, historic, and cultural resources of our National Parks for the enjoyment of present and future generations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Agriculture, and Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts):

H.R. 4681. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide greater support to students with dependents, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Ms. ESHOO):

H.R. 4682. A bill to repeal debt collection amendments made by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. COFFMAN (for himself, Mr. WALZ, Mr. ZELDIN, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. JONES, Mr. RUSSELL, Mr. ZINKE, Mr. MOULTON, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, and Mr. GALLEGO):

H.R. 4683. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for a review of the characterization or terms of discharge from the Armed Forces of individuals with mental health disorders alleged to affect terms of discharge; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. COFFMAN (for himself, Mr. KILMER, and Miss RICE of New York):

H.R. 4684. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish mental health care to certain former members of the Armed Forces who are not otherwise eligible to receive such care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MCCARTHY:

H.R. 4685. A bill to take certain Federal lands located in Tulare County, California, into trust for the benefit of the Tule River Indian Tribe, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. REICHERT (for himself and Mr. NEWHOUSE):

H.R. 4686. 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; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. MULLIN (for himself and Mr. RUSSELL):

H.R. 4687. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that temporary employees of the Department of Defense may compete for vacant permanent positions under internal merit promotion procedures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. AMODEI (for himself, Mr. HARDY, Mr. HECK of Nevada, and Ms. TITUS):

H.R. 4688. A bill to promote conservation, improve public land, and provide for sensible development in Douglas County, Nevada, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. BOUSTANY:

H.R. 4689. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts with administrative contractors for the processing of claims for hospital care and medical services furnished in non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. BUSTOS (for herself, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. LOEBSACK, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Mr. TONKO):

H.R. 4690. A bill to revitalize Army arsenals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT (for himself and Ms. JACKSON LEE):

H.R. 4691. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to require local educational agencies to implement a policy on allergy bullying in schools; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. CLARKE of New York:

H.R. 4692. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act, in relation to requiring adrenoleukodystrophy screening of newborns; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. DELAURO (for herself, Ms. PELOSI, and Mr. LEVIN):

H.R. 4693. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a refundable and advanceable tax credit for individuals with young children; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ELLISON (for himself, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mrs. LAWRENCE, and Mr. KILDEE):

H.R. 4694. A bill to amend the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992 to define environmental intervention blood lead level, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, 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. ENGEL (for himself, Mr. STIVERS, Ms. GRAHAM, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. DOLD, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, and Mr. MACARTHUR):

H.R. 4695. A bill to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to improve the quality, health outcomes, and value of maternity care under the Medicaid and CHIP programs by developing maternity care quality measures and supporting maternity care quality collaboratives; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. ESHOO (for herself and Mr. THOMPSON of California):

H.R. 4696. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a deduction for homeowners association assessments; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. ESTY (for herself, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, and Mr. KNIGHT):

H.R. 4697. A bill to provide for increased Federal oversight of prescription opioid treatment and assistance to States in reducing opioid addiction, diversion, and deaths; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. KATKO (for himself, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. KEATING, Mr. DONOVAN, and Mr. KING of New York):

H.R. 4698. A bill to enhance aviation by requiring airport security assessments and a security coordination enhancement plan, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. KATKO (for himself and Ms. SINEMA):

H.R. 4699. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for parent savings accounts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. KING of New York (for himself, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. NUNES, Mr. JONES, Mr. ZELDIN, and Mr. ISRAEL):

H.R. 4700. A bill to award a Congressional gold medal to the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), commonly known as ''Merrill's Marauders'', in recognition of their bravery and outstanding service in the jungles of Burma during World War II; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, 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. KUSTER (for herself, Mr. LANCE, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, and Mr. HARPER):

H.R. 4701. A bill to encourage States to require the installation of residential carbon monoxide detectors in homes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, 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. LANCE (for himself and Mr. QUIGLEY):

H.R. 4702. A bill to direct the Director of the Government Publishing Office to provide members of the public with Internet access to Congressional Research Service reports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. LUETKEMEYER:

H.R. 4703. A bill to eliminate the authority of the executive branch to further restrict intra-family firearm transfers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MCKINLEY (for himself and Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 4704. A bill to increase accountability with respect to Department of Energy carbon capture, utilization, and sequestration projects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MURPHY of Florida:

H.R. 4705. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a nonrefundable

credit for the purchase of emergency position-indicating radio beacons and personal locator beacons; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PAULSEN:

H.R. 4706. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross income certain interest and money market fund dividend income payments to charity and to modify the requirements relating to the reporting of such payments; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PRICE of North Carolina (for himself and Mr. ADERHOLT):

H.R. 4707. A bill to provide housing opportunities for individuals living with HIV or AIDS, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California):

H.R. 4708. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a nonrefundable credit for working family caregivers; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Miss RICE of New York:

H.R. 4709. A bill to amend the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003 to require commercial email messages to include an option allowing recipients to unsubscribe from any such future emails; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. RUSSELL:

H.R. 4710. A bill to amend the Federal Crop Insurance Act to eliminate premium subsidies for crop insurance for tobacco; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Ms. SPEIER (for herself, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. FARR, Ms. ESHOO, Mrs. CAPPS, and Mr. THOMPSON of California):

H.R. 4711. A bill to make funds available for Dungeness crab and rock crab emergency disaster assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Ms. SPEIER (for herself, Mr. WOODALL, Mr. QUIGLEY, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. CONYERS, and Mr. CUMMINGS):

H.R. 4712. A bill to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to provide for an option under the Secure Mail Initiative under which a person to whom a document is sent under that initiative may require that the United States Postal Service obtain a signature from that person in order to deliver the document, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, 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. YOUNG of Alaska (for himself and Mr. DEFAZIO):

H.R. 4713. A bill to amend the market name of genetically altered salmon in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. YOUNG of Indiana (for himself and Mr. PETERS):

H.R. 4714. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure Medicare coverage of certain costs associated with FDA-approved clinical trials; 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. LOUDERMILK (for himself, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. GOWDY, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. BRAT, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. CHAFFETZ, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. BARTON, and Mr. RIBBLE):

H.J. Res. 85. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States requiring that the Federal budget be balanced; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GOODLATTE (for himself, Mr. BEYER, Mr. BRAT, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. FORBES, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. HURT of Virginia, Mr. RIGELL, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, and Mr. WITTMAN):

H. Con. Res. 123. Concurrent resolution recognizing the George C. Marshall Museum and George C. Marshall Research Library in Lexington, Virginia, as the National George C. Marshall Museum and Library; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. CROWLEY (for himself and Mr. CHABOT):

H. Res. 636. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding Burma's 2015 elections; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. DELANEY (for himself, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. POLIS, Mr. TONKO, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. KEATING, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. CROWLEY, Ms. LEE, Mr. HECK of Washington, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. HONDA, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. ISRAEL, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. WELCH, Mr. SARBANES, Ms. ESTY, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. NORTON, Mr. KILMER, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. CARNEY, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. HIMES, Ms. BONAMICI, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. BEYER, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. BECERRA, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. LEVIN, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. CLYBURN, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. NADLER, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. RUSH, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. COHEN, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. HAHN, Mr. NEAL, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. FOSTER, Mrs. BUSTOS, Ms. MENG, Mr. NOLAN, and Ms. VELÁZQUEZ):

H. Res. 637. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States should establish a national goal of more than 50 percent clean and carbon free electricity by 2030 for the purposes of avoiding the worst impacts of climate change, growing our economy, increasing our shared prosperity, improving public health, and preserving our national security; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

175. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the Senate of the State of Michigan, relative to Senate Resolution No. 121, to memorialize the Congress of the United States to address freeze emergencies and their consequences by enacting legislation to define freeze emergencies as major disasters eligible for federal disaster relief and emergency assistance; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

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. CAPUANO:

H.R. 4677.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause I; and Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. ROYCE:

H.R. 4678.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 and Article IV, section 3 of the Constitution of the United States

By Mr. DENT:

H.R. 4679.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. BISHOP of Utah:

H.R. 4680.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3

Article I, Section 8

By Ms. DUCKWORTH:

H.R. 4681.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 18, Section 8, Article 1 of the Constitution of the United States

By Ms. DUCKWORTH:

H.R. 4682.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 18, Section 8, Article 1 of the Constitution of the United States

By Mr. COFFMAN:

H.R. 4683.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority of Congress to enact this legislation is provided by Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution (Clauses 12, 13, 14, 16, and 18), which grants Congress the power to raise and support an Army; to provide and maintain a Navy; to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces; to provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia; and to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the foregoing powers.

By Mr. COFFMAN:

H.R. 4684.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. MCCARTHY:

H.R. 4685.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Constitution, Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2

U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. REICHERT:

H.R. 4686.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. MULLIN:

H.R. 4687.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, clauses 1, 12, 13, and 14 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. AMODEI:

H.R. 4688.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 4, Section 3, Clause 2: The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State.

By Mr. BOUSTANY:

H.R. 4689.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mrs. BUSTOS:

H.R. 4690.

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. CARTWRIGHT:

H.R. 4691.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 (relating to the power of Congress 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 Ms. CLARKE of New York:

H.R. 4692.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I of the United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By Ms. DELAURO:

H.R. 4693.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 and the Sixteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. ELLISON:

H.R. 4694.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 1, Clause 3 and Clause 18.

By Mr. ENGEL:

H.R. 4695.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 1 of the Constitution.

By Ms. ESHOO:

H.R. 4696.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1

By Ms. ESTY:

H.R. 4697.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 18 of section 8 of article 1 of the Constitution, ''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. KATKO:

H.R. 4698.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3—To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18—To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. KATKO:

H.R. 4699.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution: The Congress shall have the Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States.

By Mr. KING of New York:

H.R. 4700.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 5 of the Constitution

By Ms. KUSTER:

H.R. 4701.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 (relating to the 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) of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. LANCE:

H.R. 4702.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Sec 8, Clause 18, of the United States Constitution Which states: Congress shall have power . . . to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying in execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any other department or officer thereof.

By Mr. LUETKEMEYER:

H.R. 4703.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8 of the U.S. constitution. Specifically Clause 3 which gives Congress the authority to Regulate Commerce.

By Mr. MCKINLEY:

H.R. 4704.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

According to Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. MURPHY of Florida:

H.R. 4705.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. PAULSEN:

H.R. 4706.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. PRICE of North Carolina:

H.R. 4707.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States, the general welfare clause.

By Mr. REED:

H.R. 4708.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution and Amendment XVI of the United States Constitution.

By Miss RICE of New York:

H.R. 4709.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution: To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes

By Mr. RUSSELL:

H.R. 4710.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Ms. SPEIER:

H.R. 4711.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. SPEIER:

H.R. 4712.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

According to Article 1: Section 8: Clause 18: of the United States Constitution, seen below, this bill falls within the Constitutional Authority of the United States Congress.

Article 1: Section 8: Clause 18: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska:

H.R. 4713.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3.

By Mr. YOUNG of Indiana:

H.R. 4714.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, to ''provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States.''

By Mr. LOUDERMILK:

H.J. Res. 85.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article V of the Constitution, which grants Congress the power to propose amendments to the Constitution when two-thirds of both chambers shall deem it necessary.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 24: Mr. GUINTA.

H.R. 27: Mr. SANFORD.

H.R. 169: Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.

H.R. 239: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 267: Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee.

H.R. 288: Mr. MICA.

H.R. 297: Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. PASCRELL, Ms. MCCOLLUM, and Ms. KAPTUR.

H.R. 314: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
H.R. 448: Mr. MOULTON.
H.R. 491: Mr. LYNCH.
H.R. 546: Mr. COOK.
H.R. 605: Mr. ROHRABACHER and Mr. LANGEVIN.
H.R. 654: Mr. DUFFY.
H.R. 662: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 664: Mr. NEAL, Mr. CLAY, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. FATTAH, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, and Mr. MEEKS.
H.R. 815: Ms. JENKINS of Kansas.
H.R. 865: Mr. SHIMKUS.
H.R. 1151: Mr. HARRIS.
H.R. 1185: Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. WALBERG, Ms. PINGREE, and Ms. MENG.
H.R. 1220: Mr. KNIGHT, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, and Mr. SMITH of Missouri.
H.R. 1260: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.
H.R. 1342: Mr. PAYNE.
H.R. 1399: Mr. FORBES and Mrs. CAPPS.
H.R. 1457: Mr. CÁRDENAS.
H.R. 1523: Mr. MARCHANT.
H.R. 1567: Mr. WOMACK.
H.R. 1717: Mr. ASHFORD, Mr. ZELDIN, and Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.
H.R. 2124: Mr. TAKAI, Mr. LANCE, Mrs. DAVIS of California, and Ms. SINEMA.
H.R. 2400: Mr. BLUM.
H.R. 2404: Mr. BOUSTANY.
H.R. 2411: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 2430: Ms. BONAMICI and Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.
H.R. 2434: Mr. FORTENBERRY and Mr. MARCHANT.
H.R. 2460: Ms. STEFANIK.
H.R. 2737: Mr. PETERSON.
H.R. 2773: Ms. SINEMA.
H.R. 2799: Mr. SHIMKUS.
H.R. 2800: Ms. STEFANIK.
H.R. 2811: Mr. DEFAZIO.
H.R. 2849: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 2939: Mr. HIMES.
H.R. 3092: Ms. MOORE.
H.R. 3119: Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania and Mr. TED LIEU of California.
H.R. 3179: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 3185: Ms. ADAMS and Ms. GRAHAM.
H.R. 3222: Mr. FLORES.
H.R. 3235: Mr. FARR.
H.R. 3268: Mr. KIND and Ms. STEFANIK.
H.R. 3299: Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. OLSON, and Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 3326: Mr. COURTNEY.
H.R. 3514: Mr. COHEN, Mr. SARBANES, and Ms. ESTY.
H.R. 3580: Mrs. BEATTY.
H.R. 3860: Mr. POSEY.
H.R. 3862: Mr. KENNEDY.
H.R. 3917: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey and Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 3929: Mr. EMMER of Minnesota, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. WELCH, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. BRAT, Mr. CLAY, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. BEYER, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. BABIN.
H.R. 3970: Mr. WELCH and Mr. NOLAN.
H.R. 3985: Mr. ROSS.
H.R. 4027: Ms. MATSUI.
H.R. 4095: Mr. GRAYSON.
H.R. 4167: Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. WILLIAMS.
H.R. 4209: Mr. MCGOVERN and Mr. HECK of Washington.
H.R. 4219: Mr. ROYCE.
H.R. 4229: Mrs. COMSTOCK.
H.R. 4293: Mr. ALLEN, Mr. BARLETTA, and Mr. MARCHANT.
H.R. 4352: Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. VALADAO, and Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
H.R. 4371: Mr. LABRADOR.
H.R. 4376: Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. COHEN, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. NADLER, Ms. ADAMS, Ms. MOORE, Mr. POLIS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. PINGREE, and Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H.R. 4386: Mr. KENNEDY and Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 4420: Mr. POE of Texas.
H.R. 4430: Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 4442: Mr. ASHFORD.
H.R. 4474: Mr. SENSENBRENNER and Mrs. LUMMIS.
H.R. 4479: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
H.R. 4480: Mr. TED LIEU of California.
H.R. 4491: Mr. SERRANO.
H.R. 4500: Mr. POLIQUIN.
H.R. 4522: Mr. DIAZ-BALART.
H.R. 4524: Mr. ASHFORD and Ms. DELAURO.
H.R. 4526: Mr. DIAZ-BALART.
H.R. 4570: Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 4592: Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. TIBERI, Ms. ESTY, Mr. CICILLINE, and Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 4599: Mr. LYNCH.
H.R. 4600: Mr. TAKANO.
H.R. 4614: Mr. WOMACK.
H.R. 4622: Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, and Mr. PALAZZO.
H.R. 4625: Mr. TONKO.
H.R. 4633: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.
H.R. 4641: Mr. OLSON.
H.R. 4653: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 4654: Mr. CICILLINE and Ms. CLARKE of New York.
H.R. 4657: Mr. MCDERMOTT.
H. Con. Res. 89: Mr. LUETKEMEYER and Mr. YOUNG of Indiana.
H. Res. 33: Ms. MENG.
H. Res. 393: Mr. BEYER and Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H. Res. 451: Mr. PALAZZO and Mr. WEBER of Texas.
H. Res. 501: Ms. PINGREE and Ms. LOFGREN.
H. Res. 552: Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.
H. Res. 591: Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. HANNA, and Mr. TONKO.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 162 WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2016 No. 35

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, You are the strength of our lives. Use us to tell of Your wondrous works, inspiring others to glorify Your Name in the Earth. Help us to depend on You in the welter and variety of events we encounter each day. May we trust You to supply all of our needs, responding with gratitude to Your generous mercies.

Today, give our Senators an eternal perspective on the myriad issues they face. Infuse their hearts with faith, sharpen their minds with truth, and renew their spirits with courage. Bless the members of their staff who sacrifice so much for freedom's cause.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). The majority leader is recognized.

COMPREHENSIVE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today we have an opportunity to take another step forward on the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, or CARA, a critically important and bipartisan bill to address the growing prescription opioid and heroin epidemic.

As we have worked through debate on this legislation, we have heard numerous stories from across our Nation about the toll this crisis is taking on Americans. Today, I want to take a moment to address the difference CARA can make in my home State of Kentucky, which has been among the hardest hit by this epidemic.

More people are dying from drug overdoses than car crashes in the Commonwealth, and that is largely due to prescription opioids and heroin. We know education and prevention programs can help reduce the number of people who experience drug addiction and overdose. One program I have been proud to support is the Drug-Free Community Program, which provides funding to local communities so they can promote education and awareness about the dangers of substance abuse.

I wrote letters of support on behalf of Oldham and Carter Counties, which have both received drug-free community grants. This funding helps them train community members, parents, and school officials in preventing youth substance abuse.

There are other programs in CARA that can help build on these efforts through community-based coalition grants that address local drug crises. Education is incredibly important, and it is great to see what we are achieving on that front. But for Kentuckians and Americans currently struggling with addiction, the cycle can be very difficult to break.

We have seen a staggering number of people lose their lives to overdose, and we know more must be done to stop that terrible trend. Fortunately, groups like the Harm Reduction Coalition are providing overdose prevention and naloxone training for drug treatment programs, recovery advocates, and health departments across Kentucky and several other States. Through State demonstration and first responder grants, the group says CARA can give them a ''stronger foundation to move from training to action.''

Prescription drug monitoring programs are also instrumental in saving lives, and I have been a strong supporter of Kentucky's own program, called KASPER. Just last fall, I received confirmation from the CDC that the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center had been awarded funds to combat the prescription drug and heroin epidemic in Kentucky. These funds are being used to improve KASPER, as well as target interventions in counties such as Jefferson, Fayette, Boone, Kenton, and Campbell—counties that have seen some of the highest rates of overdose deaths in the Commonwealth. The bill we are considering today also places an emphasis on prescription drug monitoring programs and will strengthen efforts already in place.

Perhaps one of the most heartbreaking aspects of this epidemic is its effect on newborns. Just last year, I sponsored the Protecting Our Infants Act to address this specific issue and was proud to see it become law. Our work to protect these fragile lives continues with the legislation we have before us today. CARA would improve treatment for both pregnant and postpartum women by reauthorizing an existing grant program. It would also authorize a pilot program to enhance treatment options for this specific population.

CARA can make positive strides in terms of keeping communities safe, too. It would bolster the efforts of law enforcement through the authorization of grant programs for collaborative investigative units. What that means is Kentucky's outstanding drug task forces stand to benefit when it comes to investigating illegal trafficking and distribution of heroin, fentanyl, and prescription opioids. I have strongly supported each of these efforts to intensify the Commonwealth's fight

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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against our prescription opioid and heroin crisis.

So because of efforts like those I mentioned—to strengthen education and treatment programs, to improve prescription drug monitoring tools, and to enhance law enforcement efforts—differences are already being made in the lives of many Kentuckians. With the passage of CARA, we can build upon these and other initiatives that can help shore up the fight against prescription opioid and heroin addiction.

Kim Moser, Director of the Northern Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy, says CARA will ''address the growing needs'' of Kentucky communities and ''expand treatment resources for those suffering.'' She goes on to say that CARA ''will allow individuals, families and communities to heal from this scourge.''

I want to thank Senator GRASSLEY, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, for working with Senators to move this bill by voice vote in a timely manner, and I want to also acknowledge Senator PORTMAN and Senator AYOTTE for their responsiveness to this urgent problem and for their dedication to advancing the bipartisan bill that is before us now.

Remember, although this is an authorization bill, Congress has already appropriated $400 million—funds that are still available today—for opioid-specific programs. We will have more opportunities for funding through the next appropriations process, but it is important we act on this legislation right now.

CARA will bring us closer to ending a national epidemic. It will help lift communities like those in Kentucky out of the throes of prescription opioids and heroin addiction. It will help save lives.

I look forward to joining my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this important legislation.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as Senators, we pride ourselves in making sure that we vote when we are required to vote, and we are always very aware of when the votes occur and what happens with the votes. I missed a vote yesterday at 4 o'clock.

My staff has told me the clerks here are concerned that they did something wrong. I missed the vote. It was my fault. It was no one's fault but my own. I had a doctor's appointment at 4:30, and I got here too late.

So everyone should understand that I have missed other votes, and I have already announced how I would have voted had I voted, and it wouldn't have changed the outcome of the vote. So all the clerks, who serve us so well all the time, shouldn't worry at all about my not being recorded on that vote.

So calm down, everybody. I don't care. You shouldn't care.

COMPREHENSIVE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY BILL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have heard my friend the Republican leader the last couple of days talking about what a good bill we have here. He is right. It is something that is important to do. We have this opioid problem sweeping the Nation. It is in Nevada, as well as in all other States. All the other 49 States have the problem. So I understand the importance of this legislation. I only wish the Republicans had joined with us yesterday in voting for the Shaheen amendment, which would have provided real money to meet the requirements of this legislation, if it passes.

I also know my friend keeps talking about the money we have already appropriated. We did it because there was an emergency then, and there is one now. The programs we have appropriated money for are totally separate and apart from this legislation. That is why Senator SHAHEEN offered her amendment. It was emergency funding that we badly need. So it is too bad my friends on the other side of the aisle are talking about taking money from other programs and funding this program. That isn't how it should be.

This is a scourge sweeping the country. We have programs in this new legislation that need to be funded, otherwise it won't have any meaning whatsoever to the problem we are facing in the country.

A number of Democrats have also tried to offer amendments. To this point, they have been able to offer one amendment and vote on one amendment. We have had more than 60 amendments filed over here. I know we are not going to have the ability to debate and vote on 60 amendments, but my friend the Republican leader has been out here boasting time and again about this robust amendment process, and it is only talk. We haven't had a robust amendment process.

I wouldn't think robust would mean having seven or eight amendments. We would accept a new definition of robust, I guess, if we got to offer a few amendments, but we should be able to offer amendments on this legislation.

So I hope the Senate will be able to have a full and open amendment process on this legislation. If not, we may not be able to proceed to vote on this legislation, and it would be too bad. Even though the legislation is not funded properly, we should pass it. We are not going to pass it if we get jammed, and that is what is happening.

FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, listen to these words: fair, respectful, deliberative, and thorough. These are the words the senior Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY, once used to describe the way Supreme Court nominations should be considered by the Senate—fair, respectful, deliberative, and thorough.

In June 2010, he said something more:

> I have always been of the opinion that the Senate needs to conduct a comprehensive and careful review of Supreme Court nominees. It is important that the nominee be given a fair, respectful, and also deliberative hearing.

That same month, in June 2010, he also said:

> I am committed to ensuring that this process is fair and respectful but also thorough. The Constitution tasks our Senate with conducting a comprehensive review of the nominee's record and qualifications.

Fair, respectful, deliberative, and thorough. I don't think refusing to meet with a nominee, refusing to hold a hearing of a nominee, refusing to vote on a nominee is fair, respectful, deliberative, and certainly not thorough.

He was not yet chairman of the Judiciary Committee when the senior Senator from Iowa made those comments. As I have noted, he has said on more than one occasion that the Constitution tasks our Senate with conducting a ''comprehensive review of the nominee's record and qualifications.'' He made those statements when he wasn't chairman of the committee. He is now chairman of the committee—the committee he has served on for decades. Now his response for the Senate's consideration of Supreme Court nominations sets the standard. He runs that big and powerful committee, and he has chosen an approach that could not be further from the fair, respectful, deliberative, and thorough that he has urged on more than one occasion.

Instead of exercising his once-respected independence, my friend the senior Senator from Iowa is taking his marching orders from the Republican leader and refusing to give President Obama's Supreme Court nominee a meeting, a hearing, or a vote.

Within an hour after Justice Scalia's death was announced, the Republican leader hijacked the Supreme Court nomination process in the Senate by declaring that the Republicans would not consider the President's nominee.

Then the Republican leader decided to seize control of the Judiciary Committee—I don't know if he twisted arms, but that certainly conveys the message I want to convey—twisting the arms of the senior Senator from Iowa and his committee members to get them to forfeit their independence and fall in line. Behind closed doors, the Republican leader compelled the 11 Republicans who make up the majority of the committee on the Judiciary to sign a loyalty oath. This loyalty oath, which abdicated the role of this once-dignified committee, took the form of a letter promising to follow the Republican leader's demands and block consideration of President Obama's Supreme Court nominee.

Earlier this week, the Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY, discussed the arm-twisting that took place. During an interview on Tuesday on an NBC affiliate in Iowa, he was asked whether undue influence had been exerted by Republican leadership. This is what he said: ''Some had reluctance, but all signed.'' Again, ''Some had reluctance, but all signed'' on when asked whether undue influence had been exerted by Republican leadership.

I don't blame Senator GRASSLEY's colleagues for their reluctance. The Judiciary Committee once had a proud history of independence. This committee is 200 years old and is one of 11 committees that were formed when this body came into being. So their reluctance is understandable. It is understandable that the Republican members don't want to abdicate their independence. I don't blame those Senators for being reluctant to follow the Republican leader's orders for refusal to do their jobs. I don't blame them for their reluctance to banish the independence of the Judiciary Committee's past, ensuring that this once powerful, independent, strong committee's reputation is now nothing but a memory.

I wish the Judiciary Committee Republicans had been a bit more reluctant to sign on to the McConnell-Grassley letter, a pledge not to do their jobs. It appears most voters also think they should not have signed the letter. According to a new CNN poll that came out last night, two-thirds of Republicans want hearings on the President's Supreme Court nominee—almost 70 percent. Senate Republicans' pledge to obstruct doesn't make sense to the Republicans' own base.

The senior Senator from Iowa's blind adherence to the dictates of leadership doesn't stop there. The chairman of the Judiciary Committee was too timid to even meet with President Obama without the Republican leader's consent. He refused to go to the White House without the Republican leader by his side. When we all finally did meet with President Obama on Tuesday—the Republican leader, Democratic leader, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, and ranking member of the Judiciary Committee—at that meeting, the chairman wouldn't commit to meeting the nominee or holding hearings. He wouldn't do that. He wouldn't give the nominee a vote. That is what he told the President.

This is not what Senator GRASSLEY advocated before his party assumed the majority. Back in January 2015, on the Senate floor, the Senator from Iowa said:

> We must get back to what we in the Senate call regular order. I would say do things the way Madison intended.

Everything the chairman has done since assuming the role runs counter to those words and what Madison intended and obviously what the senior Senator from Iowa had intended.

Allowing 11 Republican members of the Judiciary Committee—and they are all men—to decide on behalf of 100 Senators and 300 million Americans that they will not even meet with or hold a hearing or vote on the Supreme Court nominee is certainly not regular order. This is about as irregular order as you can have. Given the opportunity to preside over a fair process, the chairman chose blind obedience to his party leaders instead. Nothing the Judiciary Committee chairman has done in the wake of this Supreme Court vacancy can be identified as regular order. It is about as irregular order as you can have.

Working behind closed doors is becoming the theme for Senator GRASSLEY and the Judiciary Committee. He sought to move a committee markup scheduled for today—a meeting that normally takes place in the full view of the public—behind closed doors. Everyone, think about that. This hearing has been scheduled for a long time, but the Republican leader wants to do it secretly. When Democrats objected, the chairman postponed the meeting altogether. No public hearing, a closed door hearing, Democrats objected, so he just canceled the meeting. This isn't transparency; this is obstruction and chaos.

Even Republicans agree—or at least some of them. Last week, the junior Senator from West Virginia said:

> Do I worry that this would make the Senate look dysfunctional? That's a slight worry for me.

It may be a slight worry for the Senator from West Virginia, but it is a huge worry for the American people.

Again:

> Do I worry that this would make the Senate look dysfunctional? That's a slight worry for me.

Well, it may be a slight worry for the Senator from West Virginia, but it is not a slight worry for the American people. It is a big, huge worry for the people of West Virginia.

The good news is that this can all be remedied very quickly. All my friend from Iowa needs to do is use the authority he has as the Judiciary Committee chair and give the President's nominee a meeting and a hearing. This would be what Iowa deserves and what this country deserves. All he needs to do is live up to his own words and be ''fair,'' ''respectful,'' ''deliberative,'' and ''thorough.'' Simply put, he needs to stop blindly following the Republican leader and just do his job.

Would the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

COMPREHENSIVE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 524, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

> A bill (S. 524) to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use.

Pending:

> Grassley amendment No. 3378, in the nature of a substitute.
>
> Grassley (for Donnelly/Capito) modified amendment No. 3374 (to amendment No. 3378), to provide follow-up services to individuals who have received opioid overdose reversal drugs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the year was 1936. President Franklin Roosevelt had just been reelected with an overwhelming majority, and he decided he had had enough of the U.S. Supreme Court. They had been striking down some key pieces of legislation in his New Deal package. So he came up with a bold plan in February of 1937. That bold plan was to add enough new Justices to the Supreme Court to tip the balance his way.

He presented this plan to change the Supreme Court for his political purposes to a Democratic Congress and a Democratic U.S. Senate, believing, with his big reelection majority and the fact that most of the Members of Congress had supported his New Deal agenda, that they would stand by him when it came to changing the Supreme Court so that it would start ruling his way. He was wrong. What happened then was that Members of the Senate decided to stand up to their President and to stand up for the Constitution.

A little-known Senator from Arizona, Henry Ashurst, was the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. He deliberately delayed the FDR Court-packing proposal to a point where, when it was finally called, it was overwhelmingly defeated.

Think about that in the context of our current debate about filling this Supreme Court vacancy created by the untimely death of Justice Scalia. In that case, in 1937, the Senate Judiciary Committee and its chairman stood up for the Constitution first, over and above even the President of their own political party. This was a popular President; yet they believed the Constitution was more important than any political issue when it came to the New Deal.

So where are we today? We are in a situation where we have a vacancy on the Supreme Court. The Court still continues to hear cases of great historic moment—yesterday, the case involving abortion and I am sure, in weeks ahead, even more controversial issues. It is a Court that is at least limited by the fact that there are only eight Justices. In many instances, this Court is likely to end up with a tie—a decision which doesn't decide the law but leaves it still unresolved.

So what is our responsibility as this Senate at this time as we reflect on the Senate of 1937? Well, we only have to

turn to the U.S. Constitution—the Constitution which each of us, each and every one of us as Senators, Democratic and Republican, stood in the well and swore to uphold.

The second article in this Constitution relates to the powers of the Presidency. In this book, it is only three pages, but the people who wrote the Constitution, our Founding Fathers, tried to put in those three pages the critically important elements to make sure that our democracy would continue. They tried to envision the possibilities and to authorize branches of government to do certain things.

In article II, section 2, when it comes to the powers of the President, it says:

> he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint . . . Judges of the supreme Court.

Did it say he may appoint? No. The language is explicit. He shall appoint, and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall fill the vacancies on the Supreme Court.

So what faces us today? An announcement by the Republican leadership, Senator MCCONNELL, within hours of the announcement of the death of Justice Scalia, that for the first time in the history of the United States Senate, for the first time in our Nation's history, the Republicans have announced that they will not only refuse to fill this vacancy, they will not even allow a hearing on a Presidential nominee. And Senator MCCONNELL went a step further and said he will not even meet with a nominee offered by the President to fill this vacancy. That is a clear violation of the constitutional responsibility which this Senate has. The Constitution doesn't require us to approve any nominee, no; it is advise and consent, not consent only. We can certainly vote no if we feel that vote is warranted. But the Constitution is very clear that we can't walk away from our constitutional responsibility when it comes to a vacancy on the Supreme Court.

If the Senate Republicans have their way, this vacancy on the Supreme Court will continue on until the next calendar year. It will be the longest vacancy on the Supreme Court since the Civil War, when this Nation was torn apart. If there was any excuse in those days for not filling the vacancy, there is no excuse today.

There is the argument made: Let the people decide. Let the people decide in the next election who the next Supreme Court Justice will be. But that ignores the obvious: There is a sitting President, elected for 4 years, with the constitutional authority every President has, and one of those authorities is to fill this vacancy on the Supreme Court.

They argue: Well, the people will decide in November what will happen next year. I might remind them that the people decided in the year 2012 by a margin of 5 million votes that Barack Obama would be President of the United States—not for 3 years, not for 3 years and 2 months, but for 4 years. And to argue that he is somehow now unable, unwilling, or cannot be called on to exercise his Presidential authority flies in the face of reality—a reality which most Republicans will readily concede, at least in private.

The Republicans think they are winning this debate. I think they are losing. They think their ''let the people decide'' approach to this is really carrying the day. I think our approach to this—saying to our Republican colleagues: Do your job—is carrying the day.

How is this playing in Peoria, IL? I want to read from an editorial of the February 28 edition of the Peoria Journal-Star:

The most worthless Congress in memory became more so last week, with Senate Republicans doubling down on their decision not to even hold hearings for any Obama nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court to fill the Scalia vacancy.

They went on to say:

> Even as awful as Congress is, it's not often that its members combine dereliction of constitutional duty—(see Article II, Section 2)—with political cravenness (the aversion to tough decisions in an election year) in one fell swoop, but so Senate Republicans have here. Not only have they unconstitutionally changed a president's term from four to three years, not only are they renouncing their ''advice and consent'' role, not only are they effectively suggesting the Constitution be amended to popularly elect Supreme Court justices, but even more lame are the lengths Republicans went to in order to rationalize their decision.

No more excuses. The Senate Judiciary Committee and the Senate should do their job. When the President submits a nominee, we should give that nominee a fair and thorough hearing—a fair, respectful, and thorough hearing, as one Republican said over and over again—in full view of the American people and then vote.

A fair warning to my Senate Republicans. They said the American people should decide. They will decide—they will decide in November that the Republicans in the Senate should do their job.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. DURBIN. I will be happy to yield.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Senator may well recall—he was here when I was chairman of the Judiciary Committee in 2001 during President Bush's administration, the ranking member was then Senator HATCH—we put together an agreement about how the committee would consider Supreme Court nominees. We wrote: The Judiciary Committee's traditional practice has been to report Supreme Court nominees to the Senate once the committee has completed its consideration. This has been true even in cases where Supreme Court nominees were opposed by a majority of the Judiciary Committee.

Does the Senator recall that at that time the Republican leader of the Senate, Senator Lott, even read that letter into the RECORD to say that this is the way the Senate should operate?

Mr. DURBIN. I do remember that.

Mr. LEAHY. I appreciate that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor this morning because of the important subject that is before us, the bill that deals with the opioid epidemic, the follow-on heroin problem, a bill that was reported out of committee unanimously, a very important piece of legislation. Right now we have unfortunate political gamesmanship that has overtaken some of my Democratic colleagues at the very same time that everybody on the Judiciary Committee knows we need to pass the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act that goes by the acronym CARA for short.

It happens, though, that the opioid epidemic is not a political game. It is a real problem out there. A massive hearing we had in committee demonstrates that. I am very proud the Senate has taken up the CARA bill, after this public health crisis festered for so long while the Senate was controlled by the Democrats.

For example, tragically heroin overdose deaths more than tripled from 2010 to 2014. All the while, the Democratic leadership simply did not make it a priority to move a bill like CARA. It is a bipartisan bill that addresses the public health crisis of heroin and prescription opioid abuse.

Through the hard work of many on both sides of the aisle because it is a bipartisan bill, as I said, it passed out of our committee—and you can't say so often—unanimously. Everybody at the grassroots level of America thinks everything here is always partisan between Republicans and Democrats—not when it comes to the opioid issue or a lot of other issues. This bill came out of committee unanimously, and we ought to get it to the House of Representatives as fast as we can and to the President. Just a few weeks after it came out of committee, here we are working on it with an opportunity to pass it.

This reflects the Senate working in a very constructive, bipartisan way on behalf of the American people and the people who are addicted to heroin and opioids. This is very much unlike the way the Senate acted when the Democrats controlled it. This issue was not brought up. For political reasons, that is not a narrative some Democrats want the American people to hear, and so we are having this game today.

Yesterday, there was a manufactured controversy over the amount of funding. Of course, the opioid crisis demands resources, and significant resources are being directed to it, both by the Appropriations Committee and the programs laid out in this bill before us right now. In fact, according to the

Office of National Drug Control Policy, the Appropriations Act passed in December provides more than $400 million in funding specifically to address the opioid epidemic. This is an increase of more than $100 million over the previous year. None of that money has been spent yet. All of that money is still available today.

This bill authorizes so many activities to combat the crisis, but it was never intended to appropriate funding. That is what we have Appropriations Committees for. That is why we have an appropriations process. Through the appropriations process, we can evaluate competing priories, evaluate tradeoffs, and in the end ensure that adequate resources are directed to this epidemic while at the same time maintaining fiscal discipline.

I am glad the Senate rejected that attempt to inject gamesmanship into the debate over ways to improve this bill. That vote happened yesterday. Now the minority in the Senate, the Democrats, are setting up additional procedural roadblocks. We tried to set up additional votes this morning to move this very important bill along so we can help the people of the various States, and particularly New England, solve this opioid addition and heroin problem—also a problem in the eastern part of my State—but somehow the Democrats would not agree.

Because we have this bill on the floor, I also asked the Democrats on the committee to hold our weekly Judiciary Committee business meeting over here in the Capitol Building instead of in the committee room, right off the floor of this Senate, as we do quite regularly, particularly when we have so much business here.

That was a routine accommodation I asked them to make, similar to the accommodation I gave to them when we had a hearing scheduled earlier this week on the EB–5 immigration bill, when they asked to cancel that because this bill was on the floor of the Senate. So I accommodated them. Would they give me the accommodation of holding this meeting off the floor of the Senate so we could take up the business of voting out some judges? There was not any legislation on our agenda, but we could have voted out some judges. How often do we hear that the Judiciary Committee is not moving judges? We had a chance to do that probably in a 10-minute meeting right in the President's Room, just a few feet from where I am standing right now.

I gave them an accommodation, but now I am running into trouble because I canceled a meeting because we have this important bill on the floor of the Senate. I understand they are protesting the Judiciary Committee's lack of action on a Supreme Court nomination, which nomination we could not even possibly consider if the President does not send it up.

I imagine this is just the first of several problems we are going to have in the next few weeks. While they do that this morning, I want you to know I am going to be on the Senate floor trying to get this very important opioid addiction bill—heroin addiction bill—passed, and I will be thinking about so many people CARA will help once this bill is signed by the President.

At our Judiciary Committee hearing we had on this very important problem, we heard from Nick Willard, chief of the Manchester New Hampshire Police Department. His officers will benefit from the training the bill authorizes to use naloxone, a drug that can save lives after an overdose.

At that hearing, we also heard from Tonda DaRae, a courageous Ohio woman who lost a daughter to an overdose and who founded a support group for those in recovery called Holly's Song of Hope. Her group may profit from this legislation's grants aimed at building communities of recovery.

I will be thinking about the many Iowans I have heard about who have been impacted by this crisis. I spoke earlier this week about Kim Brown of Davenport, who lost her son Andy to an overdose. She now speaks out across the State about the epidemic.

There is Carla Richards, of Waukee, IA, who lost her daughter Anna to an overdose as well. She founded an organization to promote awareness called Anna's Warriors. There are all kinds of tragic stories that every Senator in this body could talk about that highlight the rationale behind this legislation and the $400 million that is waiting to be spent to overcome the opioid addiction.

There is a seed of hope in many of them, hope that we can act to address this epidemic, each in our own way. I will be thinking of these stories today as we try to move CARA one step closer to becoming law. So why would a bill that got out of committee unanimously have this sort of shenanigans going on, on the floor of the Senate, at a time when people are dying—44,000 people in the most recent statistical year, more than automobile accidents and gun crimes together. This is a real problem. We need to get this bill passed, and we are working on accommodating amendments and moving it forward. It is not the time for the go-slow approach we are seeing already on the floor of the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with other Democratic members of the Judiciary Committee for 30 minutes.

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

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, one, so we fully understand, we are perfectly willing to have—even though we don't hold Judiciary Committee meetings every week as we used to—we would be perfectly willing to have a meeting that was not in a backroom but open so the press would see it.

It is important to have such meetings open, for the press and anybody who wants to come in. It is unfortunate that we have had—with the Supreme Court vacancy—there has been a closed-door, back-room meeting. That is when a small handful of Republican Senators decided, with the Republican leader, to say the President should not follow his constitutional duty and nominate a Supreme Court nominee, and, in an unprecedented fashion, the Senate Judiciary Committee would not follow its constitutional obligation of advice and consent.

In that small closed-door meeting, it was decided that Senators should not follow the solemn oath they have taken on this floor when they say they will uphold the Constitution ''so help me God.'' We have had enough closed-door meetings, especially closed-door meetings that tell us to violate an oath where they said ''so help me God'' and to not follow the Constitution.

I think it is important that we have these meetings since the untimely passing of Justice Antonin Scalia. There is certainly a disagreement over how to move forward in filling the Supreme Court vacancy, but I think the American people want us to do our job. This is a time we should have an open conversation about it, not closed-door meetings, where afterward self-serving press releases are issued, which may or may not accurately represent what went on in those meetings.

The American people deserve to have us do our job, hear us discuss and debate the committee's next steps in fulfilling our constitutional duty.

Last night, my friend, the senior Senator from Iowa, decided to postpone this meeting rather than have it in public. Now we have to wait another week before the committee can sit down in public so the American people can discuss an issue that is so important. The move to postpone today's meeting is troubling, given that last week's meeting—a meeting that should have happened with the participation of all the committee members in a room open to the public, showing us doing our jobs—was also postponed. So we didn't have a meeting in public. We weren't doing our job.

Instead, last week the committee's Republicans decided to meet behind closed doors—the public couldn't follow what they were doing—without any Democrats so they could hatch a partisan plan to obstruct any effort to consider the next nominee to the Supreme Court and do that no matter what the Constitution says. There was no consultation with any Democrats serving on the committee. There was no public discussion of any kind.

Certainly, in my 40 years here, whether Republicans have been in control of the Senate or Democrats, I cannot think of any precedent for this kind of closed-door discussion of how we avoid doing our job. Instead, 11 Republican Senators unilaterally decided the Senate would abdicate its responsibility and block all of us from fulfilling

our constitutional obligation of advice and consent. They block all of us from doing our job.

Supreme Court nominations are a unique priority for the Judiciary Committee. Since I have served in the Senate—I voted on every member currently on the Supreme Court and on several who have since retired—the Judiciary Committee has always held hearings on Supreme Court nominees, and they have always reported them to the full Senate for consideration.

When I took over as chairman of the Judiciary Committee in 2001, George W. Bush was President. I did not agree with much of what his administration was already doing—I was very frank in discussions with President Bush to tell him that—and I was not sure if I would approve of any Supreme Court nominations he might have the opportunity to make, but even with those reservations, I wrote a letter with then-ranking member Senator HATCH memorializing an agreement we reached—which Republicans gave their word to follow—about how the Judiciary Committee would consider Supreme Court nominees.

In that letter that Senator HATCH and I wrote, he gave his word and I gave mine:

> The Judiciary Committee's traditional practice has been to report Supreme Court nominees to the Senate once the Committee has completed its considerations. This has been true even in cases where Supreme Court nominees were opposed by a majority of the Judiciary Committee.

Senator HATCH and I gave our word on that. The Republican leader at the time, Senator Lott, then read our letter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to ensure that it was available to all Americans to see, and I took the word of Republicans in this body that they believed what they were saying. It showed the long understanding of the Senate Judiciary Committee's commitment to an open, fair process, even when the majority does not agree with the opposing party's President.

The priority of the Judiciary Committee has afforded Supreme Court nominees is exemplified by its consideration of two of the most contentious nominations to the Court: Robert Bork and Clarence Thomas.

In both instances, then-Chairman Biden moved the nominations to the full Senate, even though a majority of the Senate Judiciary Committee did not support the nominations. In other words, the majority did not support the nomination, but we still moved them forward.

In Robert Bork's case, a committee vote to report out his nomination favorably failed by a vote of 5 to 9, with both Republicans and Democrats voting against it. At the time, the Reagan administration was quietly asking him to withdraw his name, but he still wanted to have a vote, and the committee then voted to report his nomination with an unfavorable recommendation. He was reported out unfavorably by a vote of 9 to 5 so the full Senate could consider him. Some Democrats voted for him. Many Democrats voted against him. Some Republicans voted for him. Many Republicans voted against him, but he had his vote.

In Clarence Thomas's case, the committee voted to report out his nomination favorably. That failed by a vote of 7 to 7. The committee then voted to report his nomination without recommendation, and by 13 to 1 we voted to give him a chance to be heard on the floor.

Even when a majority of committee members have not supported a nominee, as was the case with Robert Bork or Clarence Thomas, we have not denied the full Senate—or the American people—the opportunity to debate and consider a Supreme Court nominee. We were not going to say this Senate shouldn't do its job.

The Judiciary Committee has a strong tradition of transparency. I remember when I first came on, there was one of the most conservative Senators as chairman, Jim Eastland. We have done it with all who have been chairs. I believe the American people have a right to see and hear what we are doing. They have a right to know whether we are doing our job. They have a right to weigh in on the decisions we make. Nowhere does transparency matter more than a lifetime appointment to the highest Court in our land. You can't decide a question of somebody going on the highest Court of our land, with a lifetime appointment, and do it with a small group behind closed doors. That is not doing our job. There is no place for backroom deals for something so important. Public confirmation hearings are a vital part of our democracy. That is not just about us.

Public hearings are how Americans meet the nominee. Public hearings allow every American the opportunity to watch and listen to this person whose decisions may have a lasting impact on their lives. Ultimately, what this small group of Republican members of the committee meeting behind closed doors unilaterally decided last week was to reject the longstanding tradition of public hearings. In doing so, they are denying Americans—all Americans, Republicans and Democrats alike—the chance to participate in the consideration of a nominee. They deny Americans a chance to have us do our job.

The Judiciary Committee is one of the busiest in the Senate. It considers some of the most consequential issues affecting millions of Americans. When we commit ourselves to what brought us here, to do our job and work together for our constituents, we can achieve great things. This is what happened 3 years ago when the Senate passed comprehensive immigration reform. After six hearings and 3 weeks of markups—many lasting until very late at night—each of the 18 Senators serving on the committee participated in the process to draft that legislation. I allowed everybody who had an amendment to bring it up. We would go back and forth—one Democrat, one Republican, back and forth. We did this day after day, late at night sometimes, but all in public. It was all covered by television. Not all of us supported the bill, but all of us had a chance to debate and amend it. Even the staunchest opponents of the legislation, including some in the Chamber right now, praised the Judiciary Committee's transparent and fair process for consideration of that bill. A Vermont editorial at the time called our committee proceedings—because they were open, because everybody had a chance to participate, because the American people could see what we were doing, because we were doing our job—''a lesson in democracy.'' I think it is time for a refresher course.

The legal issues before the Supreme Court are significant, and its importance in our constitutional democracy cannot be overstated, nor can the responsibility of both the President to follow his constitutional duty to nominate and the Judiciary Committee's responsibility to fairly consider a nominee to serve in the highest Court in the land.

It is with deep concern I come to the floor. I urge my friend, the chairman, and all members of the Judiciary Committee to renew their commitment to transparency and regular order. I ask that you withhold judgment. I ask those who met behind closed doors to withhold your judgment until you can review the record of whomever the President nominates. I ask you to give the next nominee to the Supreme Court a fair hearing, as we have done in this body—the body should be the conscience of the Nation—for the last 100 years. The American people expect us to do our job.

Senator COONS is on the floor. The distinguished Senator from Delaware is the ranking member of the Court Subcommittee. I wish to ask Senator COONS, through the Chair, what his understanding of the role of the Senate Judiciary Committee with regard to the next Supreme Court nominee is.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I emphasize how important I think the role is of the Senate Judiciary Committee. As many present know, my predecessor, now Vice President BIDEN, is a former chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

As my good friend and colleague from the State of Vermont just reminded us, there is a long and important history on the Senate Judiciary Committee that I think bears repeating; that since its formation a century ago, the Senate Judiciary Committee has provided a hearing, a vote or both for every single Supreme Court nominee. The only exceptions being those that went straight to the floor because their confirmations were supported so broadly.

I also think there is a second important point, if I could briefly touch on it; that even in those instances where a nominee did not enjoy majority support on the committee, even in those instances just cited by the Senator from Vermont, where a majority of the Senate Judiciary Committee voted against a nomination, that nomination proceeded to the floor of the Senate to ensure that advice and consent—our constitutional duty—could be carried forward.

If I might ask for the forbearance of the Senator from Vermont for one moment, I also want to set the record straight about what my friend and predecessor then-Senator, now-Vice President BIDEN actually said in a floor speech back in 1992, a floor speech that has been widely cited as evidence of some new set of so-called Biden rules that are somehow a basis for the obstructionism we now see—a refusal to even meet with a Supreme Court nominee, let alone give them a fair hearing.

I want to take this moment because then-Senator BIDEN has been quoted out of context. He gave—I am sure this will not surprise some in the Chamber—a somewhat long and winding speech. There was no Supreme Court vacancy at the time. He was simply observing what might happen if there were to be a vacancy. While he did, early in the speech, give some comments that have been now used, he also gave at the end of his speech a section I want to read. To quote directly:

> I believe that so long as the public continues to split its confidence between the branches, compromise is the responsible course both for the White House and for the Senate. Therefore I stand by my position, Mr. President, if the President [then President George H.W. Bush] consults and cooperates with the Senate or moderates his selections absent consultation, then his nominees may enjoy my support, as did Justices Kennedy and Souter.

In conclusion, let me remark that what then-Chairman BIDEN did speaks more loudly even than what he said. I believe his record as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee is unmistakable. In case after case, he convened and held timely hearings, even in the election year of 1988. It means he considered and confirmed 64 judicial nominees, as late as September in a Presidential election year. It means he voted in favor of Justice Kennedy and Justice Souter, nominated by Republican Presidents, and it means that in his speech, in the section I quoted, I think he sent a clear request to then-President George H.W. Bush to work with the Senate, send us a moderate nominee, and I will consider supporting them.

I urge the chairman and ranking member, all of us who are members of this important and august committee, to follow the actual Biden rules by working across the aisle, by consulting, and by offering a fair, open, and timely hearing for any nominee who should be proffered by our President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Delaware for clearing that up. I don't normally discuss what is said in meetings with the President, but so much has been reported by the two Republicans who were there, the distinguished Senator from Iowa and the distinguished Republican leader. Vice President BIDEN was also there, and he was very clear as to what he meant so that there would be no question. He also pointed out that right through September, 64 of the Republican President's nominees went through. I think during President Bush's last 2 years, I was chairman, and I moved 68 judges.

We see a double standard by our friends from the Republican Party when it comes to the courts of appeals judges as well as district judges. In the majority, they have allowed only 16 of President Obama's judges. Facts do speak louder than words.

I thank the distinguished Senator from Delaware for clearing up that matter.

I know the distinguished Senator from Rhode Island also has something he wishes to say, and I will yield to him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I thank the ranking member for that courtesy. Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution states quite clearly that the President shall nominate a candidate when there is a vacancy in the United States Supreme Court. I would like the record of this discussion to reflect that the term ''shall,'' as defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary—the relevant definition—is A, used to express a command or exhortation, and, B, used in laws, regulations, or directives to express what is mandatory.

Under the Constitution that we are all sworn to uphold, the President of the United States has a mandatory duty. I think it is important that he accomplish it and nominate a candidate.

I ask my colleagues to imagine if there were another mandatory duty of the President of the United States that this President refused to perform—imagine the cavalcade of Republican Senators to the studios of Fox News to decry and condemn this President for that omission. This should be no different.

The President must and will do his constitutional duty. If and when he does that, then the constitutional burden of duty moves from the President to the U.S. Senate, and we will then have to decide whether we will abide by our constitutional duty, whether to follow the regular order that so many of us have articulated as an important goal, whether to follow the precedents of previous nominees, whether to act fairly, whether we are going to be an organization here, an institution, that will prejudge a nominee before we even know who he or she is. Prejudge is at the heart of prejudice; it is not a good thing for the Senate to be doing. Finally, we will have to decide what kind of example we want to set to the rest of the world—of a country that follows the regular order as established in its constitution and has its institutions of government do their duty or as a country that will bend, twist, and dodge those responsibilities because of the demands of immediate politics.

Those are choices I will address when they come to us. For now I wish only to say that the President's mandatory duty is clear, and no one should be surprised that he performs it.

I thank the Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Rhode Island. He is a former attorney general of his State as well as a former U.S. attorney and is well familiar with what the Constitution requires, and I appreciate his urging the U.S. Senate to do its job and follow the Constitution.

Mr. President, at this point I will yield to the distinguished senior Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I thank my colleague and our ranking member on the Judiciary Committee not only for his friendship and his articulateness but his great work on this issue.

Just as the President has a constitutional responsibility to name a nominee to the Court, the Senate has its constitutional duty to provide advice and consent on the nominee. It is our job. It is the job of this body and specifically the Judiciary Committee to hold hearings on that nominee.

This chart says, ''America to Senate Republicans: Do your job.'' Today we might be saying, ''America to the Judiciary Committee: Do your job.'' The American people expect us to do our job in the Senate and in the committees and do what we are supposed to be doing.

As my colleague from Vermont has noted, the Judiciary Committee should be meeting right now at this moment, as we do every Thursday. This would have been the first opportunity for all members of this committee to debate in public the Republican chairman's unilateral decision to issue a blanket hold on an unnamed Supreme Court nominee. We hold Judiciary meetings on Thursday all the time while legislation is being debated on the floor. There were no votes scheduled. We meet every Thursday. We know why they are not meeting today. They are afraid to discuss the issue. They cannot win the argument that we shouldn't be doing our job in a public debate. They can't win the argument that the Judiciary Committee shouldn't be holding hearings. We had the meeting abruptly canceled at the last minute not because CARA is being debated on the floor—CARA is important—but because people didn't want to debate the issue of the Supreme Court. Let's face it; that is the truth.

We are not asking the Senate or the Judiciary Committee to be a rubber stamp.

I have one more point on the Judiciary Committee. We are asking our Republican colleagues to simply do their job. Hold this body and the Judiciary Committee in some regard. We can disagree on the politics, we can disagree on a nominee, but hold a hearing and hold a vote. That is what our constituents sent us here to do.

I will remind my dear friend from Iowa, and he is a dear friend, what his own Web site—the Judiciary Committee's Web site—says is its job. This was pointed out by Senator DURBIN a few days ago, but I think it is worth repeating. This is a copy of the Web site of the Judiciary Committee. Here is part of what it says when it comes to nominations.

When a vacancy occurs on the Supreme Court, the President of the United States is given the authority, under Article II of the United States Constitution, to nominate a person to fill the vacancy. The nomination is referred to the United States Senate, where the Senate Judiciary Committee holds a hearing where the nominee provides testimony and responds to questions from members of the panel. Traditionally, the committee refers the nomination to the full Senate for a vote.

This is the Web page of the Senate Judiciary Committee. It does not say you hold a hearing when you want to. It does not say you hold a hearing when you like the nominee or only when your party has the Presidency. It says: ''The nomination is''—not may be; is—''referred to the United States Senate, where the Senate Judiciary Committee holds a hearing where the nominee provides testimony and responds to questions from members of the panel.'' It doesn't say the Senate Judiciary Committee might hold a hearing or could at its whim hold a hearing. It says hold a hearing, no qualifiers.

We ought to be holding a hearing and we ought to be debating on whether to hold a hearing now in the Chamber of the Judiciary Committee on Thursday at 10 a.m., as we have done week after week after week when other important issues are being debated on the floor of the U.S. Senate. We can do both. We can move CARA—I admit it doesn't have the funding I would like to see there at this point—and we can meet in the Judiciary Committee.

I don't understand the decision by the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, who I believe holds the same reverence that I do and the same reverence that the ranking member and former chairman, the Senator from Vermont, does for its profound and historic standing in the Senate. I would like to hear directly from the chairman about the thinking behind his decision to unilaterally decide that this committee will have no voice, no ability to examine a nominee's record and qualifications.

Earlier this week, the chairman indicated that there are some members of his committee majority who might like to see us hold hearings. He said: As any chairman ought to do, I went to the members of my committee. They all agreed with me for different reasons, not just because I am chairman. Some had reluctance, but all signed.

The chairman indicated he would consider breaking ranks with his party leader by meeting the potential nominee, Eighth Circuit Court Judge Jane Kelly from his home State of Iowa. He was reluctant to issue the same across-the-board denial. I understand his reluctance. He is a good man. CHUCK GRASSLEY is a good man. He comes from the heartland of America and represents its finest values. I regret to say it, but I think politics are pulling him off course here, and I hope he will return because he is a good man and I understand the reluctance of Senators to sign that letter. Senators did not come to Washington to do that. The Senators know the folks out there want them to do their job.

Editorial boards across the country have castigated this policy of obstruction.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SCHUMER. Almost every poll shows the majority of Americans favor action.

Mr. President, just one more point.

It is not right to do what the committee is doing, and I sincerely hope the chairman will reconsider his position. If Republicans truly respect the Constitution, they should follow it and consider a nomination from the sitting President rather than play political games.

I yield back to my dear friend, our outstanding leader on the Judiciary Committee, Senator LEAHY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I realize our time has expired, but I ask unanimous consent that I be able to yield the floor for my colloquy but that I be followed for 5 minutes by the distinguished senior Senator from Connecticut and that he be followed by the distinguished senior Senator from Minnesota for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRASSLEY). I am in the Chair and probably can't participate, but I want to make it clear that I want the manager of the bill to speak so——

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, could we have regular order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. I am exercising my prerogative. If I don't have that prerogative, then I object.

The Chair recognizes the Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, may I make a unanimous consent request?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. I thank the Presiding Officer.

Mr. President, I didn't have any intention to speak today, but one of the blessings of being a freshman Member is you get the opportunity to preside and hear the arguments that are going on in the Chamber and the discussion about the SCOTUS nomination. We are going to have to agree to disagree with our friends from across the aisle on the SCOTUS nomination.

Let's take a look at what is going on here.

In North Carolina, over the past 24 hours, some four people have died of a drug overdose. We had more deaths associated with drug overdoses than we had with car accidents last year.

So what is going on here? Back in 2008, there was an opioid epidemic. There was a supermajority in the U.S. Senate. There was a Democrat in the White House and a majority in the House of Representatives. No action. In 2010, the epidemic was growing. In places in New England, in the Midwest, down in the South, people were dying. Yet there was no action.

Now this Congress has taken action. I think it is time to move the CARA bill. To hold hostage the CARA bill and shift the discussion to a genuine disagreement we have with the minority on SCOTUS is literally costing lives.

For those who sit here and want to hold up the CARA bill for the purposes of discussing the SCOTUS nomination, we don't even have a nominee yet. There is going to be plenty of time in committee and plenty of time on the floor to debate this difference of opinion between the minority and the majority. But in the meantime, for people who would hold up passing the CARA bill over the SCOTUS nomination, what are you going to tell the two people—last week, two friends of mine, when they heard my speech on the Senate floor, came to me and said: Thank you for moving this bill. I lost my son a year and a half ago.

Two of my friends have told me: Thank you for helping us increase the visibility and get to a point to where we are saving these lives.

Those who would hold up the CARA bill, what are you going the tell the first responders who, if they had naloxone, could have potentially saved the life of somebody who has fallen on the floor and died? What are you going to tell them? What are you going to tell the law enforcement officers who are trying to help people live who have succumbed to addiction and opioid abuse? What are you going to tell them by holding up this bill? What are you going to tell the parents who are struggling, who need help with education, who need help with their incarcerated children who may have succumbed to addiction, who did a wrong thing and are in prison and now need help? They need to be rehabilitated. They need to be saved.

At some point, we need to recognize that we do need to do things separately. We need to recognize that it is disgraceful to hold up the CARA bill over a genuine disagreement we are going to have for months.

I am one of the Senators in the Judiciary Committee who signed the letter. I do not believe that until we hear the vote of the people, we should hear a SCOTUS nomination. But I am not here to talk about SCOTUS today. I am here to talk about saving lives. I am here to talk about addressing the addiction problem that is growing. I am here to talk about the sad, heartbreaking stories of families across this Nation who are starving for help.

This bill helps. This bill appropriates over $100 million that can be spent between now and the end of September to save lives. If I come to the floor tomorrow, I am going to be talking about four more lives that have been lost in North Carolina, some that could have been saved if we would just do our job. There is a lot of discussion about doing our job, right? Let's do our job and get CARA passed.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask my colleague from North Carolina to yield for a question.

Mr. TILLIS. I yield.

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you. I appreciate the courtesy. I so understand what you are saying. A week ago, I held in my arms a father whose son had committed suicide while waiting for treatment, so I understand the importance of the bill we have before us.

I don't see why we can't do both things at once. The Senator from North Carolina has sat with me while we debated important bills on the floor and met in the Judiciary Committee, and all of a sudden, at the last minute, the rug is pulled out from under that meeting. It was scheduled. The CARA bill was scheduled to be debated, and we could meet in the Judiciary Committee.

I am sure my colleague will admit that the issue with the Supreme Court is important, too, just as CARA is. So could he explain to me why we couldn't do both—have our meeting in the Judiciary Committee and let those who want to be in the Judiciary Committee speak there and let those who want to speak on CARA speak here? No votes were scheduled. I am right about that, correct? So just explain how one delays the other.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I actually was speaker of the house in North Carolina for 4 years. I like a good scrap. I don't have any problem with going to a committee hearing and explaining why I have taken the position I have on the judicial nomination. But that is not what I am talking about today. I am talking about over the next 24 hours, four more people are going to die from overdoses in North Carolina. I am trying to figure out what I say to that mother and that father to say, well, gosh, you know, things got gummed up here because we decided to connect two unrelated issues. One has to do with the Supreme Court nomination, and that is very important. It is critically important. I get that. But what is more important than saving lives of people who we know are going to die? The data is compelling.

Folks, we have to get to a point where we get Washington working again, and you don't do it by playing chess. I am not an attorney. I am not a constitutional scholar. But I am a father and somebody who spends a lot of time in my State. I think we have reached a point where we need to get serious with it. We are creating obstacles on CARA that don't exist. People are absolutely costing lives by failing to move on this bill.

Let's have a fight. Let's have a committee hearing. I like a good scrap. I am looking forward to having that debate. I am looking forward to the history of other positions that have been taken by my friends across the aisle on how to dispose of nominations from the President. I am happy to do that. But I want this bill passed. I want to be able to go back to the people in North Carolina and say: We are doing everything we possibly can to save lives. That is what CARA does. That is why we need to act.

Mr. SCHUMER. Will the Senator yield?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks the floor?

Mr. SCHUMER. I seek to ask another question of my friend from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, we were supposed to be here moving the bill forward. We need to make it clear that we were going to vote on amendments on CARA today to draw down the backlog and move the bill. The Presiding Officer decided to have the meeting off the floor so that we could move judicial nominations. We weren't going to take up legislation there.

I think what we need to do is get back to the work of disposing of amendments, making the bill better potentially, and getting it to the House and getting it to the President's desk. That is what I am talking about. This is the capacity. We have limited capacity in this Chamber. You all know the procedural games you can play around here. The limitations of time are numerous. We are just creating more of that. We are gumming up the works while people are dying. One person every 6 hours in the State of North Carolina is dying from a drug overdose. If we delay by 6 hours, we are responsible for a life in North Carolina. These are lives we can save. We need to dispose of the amendments on this bill and move it to the House.

Mr. President, I apologize if I am angry, but when lives are involved, when youth is involved, I think it is time for us to do our job. Our job is to dispose of amendments and move this bill to the House of Representatives.

Thank you.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, will my colleague yield for a question?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator yield?

Mr. TILLIS. Yes, sir.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask my colleague, is it true that we have had debates in the committee in the committee room while important discussions have been carried on here in other instances? Is that true or false?

Mr. TILLIS. I say to Senator SCHUMER, it is true.

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you.

Mr. TILLIS. But I don't see its relevance to the task at hand. That is the problem——

Mr. SCHUMER. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. TILLIS. If I may completely answer the question, that is the problem with this process. I hear that. I see the Kabuki dances going on. What I want to do is dispose of the amendments on the CARA bill and do our job. Let's do our job. Our job is to pass legislation and in this case save lives. So I get that we need to do the other things, but let's get to the task at hand. Let's do our job. I am prepared to do the job. I will stay here all weekend long. I will work 24/7 until this bill gets passed. Why don't we focus on that and introduce a little humanity into the discussion? I get the procedural issues. We need to have the debates in Judiciary. I am perfectly happy to do that. I want this bill passed. I want Members to come down to this floor, pass amendments, draw down the queue, and send this bill to the President's desk.

Let's do our job. I am prepared to do my job today, tomorrow, Saturday, Sunday, and through all of next week if that is what it takes to get this done. I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will be too.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has yielded the floor.

Who seeks recognition?

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, as one who has held a lot of hearings on opioids, as one who has brought together law enforcement, the medical community, parents, the faith community, and physicians in my State on the opioid matter, I am perfectly happy that the Republicans control the schedule and perfectly happy that they want to stay here today, tomorrow, the next day, and go forth.

Mr. SCHUMER. Will my colleague yield for one more question?

Mr. LEAHY. Certainly.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you, Mr. President.

I would just ask you, our ranking member, haven't we been able in the past to hold meetings in the Judiciary Committee and debate bills on the floor?

Mr. LEAHY. We did hate crimes legislation on the floor at the same time we were doing a Supreme Court nomination. Those are pretty significant things. It can be done.

Mr. SCHUMER. One more question to my colleague. Has the leader filed cloture, which would move this to a conclusion? As best to your knowledge, has the leader filed cloture? Because if

he hasn't, we are not holding up anything.

Mr. President, I would suggest to my colleague from North Carolina that if he wants to move the bill quickly, he ought to go to the leader and say ''File cloture,'' not say ''Delay a meeting in the Judiciary Committee''; is that right?

Have you heard of the leader filing cloture yet?

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, my understanding is that cloture has not been filed.

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you.

Mr. LEAHY. I would agree with the Presiding Officer. I will stay here Friday, Saturday, and Sunday and vote and pass this, I would hope with actually putting money in it so we are not just passing something symbolically without teeth.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I would ask the Senator from Vermont a question, if he would take it.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, without losing my right to the floor, I yield to answer the question, yes.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I heard what they said about the meeting being canceled today, because we could have held the meeting off the floor and voted out three judges. So somehow that interfered with what they wanted to do in the Judiciary Committee meeting. I asked for an accommodation. I asked the ranking member for the same accommodation I gave his side when we canceled a hearing on the EB–5 Program earlier this week. And a hearing obviously doesn't take the same time away from the floor as a markup might. So consequently I am asking the ranking member if that accommodation isn't worth the accommodation that I asked today.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, addressing the distinguished Member through the Chair, he is well aware of my concern and the difference between EB–5, which we debate all the time, and a Supreme Court nomination. This goes beyond apples and oranges. There is absolutely no comparison.

I think the Republicans having had a closed-door meeting where a small percentage of the Senate decided there should be no debate or discussion on a Supreme Court nomination—there is no way that having a closed-door meeting off the floor is something that—it wouldn't pass the giggle test. I think all of us, both Democrats and Republicans, would have been rightly criticized by the press if we had done that. This is anything but routine. We are talking about the Supreme Court.

I ask unanimous consent to yield 5 minutes to the distinguished senior Senator from Connecticut and then 5 minutes to the distinguished senior Senator from Minnesota.

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

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I am always honored to be in this Chamber, and I feel immensely privileged to participate in any debate. But I must say, Mr. President, that the average American listening to the colloquy that has been conducted just within the past few minutes would regard it somewhat in disbelief, maybe dismay, because the Presiding Officer is absolutely right that the people of our States are literally dying as a result of the heroin and opioid epidemic that has created a public health hurricane, a crisis of untold proportion.

This body should and hopefully will pass a bill that will help to address that public health crisis. It is only a downpayment, only a first step, and only effective if accompanied by funding, an emergency supplemental necessary to provide the real resources to address this problem. But this body is capable of passing that bill and still debating whether there should be a hearing and vote on the President's Supreme Court nominee.

The voting on the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, also known as CARA, is within the control of the majority. That is a simple fact. As Ronald Reagan said, facts are stubborn things. The fact is that control of the votes on that measure are within the prerogative of the majority.

In the meantime, the majority also has the power and authority to say we will have a hearing and a vote on the President's Supreme Court nominee; we will do our job. That is what Senators are elected to do. That is why we have come to the floor of the Senate to say that the Senate must do its job. It has a constitutional duty. It has no discretion whether it should wait for a politically opportune time to do its job or whether it should hear from its base politically. It should do its job when the President submits his nominee.

What may be most regrettable about this debate and about the majority leadership's refusal to have a hearing and a vote on the President's nominee is that it demonstrates political machination—game playing—that threatens the Supreme Court as an institution. It endangers its credibility and trust. The Supreme Court has no armies or police force. It depends, for the enforceability of its decisions, on its credibility and trust. And when it is demeaned in the eyes of the public, when its stature is diminished, when it is dragged into the political morass of a partisan debate and partisan paralysis, its credibility and trust and its stature are vastly diminished, and its powers and institution are in danger.

I am dismayed that these machinations tend to diminish and demean this institution where I worked for a year as a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun, where I argued cases when I was attorney general, and where I was yesterday on those steps with the same awe and admiration and, indeed, reverence that the American people should feel for an institution above politics, higher than the ordinary give-and-take and contention that occurs on this floor and throughout the political institution. The refusal to even consider having a hearing, having a vote, having a meeting with the President's nominee endangers this institution.

Elections have consequences. We all say so. Obstruction has consequences too. The failure to consider these nominees means that critical decisions will be left undecided.

I urge my colleagues to enable us to have a vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. May I have just 1 more minute?

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator BLUMENTHAL be granted three more minutes.

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

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Thank you.

Madam President, I want to close with the words of Justice Scalia, who said, when he was asked to recuse himself, that leaving the Court potentially equally divided 4 to 4—that a 4-to-4 vote was to be avoided if possible. He said:

> With eight justices [it] rais[es] the possibility that, by reason of a tie vote, [the Court] will find itself unable to resolve the significant legal issue presented by the case. . . . Even one unnecessary recusal impairs the functioning of the Court.

Even one unnecessary 4-to-4 vote impairs the stature and credibility and the effectiveness of the Court.

I urge all of us to move forward with the President's nominee when it is made.

Thank you, Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I thank the distinguished senior Senator from Connecticut, especially since he brings a wealth of knowledge here. He was one of the most noted attorneys general of his State. Also, he has that very unique knowledge of one of the most highly sought positions—a clerk to a member of the U.S. Supreme Court. In many ways, these are the people who have a closer view. So Senator BLUMENTHAL's experience as a clerk of the Supreme Court is something none of us should ignore.

Madam President, I ask to be able to yield to the distinguished senior Senator from Pennsylvania.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I thank the senior Senator from Vermont for the opportunity to speak.

I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

ISIS

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I rise to discuss the United States and coalition strategy to bring about a lasting

defeat of the terrorist group ISIS, often known by different acronyms, such as ISIL, as well as Daesh. I will use the acronym ISIS.

We know that ISIS proposes a direct threat to our partners in the Middle East and is exporting its distorted, hateful ideology to other nations, including here in the United States. Beginning in 2014, I have pressed the administration to take action against the financial and facilitation networks that support ISIS. The administration has done good work, but much more remains to be done.

In mid-February, I traveled to a number of countries in the region, including Israel, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey to conduct oversight of our strategy to cut off the financial networks that support terrorist groups like ISIS. I found that the events of the last 2 years have brought the issue of terrorism financing into sharper focus, and certainly into sharper focus for the countries in the region. ISIS attacks in places like Saudi Arabia and Qatar should be a wakeup call for gulf countries. Terrorist financiers not only support ISIS, but they present a direct threat to their own internal security and stability—the security and stability of these gulf countries—as well as other countries the world over.

While coalition partners are taking steps in the right direction, much more work remains to be done. We need to see more investigations turn into more arrests, more prosecutions, more sentencing, and more accountability in these countries that will take these criminals and terrorists off the streets. It also became clear to me on my visit to the region that we need to improve upon the international architecture that cuts off terrorist financiers and facilitators from the international financial system. As a first step, countries should seek to meet the requirements to be a member in good standing of the Financial Action Task Force, known by the acronym FATF. This is a multinational, intergovernmental organization tasked with addressing money laundering and financial crimes.

Countries also need to take steps to address the ways terrorist financiers use the black market and the gray market to facilitate their work. For example, in Turkey, my last stop on my visit to the region, I came away with the impression that the Turkish Government is not adequately prioritizing efforts to stop foreign fighter movements and the illicit smuggling of cash, oil, antiquities, and IED precursor components across its southern border. As terrorist financiers' tactics evolve, our strategies must improve and respond. For example, more work needs to be done to regulate and to cut off the informal exchange houses in countries bordering ISIS-occupied territory, which may be the primary way that ISIS gains access to the international financial system.

Much more work remains to be done, and the United States should continue leading the effort. At every stop, I was impressed by the good work of our U.S. military personnel and diplomats. One of the highlights of my trip was the afternoon I spent at the Al Udeid Air Base in Doha.

I spent time at the Combined Air Operations Center, known as the CAOC, where elements from all U.S. services and representatives of many of our coalition partners worked together to coordinate and execute air operations against ISIS. I also received a classified briefing from the AFCENT commander, Lt. Gen. Brown, which, of course, I cannot detail here. But General Brown has said publicly: ''Successful strikes on oil facilities and on monetary centers have resulted in Daesh cutting pay to their fighters and increased the amount of money available to conduct and fund their operations.''

This is an important development. It is important to note that U.S.-led air strikes are having a profound impact on ISIS's financial operations.

As lawmakers, we must continue to critically evaluate and develop constructive policies to bring about a lasting defeat of ISIS. We cannot abdicate our oversight responsibilities. To my colleagues who say we are doing ''nothing'' to fight ISIS, I encourage them to go to a place like the Al Udeid Air Base, meet directly with senior leaders who are bringing the fight to ISIS, and see firsthand the incredible work of our servicemembers, just as I did in the middle of February. We need to hear directly from military commanders and national security experts before offering prescriptions like increasing troop levels in Iraq or expanding the mission sets our military is currently executing.

We owe it to these men and women to have a robust, bipartisan debate about this strategy and to vote on an authorization for the use of military force, vote on legislation to cut off financing, vote on bills to promote humanitarian aid—all of the elements of this strategy.

Rather than conducting oversight by sound bite and oversight by categorical condemnation, let's have a serious debate on this critical national security issue.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, we have had quite a discussion this morning on why the Judiciary Committee didn't meet.

We were prepared to meet the same way we often meet when there is just maybe 5 minutes of business. We meet off the Senate floor so that we can do both the work of the entire Senate and the work of the Judiciary committee. That happens often. And that's the accommodation I asked for from the minority. But they objected. Of course, they asked me to accommodate them on a hearing that I had scheduled for earlier this week on the EB 5 immigration issue. I postponed that hearing because minority members of the Judiciary Committee didn't want to have that hearing when this very important opioid addiction bill was on the floor. The heroin addiction bill is before the United States Senate with 44,000 lives being lost in a year because of that addiction. And we're considering important legislation to solve that problem. I did not get that accommodation, so I canceled the meeting.

So what we heard on the floor here, while my colleagues were holding up the opioid bill, all this talk about having a debate about the next nominee to the Supreme Court—a nominee that hasn't even been made yet.

So I come to the floor now to respond to just a couple ridiculous arguments that my friends made this morning.

First of all, we are going to have a debate about the Supreme Court and the proper role of a Supreme Court Justice in our constitutional system. We are going to debate whether or not the American people want yet another Justice who decides cases based on what is in his or her heart or whether they want a Justice who will decide cases based on the Constitution and the law. That is not my estimation of the debate; that is exactly what this President said regarding previous judges and Justices. He said he was looking for somebody who would have empathy for people who came before the Court. Having empathy for people that come before the Court means that you are supposed to do something different than what judges are supposed to do. Judges are supposed to look at the facts and the law and base their decisions on the law. They aren't supposed to base their decisions on personal feelings. We are a nation based on the rule of law. So this is what the American people have to think about and decide. They need to have a voice in this process. As Senator BIDEN said in 1992 or as Senator SCHUMER said in 2007—we are not going to consider a Supreme Court nominee during a heated Presidential election. So we have an opportunity to have a national debate. This whole debate is about whether we are going to have Justices who decide cases based on empathy rather than the letter of the Constitution and the letter of the statute.

On the second point, we have heard a lot of complaining around here—and I suspect we are going to hear a lot more—because Senate judiciary Republicans met and then made public our decision not to hold hearings on the Supreme Court nomination during a heated Presidential election year. Give me a break.

We made a decision based on history and our intention to protect the ability of the American people to make their voices heard. We didn't play games, just as Senator BIDEN wasn't playing games when he gave that 20,000-word speech in 1992 where he said that we shouldn't have a lameduck President make a nomination during a Presidential election campaign, just like

Senator SCHUMER said in 2007 before the American Constitution Society, 18 months before George W. Bush was out of office. So that is the historical approach. Very plain and open, both Democrats and Republicans taking the same tone so the people could make their voices heard. The American people should be heard not only on who is going to fill Justice Scalia's seat, but also on the proper role of the Supreme Court and whether or not the Court ought to be a legislative body.

Like I said, we made that decision and immediately made it public. I don't remember being invited to the secret meetings that the Democrats held before they walked onto the Senate floor in November of 2013 and invoked the nuclear option so they could pack the D.C. circuit. We wanted to save taxpayer money. The D.C. circuit is the least worked circuit court in the country. Everyone knew you didn't need three more judges. That court was fairly evenly divided between liberals and conservatives. But because that court reviews the President's Executive orders and regulations, this President wanted to make sure he had enough judges on that court, so that when the court reviews the actions he takes with his pen and phone, he would get favorable rulings. So they packed the D.C. circuit, so that is why we had the nuclear option, because the other side had to get around the 60-vote rule that we had here for the approval of judges.

I also keep hearing this claim Senator BIDEN, when he was chairman of the committee, should be praised for how he handled the Bork-Kennedy episode. Now, I happened to be here in 1987. I saw what happened to Robert Bork. I saw how he was smeared. And because he was smeared, that seat remained open and was filled in early 1988. If that is the other side's argument, then I think we all know how weak their position is.

Finally, let me say this. I said yesterday and I want to say it again, the other side knows that this nominee isn't going to get confirmed. Everyone knows it. The only reason that they are complaining about a hearing on the nominee is because they want to make the process as political as possible. And that goes to the heart of the matter.

We are not going to politicize this process in the middle of a Presidential election year. We are going to let the people have a voice.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. KING. Madam President, I listened with great attentiveness to the very distinguished chair of the Judiciary Committee, whom I have the utmost respect for, but I feel that I must respond, given this important question that is not before this body but should be.

The first point this Senator would make is that the term ''lameduck'' is being used rather loosely. Lameduck, as I have always understood it, is the period between the election and a swearing-in of a successor. A lameduck Congress is the Congress before November and January. A lameduck President is the President's term between November and January. I think, as I have always understood the use of that term, to apply it to a President who is in the middle part or early part of the fourth year of his or her term is not an accurate characterization or usage of the term ''lameduck.''

The distinguished chairman said we are going to have a debate. I am delighted to hear that. The question is, When? I wasn't here in 1992. I wasn't here in 1987. I wasn't here in 2007. So I am trying to figure out how to respond to this situation, how to understand this situation, with reference to the Constitution.

There are lots of provisions in the Constitution that are subject to windy law review articles, to lengthy court decisions, to interpretation, to characterization of what they actually mean, what was the original intent of the Framers, and all of those complicated issues of discussion, dissection, and explication. But the word ''four,'' as in one, two, three, four, and the word ''shall,'' as in ''shall do something,'' are not among those confusing terms.

I would submit that the President has a constitutional obligation to submit a nominee to this body and this body has a constitutional obligation to consider that nomination—not an obligation to confirm, not an obligation to say yes, but an obligation to consider it.

The Presidential term is 4 years; it is not 3 years and 1 month. That is in the Constitution. Article II, section 2, says the President ''shall nominate . . . Ministers . . . Judges of the supreme Court . . . with the Advice and Consent of the Senate.''

I would not for a minute presuppose what the decision of the Senate should be, but to argue that the Senate will not even hear the nomination, will not discuss it, will not debate it—in fact, some of the Members have said they will not even meet the person, with no knowledge whatsoever of who this person is. The President may nominate a person who is a combination of Aristotle, Thomas Jefferson, and St. Thomas of Aquinas, but he or she is not even going to be met with. I don't understand that as a matter of interpretation of the Constitution.

There is a lot of discussion about the people ''should have a role'' in this decision. The Constitution makes that clear. They do have that role when they elect the President of the United States for a 4-year term, not for a 3-year, 1-month term.

I can see no wiggle room on the President's obligation to submit a nominee to this body. This decision to stall this nomination, to not meet with a nominee, to not hold hearings, to not hold a debate, to not hold a discussion, has profound implications for the Court because the reality is this means the Court will be without a Justice for essentially two terms.

We lost Justice Scalia in February. The term of the Court doesn't end until later this spring. He will not be present for the final decisionmaking on the matters that have been before the Court this term. Then, if we wait until a new President is elected, the new President comes into office on January 20, 2017, and submits a new nomination almost immediately. Let's say it is within the first 2 weeks of his or her taking office. The average time for consideration of a Justice is between 60 and 90 days. We are into February, March, April, and that is into the next term of the U.S. Supreme Court. By delaying this decision, we are basically going to leave the Court without a Justice, in contravention to the explicit provision of the Constitution, for what amounts to two terms.

This Senator wants to be very clear: I am not saying that there is any constitutional obligation on this body to approve the President's nominee, but I believe there is a constitutional obligation to consider that nominee. That is really what we are debating.

I am delighted to hear the distinguished chairman say we are going to have this debate, but we ought to have it now, under the Constitution, which requires the President to submit a nominee and, I would argue, requires this body to at least consider that nominee, to hold hearings, to let the people hear who the nominee is, to hear what their views are, and to make the decision within this body whether this nominee should be approved for this incredibly important, august, and solemn obligation to undertake as a Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Again, ''four'' and ''shall'' are not debatable propositions. Whether or not the Senate should confirm is clearly within the discretion of every Senator in this body, but to say that we will not have the opportunity to make that decision I think is contrary to the Constitution. It is contrary to the best interests of the American people, and I am surprised, frankly, that my colleagues are taking this position. Nobody is saying how they have to vote. If they don't like the nominee, they can vote them down, but why not have a hearing, why not have a debate, why not have a discussion, why not find out who this person is? The President may nominate someone who is of great appeal to both sides of this body.

I would hope that the distinguished chair of the committee would reconsider his decision—the committee's decision—to not even hold a hearing and to carry out what I believe is the obligation to at least hear the nomination—not approve it, but to at least

hear it—and therefore let the American people participate in this discussion. Therefore, let the American people participate in this discussion. But let's also follow the explicit provisions of the Constitution that require the President to submit a nominee and, I believe, require us to at least consider it, if not approve.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I come to the floor to talk about the pending legislation, which is very important. It actually enjoys broad bipartisan support, and I am optimistic we can get it done.

Before I talk about that, I wish to comment on some of the things that have been said on the floor with regard to the vacancy created by the death of Antonin Scalia.

First, the Democratic leader, Senator REID, clearly wants to apply a different set of rules when Republicans are in the majority than he did when Democrats were in the majority. That is very clear.

People may get lost in some of the arcane and convoluted nature of the arguments we make on the floor, but the American people understand hypocrisy when they see it. Clearly, in 2005, when President George W. Bush was President, Senator REID made this statement:

> The duties of the Senate are set forth in the U.S. Constitution. Nowhere in that document does it say the Senate has a duty to give Presidential appointees a vote.

We actually agreed with Senator REID then. But to have him come to the floor and lambaste the chairman of the Judiciary Committee and others in a very personal way is surely beneath the dignity of this body and of any Senator. Somehow the Democratic leader feels as if the rules that apply to the rest of us simply don't apply to him. He comes to the floor and tries to provoke fights.

We actually have some important work to get done, and we will get it done on this Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, the so-called CARA Act.

I wish to make another point clear. Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee agreed in a united way to the same principle that our Democratic colleagues have argued for decades. During an election year, a Supreme Court nominee should not be confirmed. I previously had spoken about Senator JOE BIDEN making that point when he was chairman of the Judiciary Committee back in 1992. In 2005, Senator REID made that point. In 2007, Senator SCHUMER, the heir apparent to the Democratic leadership, made the same point. But, again, they feel that now the rules should apply differently under a Democratic majority than they do under a Republican majority.

We are not a rubberstamp for the President of the United States. The Constitution says as much. We can grant consent or we can withhold consent. I, for one, am for withholding consent to the confirmation of another liberal on the U.S. Supreme Court. We have seen the types of Justices that President Obama has nominated: Justice Kagan, Justice Sotomayor—clearly on the left in terms of the balance of power on the U.S. Supreme Court. To simply give President Obama the ability to appoint somebody who is going to change the balance of the Supreme Court to tilt left for the next 25 or 30 years is simply unacceptable.

So it really doesn't make any difference who the President nominates. I am sure they will be very much in the same mold as the two Justices that he has already nominated: Justice Kagan and Justice Sotomayor. I say that with respect to them as people. They are entitled to their opinions just as we are, but their decisions make fundamental changes in the United States. And it is not just for a term of office; it is literally for a generation. We are not going to stand by and allow President Obama—on his way out the door as a lameduck President—to change the balance of power on the Supreme Court for the next 25 to 30 years.

Madam President, now to a more pleasant topic. I actually have been encouraged, despite the disagreement we have with our friends across the aisle on the Supreme Court, to see that there is interest in actually getting some work done. I hope that does not cause us to fail to do our duty when it comes to places we agree on, such as the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act.

This bill has been the result of a lot of hard work and bipartisan discussions. I thank the leadership and chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Senator GRASSLEY, as he made this a priority. This wasn't just for Republicans who were proposing we move on this legislation. Senator KLOBUCHAR and Senator WHITEHOUSE on the Democratic side, and Senator PORTMAN, Senator TOOMEY and Senator AYOTTE on the Republican side brought this to everyone's attention, primarily because of the devastating impact of the opioid prescription drug abuse problem and the heroin problem in their parts of the country, but it affects the whole country.

I am thankful that the Democratic leadership understands that this legislation should not be taken as a partisan hostage because it is about helping to restore communities and families from the effects of drug addiction and it is about stemming the tide of a massive epidemic of opioid drug use and addiction that continues to claim lives across the country. It is an example of how in the 114th Congress, since the beginning of last year, we have actually been able to work together with our colleagues across the aisle.

Before that, under the leadership of the Senator from Nevada, this institution was deadlocked. It wasn't just when Republicans were in the majority. When Democrats were in the majority, even they could not get votes on amendments. It is pretty hard to explain that back home: Yes I am in the majority, but it doesn't make any difference in terms of my ability to get things done for the people I represent.

I actually am very pleased that we have been working our way through this legislation and other legislation that could help advance good policies that positively impact the lives of the American people on a daily basis.

Madam President, another effort we have worked on in the Judiciary Committee has to do with the intersection of mental illness and the criminal justice system. I recently met with a number of major county sheriffs, and I was introduced to the sheriff of Los Angeles County. He said: I am the largest mental health provider in the country—the sheriff of Los Angeles. The fact is, after we deinstitutionalized people with mental illness, basically there was no safety net for them, no continuing treatment for their needs, so they either end up in jails or living homeless on our streets.

I have introduced legislation, and Chairman GRASSLEY allowed us to have a hearing on it. I think it was very instructive. It was also very interesting. I say this to my friend from Maine: It is one of the few times we have actually had a consensus panel of witnesses. I think on some committees in the Senate that is a common practice, but usually in the Judiciary Committee things are so polarized that we rarely have a consensus panel. But we did on the issue of mental illness.

Reforming our country's mental health system has become an area of real bipartisan consensus as well, along with criminal justice reform. In order to protect our communities and to get help to the people with mental illness, we actually need to act.

What has also become clear is that many people who struggle with mental illness suffer from addiction and substance abuse. In many instances they self-medicate. They have a mental illness, they cannot deal with it, they are not getting the prescriptions they need from their doctors, so they end up drinking or taking drugs. These are so-called co-occurring disorders. It is estimated that more than 10 million Americans suffer from both addiction and mental health disorders—co-occurring disorders. Unfortunately, many mental health services such as specialty courts—drug courts, veterans courts, and the like—have operated on separate tracks and treat only one aspect of the problem. Someone with a history of drug abuse and mental illness may be sent to a drug court where their mental health needs are not taken into account. By definition, a drug court deals with people with drug problems, not necessarily mental health issues. When that happens, the underlying problem isn't addressed at all.

I have submitted an amendment to this legislation that will address this

common link between mental illness and substance abuse in the criminal justice system. It would direct existing programs to apply to co-occurring disorders as well, so that people suffering from both addiction and mental health problems are not seen and treated for just one of those problems. It seems as if it makes sense.

It would also expand substance abuse and transitional services to help people suffering from co-occurring disorders to receive the appropriate treatment they need in order to get back on their feet.

This amendment has been cosponsored by the chairman of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, the senior Senator from Tennessee, whom I thank for his important contribution to this effort. It also has the support of many stakeholders around the country, including the National Alliance on Mental Illness and the National Association of Police Organizations.

I hope, when the time comes, our colleagues will support this amendment as a commonsense measure that will help those suffering from both mental health and addiction problems, and I believe it will make the underlying bill that much stronger.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam President, I rise today to talk about the vacancy on the U.S. Supreme Court. Following the passing of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia—and our condolences to his family and our gratitude for all his hard work on behalf of his country—the time has now come for the President to nominate a new Justice and for the Senate to do its job and to review, consider, and either confirm or reject the President's nominee. That is our job.

Hoosiers don't ask much, but they do expect common sense. Do your job; treat people fairly. That is what we expect from neighbors, friends, and family, and it is certainly what we expect from those elected to serve us in Washington.

Back home in Indiana, we have a proud tradition of Senators who have embodied that approach by looking beyond partisanship and giving full and fair consideration to a President's nominee. They don't have to vote yes, they don't have to vote no, but we should at least listen and do our job. That is what the people of Indiana elected me to do. That is what people across the country elect my colleagues in the Senate to do, even when the timing is inconvenient for one side or the other.

The confirmation of a Supreme Court Justice should not be taken lightly, and it deserves careful consideration and open debate.

Senators, using their best judgment, are free to ultimately reject whomever the President nominates. But to refuse to hold a hearing? To refuse to consider any candidate? I know my colleague from Maine talk about Aristotle or Aquinas. They might be two good candidates for the Supreme Court. But to not consider any candidate before the President has even chosen a nominee is a dereliction of our most basic duty to faithfully serve our country.

Some of my colleagues have been steadfast in promising they would not meet with a nominee, let alone hold a hearing or allow a vote—would not even meet. Common sense tells you that is not right. I hope they will reconsider their position.

U.S. Senators, myself included, were elected to do a job, to do a job for our Nation—not only when it is convenient, but every day, every day we have been hired by the people back home to work here to stand for our country. That job includes considering and voting on nominees to the Supreme Court. Let's do the job we were elected to do.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

Mr. KING. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, there has been a great deal of discussion on the floor of the Senate about the current vacancy on the Supreme Court. Democrats want to fill it immediately. Republicans are much more interested in making sure the American people have an opportunity to weigh in on this very important decision.

This is a lifetime appointment—a lifetime appointment—and the stakes could not be higher for our country. So it is perfectly reasonable to wait for the next President to make this critical nomination. It is also exactly the precedent that Democrats in this body, in the Senate, created for situations just like this one.

First of all, let's remember it is not uncommon for there to be a vacancy on the Court. Sometimes the seat can be empty for even more than a year. There are eight Justices now. Two of them have already said they can handle the work that is available in front of them now with the seat vacant.

Justice Alito said so, as did Justice Breyer. Now Justice Breyer, of course, was appointed by President Clinton. When Justice Breyer was asked the other day about the death of Justice Scalia, he said: ''We'll miss him, but we'll do our work.'' He has said: ''For the most part, it will not change.'' So there is no urgency to fill this vacancy on the Supreme Court right now.

Second, we should acknowledge that the process of nominating and confirming a Supreme Court Justice has become very partisan. It has also become very political. Some Democrats in this Senate have spent the last three decades undermining the way these appointments used to be made. It started in 1987, when Senate Democrats launched an all-out assault against the nomination of Judge Robert Bork. It got so bad that the dictionary even created a new word. The word was to ''bork'' someone. It means to obstruct someone by ''systematically defaming or vilifying'' them.

Then, in 1992, Senate JOE BIDEN came down to floor of the Senate to explain his rule, the Biden rule, for Supreme Court nominations. He said that once the Presidential election is underway, ''action on a Supreme Court nomination must be put off until after the election campaign is over.'' That is the Biden rule.

You can't get any clearer than that. JOE BIDEN was the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee at that time when he announced the Biden rule. You know, he was not all that worried about having only eight Justices for a while. Senator BIDEN said that a temporary vacancy on the Court ''was quite minor compared to the cost that a nominee, the President, the Senate, and our nation would have to pay for what would assuredly be a bitter fight.''

Well, if the fight would have been bitter in 1992, it would be even worse today. Today, we have had another 24 years of Democrats continuing to politicize the process. Just days after George W. Bush became President, Senate Democrats vowed that they would use—in their words—''whatever means necessary'' to block the President's judicial nominations.

Democrats went so far as to try to filibuster a Supreme Court nominee. That was the first time in the history of the Senate that they ever tried to filibuster a Supreme Court nominee. It was the nomination of Justice Alito in 2006. The Democrats failed. Even though they failed, it set a new precedent.

Some of the leaders of that filibuster were Senator Barack Obama, now President; Senator Hillary Clinton, then-Secretary of State, now-Presidential candidate; and Senator JOE BIDEN, now-Vice President of the United States. Senator REID voted to filibuster as did current Senators DURBIN, LEAHY, and SCHUMER, all part of the filibuster of the Supreme Court nomination of Justice Alito by George W. Bush.

That is the history of how our confirmation process became so political; that is, three decades of Democrats politicizing the process. That is the precedent for where we are today. Those are the rules we will follow today.

On top of all of that, President Obama has spent 7 years ignoring Congress. He has made the confirmation process more confrontational and more contentious every step along the way. The President illegally made what he called recess appointments to the National Labor Relations Board. He even

did it though Congress was not in recess.

I use the word ''illegal'' because the Supreme Court struck down this action by President Obama. The vote was 9 to 0 that the President acted illegally. Even Democrats in Congress have said they think the President has gone too far with some of his Executive actions. So it is clear that Senate Democrats and President Obama have been injecting politics into the confirmation process for many years.

Today they seem to wish that they hadn't done it. Well, these are the rules they wrote and these are the standards they set. The Senate will follow these rules. We should wait until next year to take up this important decision. Let the American people consider it as part of deciding who to support in November. Let the new President make this lasting decision without the political influence of the election hanging over it. It is not the job of the U.S. Senate to rubberstamp the President's nomination. The job of the Senate is to protect the Constitution and to serve the American people. That is the oath every one of us has taken in this body. We have a process for nominating and confirming Justices to the Supreme Court. It is a system the Democrats created and now they should be willing to follow the rules they wrote themselves.

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.

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

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I rise to speak for the second time about the Supreme Court vacancy, and I do so not callously, not spontaneously but after 23 years of service on the committee. I like to believe I have some experience and some knowledge about how these matters have been handled in the past.

I truly believe we have an obligation to consider a President's judicial nominees no matter when, and I wish to speak about why that duty is so important—particularly for the Supreme Court—and the consequences of not fulfilling it. To be very candid, I am shocked at the supreme nature of what is happening because of what I believe its impact is going to be in the next year.

Since the Judiciary Committee started holding hearings on Supreme Court nominations in 1916, not a single nominee for a vacancy has been denied a hearing—ever. Even during Presidential election years, the Senate has done its job.

In 1988, President Reagan's final year in office, Senate Democrats confirmed Justice Kennedy. Three years later, 1991, Justice Thomas was confirmed after the Presidential campaign had begun. Democrats could have said no hearing, no committee work, no vote, no consideration by the full Senate, but that didn't happen. The nominations were processed and they were confirmed.

So why is it so important that we do our job? Why is an eight-member Court unable to function to the highest and best use of the U.S. Supreme Court? Ties in the Supreme Court create uncertainty in the law. Important legal questions go unanswered. The law varies then, throughout the country, and people and businesses often fail to receive justice. I wish to review just some of the examples where an incomplete Court was unable to levy justice. There are several examples of the importance of nine Justices, if one looks at recusals over the past few years.

No. 1, in 2010, Justice Kagan recused herself from Flores-Villar v. United States. This case was going to decide whether a United States citizen father must reside in the United States longer than a United States citizen mother in order to confer citizenship to his child born abroad. The court deadlocked 4 to 4. The result is a child in one part of the United States may be considered a citizen while another in the exact same situation in a different judicial circuit may not be a citizen. This issue remains unresolved today.

No. 2, in 2000, Justice O'Connor recused herself from Free v. Abbott Labs. The court should have determined how many plaintiffs in a Federal class action suit must meet a certain damage threshold for the case to proceed in Federal court. Again, the Court deadlocked 4 to 4. Because the case was left undecided, a later Eighth Circuit case—the circuit covering Iowa and other Midwest States—was thrown out. That meant 30,000 individuals claiming damages from a nearby refinery were denied justice in the Federal court; this, even though the company admitted releasing lead and other pollutants into the air. The issue was resolved by another Supreme Court case, but it was 5 years later and that was little consolation to families who didn't receive justice in Federal court in the interim period.

No. 3, in 2007, Chief Justice Roberts recused himself from Warner-Lambert v. Kent. This case was meant to decide whether individuals can sue for injuries caused by defective pharmaceuticals when the drugmaker allegedly hid information from Federal regulators. The 4-to-4 tie in that case failed to clarify the law, which still varies across the country today.

Let me give an example. Plaintiffs in the Sixth Circuit are now unable to sue for personal injury in this situation, while individuals harmed in the same way by the same drug in States covered by the Second Circuit are allowed to do so.

No. 4, in another case in 2007, New York City Board of Education versus Tom F., Justice Kennedy recused himself. The deadlocked Court failed to rule on whether special needs children must first attend public school before they receive tuition reimbursements to attend a private school better equipped to help them learn. This meant courts in different States treated these children differently. The issue was eventually resolved, 2 years later—2 vital years of schooling that children may have missed out on.

No. 5, in 1987, before Justice Kennedy took his seat, the Court heard U.S. v. Carpenter and Winans. The case, which came in advance of that year's stock market crash, involved defendants convicted of securities fraud based on allegations they misused information from a Wall Street Journal investment advice column. The Supreme Court failed to determine whether the action could be a basis for prosecution. The law was left unclear for 10 years, during which time some lower courts overturned criminal convictions for this sort of fraud.

These are just a handful of cases that illustrate how an incomplete Court can't fulfill its duty and why the Senate must do its job and fairly consider this President's nominee. To leave the Supreme Court in this situation for a year and some months is, in my view, unconscionable.

So why is it happening? I actually can't come up with any reason to refuse to review Obama's nominee other than politics. The only explanation is that Senate Republicans want to deny this President the ability to fulfill his constitutional obligations, and this isn't the only evidence of such targeted obstruction. It has been a sustained course of action for more than a decade now.

During the Clinton administration, more than 60 nominees to the Federal courts were blocked by a Republican Senate. Many weren't even given a hearing. A comparison with the final years of President Bush's term is particularly telling. In the 2 final years of the Bush Presidency, the Democratically controlled Senate confirmed 68 judicial nominees. That included 10 confirmations in September of his final year in office. So 8 months from now, back in the Bush years, the Democrats in control were confirming Bush appointments. So far, over President Obama's final 2 years, Republicans have allowed confirmation votes on only 16 judicial nominees. Think about that—11 confirmations in President Obama's second-to-last year versus 10 confirmations just 4 months before President Bush left the White House. I think the inequality here must sink in. People must begin to understand that.

The length of the process has also ballooned. Under President Bush, the median number of days between committee and floor votes was 14 days—2 weeks—for circuit court nominees and 19 days—3 weeks—for district court nominees.

For President Obama, the corresponding length between committee

and floor votes for circuit court nominees was 84 days—2½ months—and for district court nominees, 98 days. So we see immediately the difference between how the sides are handling judicial appointments of a President that may have been in the other party.

Most of these nominees were eventually confirmed by unanimous or near-unanimous votes. So that shows no need for extended delays. There were no problems with the nominees to deserve extended delays. When President Bush left office, there were 34 vacancies. That is a vacancy rate of 3.9 percent. Today there are more than 81 judicial vacancies, nearly 10 percent of all article III judges.

Republicans have clearly decided not to do their job, and the American justice system is going to suffer for it.

One thing I don't like to do or make is anything that can be described as a threat, but I will be candid with you because I don't think I am a firebrand. I don't think I am that partisan, but when this is done with the Supreme Court, it signals a whole other level of malevolent obstruction. One thing I have learned in my 20 years is what goes around comes around.

To do this, to keep this seat vacant for over a year because it is the fourth year of President Obama's term makes no sense at all. As I said, it is unconscionable. If you don't think an eight-member Court is a problem, you really don't need to take my word for it. Let's listen to the Justices themselves. Justice Scalia, in deciding not to recuse himself from a case in 2004, said the Court would be ''unable to resolve the significant legal issue presented by the case.'' He pointed to the Court's own recusal policy, which remains in effect today. It says that ''even one unnecessary recusal'' limits the Court's ability to function.

One can interpret from that that by not doing their job, the Republican side of this aisle is certainly limiting the Court's ability to function. I am not sure the other side should want that on their shoulders. I am not sure what may come up this next year—the degree to which justice would be denied in a 4-to-4 Court, but justice would certainly be denied, and it is probably going to happen.

Judge Rehnquist said it in 1972—when he warned that a divided Court ''would lay down one rule in Athens, and another rule in Rome.''

So here is the conclusion. A President is elected to a 4-year term—both sides of this aisle know that—but today Republicans are in effect saying that a Democratic President only gets 3 years of judicial confirmations if a Supreme Court vacancy comes before it. That is not what the Constitution says. All of us swore an oath to fulfill the Constitution, and I truly hope my Republican colleagues will stop, will think about this, will think about what will happen next year if this President is denied this appointment for the remainder of this year and a judgeship is certainly delayed way past that point. I think to deny this goes against both the spirit and the letter of our duties as spelled out in the Constitution of the United States.

Once again, I would say, please, Republicans in this House, do your job.

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

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

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I am pleased to see that on the floor we continue to make progress on the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. The legislation before us today, yesterday, and this week has been about how to deal with this growing problem we have around the country. It is at epidemic levels of heroin and prescription drug abuse, addiction, and overdoses.

Today, while we are talking about this legislation on the floor of the Senate, we expect over 100 Americans will die—die from overdoses of addiction, overdoses of heroin or prescription drugs. This is a problem that doesn't just affect my State of Ohio, although we are one of those States that is most severely impacted. It affects every single State represented by everyone in this Chamber. That is why, over the past few years, you have seen this body together, Republicans and Democrats alike, to address the problem.

Senator WHITEHOUSE and I have been the coauthors of this effort, but so many others have been involved. Senator AYOTTE, Senator KLOBUCHAR, Senator FEINSTEIN—who is on the floor right now—have been supportive of the legislation but also improved the legislation with an amendment which was accepted earlier this week dealing with the international drug cartels. There is an effort in this body to take on this issue, not in a partisan way but in a totally nonpartisan way.

Last week I was in Ohio meeting with groups, talking about various issues. Every single place I went this issue came up. I was on a plant tour, and people talked to me about it. We had a townhall meeting at that factory. At the end of the townhall meeting—after talking about taxes, energy, health care policy, and other issues—I asked for a simple show of hands of how many people have been affected where their families or friends have been affected by this new opiate addiction issue, heroin and prescription drugs. Half the hands in the room went up. They went up because this is something that is tearing at our families and our communities. It is devastating so many of our communities. The cost to the taxpayers is also tremendous.

I went to a hospital and what they wanted to talk about was how the emergency rooms are being filled with people who are overdosing or abusing drugs. I have been to three different hospitals in our State that are doing amazing things to care for those babies who are being born with addictions. There has been a huge increase in my State of babies who were born with an addiction to opiates because of their mothers being addicted during the pregnancy. They have to take these babies—some of whom are so small they can fit into the palm of your hand—through the withdrawal process. We don't know what the long-term consequences are for many of these babies because this is such a new issue, but we know this is something that is tearing at our communities. It is time to address this issue. There has been a recognition of that, and I am very encouraged by the progress we have made this week on this legislation. I hope we can find a way to get to the final amendments and get the legislation passed because it is urgent we deal with this.

The House of Representatives has their own legislation. It is also called CARA—Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. It is bipartisan also. We believe if we can pass this bill with a strong vote—and we had an 89-to-0 vote to get on the bill itself to move to the legislation, which was very encouraging—Senator WHITEHOUSE and I believe we will get a strong vote in the House as well, and we can get it to the President's desk for his signature and begin to reverse this trend.

The legislation is something that went through a unique process around here, which is bipartisan or even nonpartisan from the start and a process of bringing in experts from all around the country. Rather than us saying we know all the answers, we are going to write this legislation, we said let's hear from others. Senator WHITEHOUSE and I, Senator AYOTTE, Senator KLOBUCHAR and others held a series of summits here in Washington. We brought in people. Many of us have done this in our States as well, but here in Washington alone we had five of these conferences in 2014 and 2015. We brought experts in from around the country, but we also relied on expertise from the administration.

In April of 2014, we held a forum on criminal justice and how it is affected by this issue and treatment and alternatives to incarceration. One of the things this legislation does is it encourages diversion out of the criminal justice system for those who are addicts and gets them into treatment. It was an excellent forum. It featured Michael Botticelli. In my view, he has been a very effective Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. He is called the drug czar. This is within the White House.

Michael Botticelli came as a representative of the White House but so did a representative from the Drug Enforcement Agency and gave his great input.

In July of 2014, we held another forum. This was on how women are impacted by this drug epidemic, looking at addiction and treatment responses. We talked about pregnant women being addicted and their babies. Again, this forum featured Michael Botticelli, who is Director of the White House Office of Drug Control Policy.

In December 2014, at the end of the year, we held another forum. This was on the science of addiction and how we can potentially address the collateral consequences of addiction. This forum featured Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse in the Obama administration. It also included the Department of Justice and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration officials. SAMHSA was there. DOJ was there. By the way, again, Director Botticelli was there as well. I appreciate him coming to that forum, which was very helpful to us.

Last year, in April of 2015, we held a forum on our youth and how we can better promote drug prevention as well as to develop communities of recovery for those who are suffering from addiction. Prevention and education is a big part of our legislation. Clearly, we need to do a better job to get people to make the right decisions to avoid getting into the funnel of addiction in the first place. This forum featured officials from the Office of National Drug Control Policy in the Obama administration. It also had officials from the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Lastly, in July of 2015, we held a forum on the impact of substance abuse and PTSD on our veterans. It focused a lot on the issue of addiction and the high rates we see sometimes of mental health and addiction coming from some of our returning veterans. This forum featured one of the giants in this field, GEN Barry McCaffrey. General McCaffrey and I have worked together since his days as Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy in the Clinton administration. He is not just a giant in this field, but he gave us great input as to how to write good legislation to help us with regard to veterans courts, which we have as part of this legislation where veterans can get the help they need to get their lives back on track. That forum also featured officials from the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

From all these participants in this process, we received a lot of great feedback. It helped guide us as we wrote this legislation. In fact, we went back and forth with legislative language with all these experts in the Obama administration, as well as experts from around the country. This legislation is supported by over 130 groups—including those representing people who were in the trenches—providing treatment, providing services on prevention, law enforcement, and doctors. Those who are involved directly in this issue have given us a lot of guidance, but that included the expertise of these experts in the Obama administration. I am appreciative for that expertise and for their support of our efforts.

Because it was such an inclusive process, because it was a bipartisan process, because of the encouragement and the assistance we received from the drug experts in the Obama administration, when we introduced this bill, we actually said: OK. Here is our final product. After the back-and-forth on all the legislative language and with all the experts, this bill received a lot of support immediately on a bipartisan basis.

As I said earlier, indeed, 130 national anti-drug groups now support it in part because they helped write it, in part because some of those who might not have been intimately involved in the process are looking at this problem and realizing this is a solution that will really help.

We also have dozens of groups from my home State of Ohio that support it, in addition to the 130 national groups, from the Fraternal Order of Police to the National Attorneys General Association, to the folks who are involved day-to-day in helping to deal with this issue at their local level.

I believe it was the day before yesterday that we received a Statement of Administration Policy from the political officials at the White House on the CARA bill, and I have talked about how the administration and their experts have been so helpful, but despite all the work they have done to support this bill, the White House did not issue a Statement of Administration Policy that supported the legislation. It didn't oppose the legislation, but instead it said that the drug epidemic would not be greatly affected by this legislation unless there was substantial new funding provided. This is kind of incredible given that this is the legislation we all worked on together. I know there is a difference between the political folks at the White House and the people who actually know the issue and are experts on the issue, but I hope we can get a strong statement of administration support for a bill that was drafted with them on a bipartisan basis with myself, Senator WHITEHOUSE, Senator KLOBUCHAR, and others, but we will see.

I support additional funding over and above the $80 million of new funding that CARA provides for, and not just for this year but for next year and the year after that and the year after that. It is an authorization bill that is extremely important. I supported the Shaheen amendment yesterday, but it is factually wrong to say, as some of my colleagues have claimed and the White House seems to be saying, that there is not funding for these CARA programs. In fact, we have already appropriated, as my colleagues know, significantly more spending for this opioid problem for this fiscal year that we are in. Not a penny of that has been spent yet, by the way—over $120 million of additional spending. That $120 million of additional spending is targeted on ways to spend the money more wisely through CARA because we worked with the appropriators and the Judiciary Committee to ensure that was the case.

Again, having said that, I would have loved to have seen more funding over and beyond that provided by an amendment that was offered by my colleague Senator SHAHEEN yesterday because I think that would have helped even more, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't strongly support the underlying CARA bill. In fact, my colleagues who endorsed it and voted with us, as well as my coauthor Senator WHITEHOUSE and others, agree with that because this bipartisan bill ensures that more Federal resources will be devoted to evidence-based education, treatment, and recovery programs that we know actually work. It is not just throwing money at the problem. This is actually legislation that we know works to address the problem based on all the background I just mentioned about getting all the expertise.

Again, these groups out there that are in the trenches every day working on this issue are the ones who will tell you why it is going to work, but what they will say is it is going to help these young mothers battling addiction. It will help those veterans who return home from duty and desperately need our help. It will help young people make the right decision. It will help that teenager struggling with drug abuse. It will help in terms of dealing with this problem we have right now where people can't get treatment because there is not enough access to treatment. It will help in terms of ensuring that we get prescription drugs off the bathroom shelves so they are not being used to get people addicted to opioids and then move on to heroin. It will be helpful to ensure that we have a drug monitoring program nationally so we know who is being overprescribed and who is not. These are changes in law that are part of this legislation.

Again, I thank the experts in the Obama administration who deal with this issue every day and strongly support CARA. On January 27, 2016—so at the end of January this year—the Judiciary Committee held a hearing on our bill. I was able to testify, as well as others, including experts. Here is what some of the leading administration experts said. First, Michael Botticelli—again, a guy who I think has been a very effective Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy at the White House—said:

> There is clear evidence that a comprehensive response looking at multidimensional aspects of this that are embedded in the CARA Act are tremendously important. We know we need to do more, and I think that all of those components put forward in the bill are critically important to make headway in terms of this epidemic.

Again, that was the Director of ONDCP.

Dr. Nora Volkow, the Director of the administration's National Institute on Drug Abuse, and a real expert, said:

We support the comprehensive program delineated, and it is one of the strategies to address the problem.

Here is Ms. Kana Enomoto. She is the Acting Administrator of SAMSHA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. She said:

At SAMSHA we are so excited to be able to implement programs like medication-assisted treatment, prescription drug and opioid addiction, which Congress appropriated in 2015 and then another increase in 2016, which is very similar to some of the programs that were described in the CARA Act. Thank you, Senator Whitehouse, for your leadership on this issue and continued support of our mission. We believe that the public health approach of the CARA Act is vitally important to moving forward on this issue.

The next statement I have is by Mr. Milione. He is the Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Drug Enforcement Administration Office of Diversion Control. He said:

I am happy to work with you or anyone on any legislation that will help with this epidemic.

Again, I am thankful for these experts in the Obama administration who have put politics aside to work to support CARA. They helped us to come up with better legislation, and they support it because they know it will help support education and prevention so we can stop drug abuse before it begins. They support CARA because they know it will help with treatment and recovery and will help to reduce overdoses which will help to save lives. They support CARA because they know it will help our veterans as well as women and babies who are suffering from addiction. They also support CARA because they know there are more than 130 national groups out there that understand the importance of this bill and support it, including the National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers, Faces and Voices of Recovery, Children's Health, Children's Hospital Association, the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids, Fraternal Order of Police—again, I thank our law enforcement for stepping up on this—the National District Attorneys Association, and the Major Counties Sheriff's Association.

I understand that some folks in Washington like to play politics with everything around here, but politics has never been a part of this bill. It has been inclusive from the start and it has been bipartisan from the start. We are here to help those suffering from addiction and to save lives, and that is exactly what this measure will do. Let's get on with it and pass this legislation so we can get it to the President's desk for signature and it can begin to help.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order to call up Manchin amendment No. 3420; that at 1:45 p.m. today the Senate vote in relation to the Manchin amendment No. 3420; and that there be no second-degree amendments in order to the amendment prior to the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Connecticut.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, last Thursday I was on the floor honoring the victims of the mass shooting in Kalamazoo, MI, another shooting spree that left six people dead and two others injured, and on that very same day another shooting spree broke out in Kansas that forever changed another town—another community in this country like the change that has overcome Sandy Hook, CT, since that fateful day in December of 2012.

This was a shooting spree in Kansas that spanned several miles in nearly 30 minutes. Three people were killed. It could have been a lot more. Fourteen were wounded. The shooting spree took place in two locations as well as the Kansas workplace.

The gunman had multiple felony convictions which prohibited him from buying a firearm, but he used his former girlfriend as a straw purchaser to buy yet another military-style semi-automatic weapon that he used in the shootings. It sounds a lot like many of the other shootings I talked about on the floor.

As has been the case, I try to come down to the floor, seemingly every week, to tell the stories of who these victims are because the numbers don't seem to be moving my colleagues—31,000 a year, 2,600 a month, and 86 a day are being killed by guns in this country. My hope is that by learning who these people are and learning the ripples of tragedy that unfold after a family member is killed by guns, that maybe that psychology and connection to the emotion of these shootings will move my colleagues to do something—anything at this point—to address this epidemic.

Brian Sadowsky was 44 years old when he was killed in the shooting. He was one of three people who were killed at their workplace, Excel Industries, in Hesston, KS. Brian was remembered by his coworkers as a very outgoing guy who was always telling jokes, always fun to be around, and had a biting sense of humor. He rabidly rooted for the Pittsburgh Steelers. He wore Pittsburgh Steelers paraphernalia and gear to work almost every day. He would drop whatever he was doing in order to help his friends who were in need.

A friend of Brian's remembered him as being ''a little rough around the edges'' at times, but he was the kind soul who was ''always there to help. He was a big teddy bear once you got to know him.''

His friends said he was a recovering addict who was clean and sober for many years and was instrumental in helping a lot of others overcome addiction.

Renee Benjamin was 30 years old when she was killed. Her friend remembered her by saying that ''she's smart, she's beautiful. She was dedicated to Excel. She loved that job. She loved the people. I remember the way she loved people.''

''If you ever saw someone smile from the inside out, she was an inside out person,'' one of her friends remembered.

Another friend said:

She is a person who always gave her all into whatever she did and whoever she loved. She was so smart, but shy about it. She was so funny, so beautiful, inside and out. She was my best friend. We shared everything. We shared a life. . . . All she wanted was to love and be loved.

Josh Higbee was just a year older. He was 31. People who knew Josh said he was a loving, hard-working man. He loved to fish and spend time with his fiance and his 4-year-old son. His older brother said that Josh was '' 'Mr. Fix-It.' He loved tractors and toy cars, anything automotive. He was a car guy. He liked to work with his hands.''

His sister-in-law said that Josh was ''taught to be a very loving, kind man. He has a son that he adores, takes care of. . . . Josh would give you the shirt off his back and worked long, hard hours to take care of his family.''

We pay a lot of attention to these victims of mass shootings because they tend to make the news. We see them on TV, but every single day there are 86 people who are being killed by guns. A lot of them are suicides, but many of them are homicides. It is happening all across this country, and not all of them make the national news.

Andre Lamont O'Neal, Jr., died earlier this year in Louisville, KY. Andre was 8 years old and his babysitter was grilling and also had a gun in his pocket. He had slippery fingers, and when he attempted to remove the gun from his pocket, it accidentally fired. It struck Andre's arm and chest. His babysitter panicked and apparently put Andre in a car and took him to a nearby hospital, but it was too late.

Andre's father, as you can imagine, was overwhelmed. He was ''a good little boy,'' he told reporters.

A few weeks later, Nicholas Hawkins, 19 years old and from Winfield, AL, told his mother that someone was trying to kill him. That was the last time anybody heard from Nicholas. Four days later his body was found shot to death.

He left high school because of bullying and was only 2 weeks away from completing his GED. He intended to go into cosmetology or a related field. He loved to dance, sing, write music, and play guitar. He was good with hair and makeup and described as very funny, quirky, and had a bubbly personality. His friends said he often stole the show.

Every day 86 people die in this country. You don't hear about all of them because this has just kind of become the wallpaper of American news.

Shootings have become routine. This doesn't happen anywhere else in the world, and I just want to finish by talking a little bit about this unfortunate, tragic American exceptionalism.

America has 4.4 percent of the world's population, but we have 42 percent of the civilian-owned guns in the world. We have 4 percent of the population, but nearly half of all of the guns are in this country. It used to be that about half of Americans own guns. Today only about one-third of Americans own guns, but a small number of Americans own a lot of weapons. There are more high-powered guns, like the one that was used in Kansas, than ever before.

Why does this matter? Well, it is because the United States also has more gun deaths than any other nation in the developed world, and it is not even close. This chart shows the figures of homicides by firearm per 1 million people. Australia, New Zealand, and Germany have less than two. Switzerland gets all the way up to 7.7. In the United States it is 29.7. There is no other country in the world that comes close to the United States when it comes to the number of homicides in this country. This isn't aggregate numbers. This is per 1 million people.

The reason I show you these two charts is that when you put it together, it tells a pretty interesting and simple story. Here is the chart correlating guns per 100,000 people and gun-related deaths per 100,000 people. Here is the line of correlation. It is a pretty simple story.

With a handful of outliers such as Argentina and Cyprus, the story is that the more guns you have in a country, the more gun homicides are going to occur. Here is the United States on the line, but it is an outlier in terms of the number of guns and the number of deaths—simply an extrapolation of a story that all of our other first world competitors could tell by themselves. This rebuts this ridiculous mythology by the gun industry, which tells us that if you have more guns, you are going to be safer. The solution in Sandy Hook was just that the Sandy Hook Elementary School didn't have enough firearms. If all the teachers had had weapons, that shooter would have been killed, and the best way to stop a shooter from attacking you is to arm yourself. That is not what the evidence tells us. The evidence tells us: The more guns there are in a community, the more people get killed.

I will show at another time this same chart on a State-by-State basis, and it will tell you the exact same story. A State that has more firearms has more gun homicides. You are more likely to be the victim of gun violence if you have a gun in your house than if you don't have a gun in your house.

Now, the Second Amendment is an incredibly important, vital, integral piece of the fabric of the U.S. Constitution, and I honor people's decisions to buy a weapon in order to protect themselves. Some people live in violent places. Some people live in very isolated places, and they have made that choice, and that is theirs to make. Of course, there are millions of Americans who own weapons in order to hunt, in order to shoot for sport, a pastime they enjoy and have the right to. But they should purchase those weapons with the understanding that there is no data that tells them they are safer with a weapon in their arm, no data that suggests that the more guns you have in a particular place, the less likely there are to be homicides and gun deaths. It is exactly the opposite.

Every single day there are 86 people who are killed in this country from guns, 2,600 a month, 31,000 a year—another mass shooting in Kansas, another one in Kalamazoo. My entire point is just to say that at some point we have to recognize that our silence has become complicity in these murders. If we are not willing to forge political consensus in this session on legislation that changes gun laws, then at least let's make a commitment to fix our mental health system to make sure law enforcement has the resources they need, to make sure we make straw purchasing illegal so the method by which the shooter in Kansas got the gun has consequences at the Federal level, potentially, as well as at the State level. Let us do something to honor the thousands of voices of victims that mount by the day.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The Senator from Connecticut.

MAHAN AIR

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I begin by calling attention to a private Iranian airline, designated by the U.S. Department of Treasury for its support for terrorism and funneling of weapons to Hezbollah and to the Assad regime in Syria. This airline continues to operate and even expand its international business network, despite tough words from the administration. But this kind of tough language is insufficient.

The time to impose sanctions on Mahan Air is now. The time to impose sanctions on Mahan Air is clearly now. I have called on the administration in a letter, which I helped to lead and on which I am joined by a number of my colleagues, in late February—February 29—to the Secretary of the Treasury. Sanctions might be forthcoming against this airline if this body were to approve Adam Szubin to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, but so far we have failed to do so. His confirmation has been blocked. I regret it. Whether or not he is confirmed, sanctions should be imposed on this airline. Mahan Air relies on a host of local partners who provide financial and other services for it to maintain this robust international flight network.

So taking this action against Mahan Air will not only send a signal, it will end actions by Mahan Air that are against international law and support terrorism and the funneling of weapons to some terrorist groups that can do harm to the United States as well as to our allies and partners abroad.

Mr. President, I also want to talk about the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. Hopefully, we will vote today in support of it. It is a great bipartisan bill. I am privileged to have worked on it as a member of the Judiciary Committee. I thank all of the members of that committee and others, most especially Senator WHITEHOUSE and Senator LEAHY, for incorporating provisions that I have helped to offer in this bill.

We heard from our colleagues around the country about the public health crisis that we face today. It is more than a crisis. It is a hurricane—almost like a public health hurricane—a natural disaster that requires us to act now. Abuse and addiction are crippling our communities, shattering our families, carrying enormous financial and human costs. The overdose deaths have steadily increased. They now surpass automobile accidents as the leading cause of injury-related deaths for Americans between the age of 25 and 64.

The United States consumes over 80 percent of prescription opioids, even though we make up only 4.6 percent of the world's population. In Connecticut, I have held roundtables across our State, and I hear again and again the tragic stories of young people who begin taking powerful painkillers when they break a leg or a wrist in a sports injury or when they have wisdom teeth removed and they receive a prescription for 30 days. They only need 3 days' worth of painkillers, if they need them at all. But the overprescription and the abuse that results from it often leads to addiction.

The gateway to addiction is these powerful painkillers that provide the beginnings of the problem. One university counselor wrote to me recently:

> When I first began this position 14 years ago, it was extremely uncommon to be working with a student who abused a substance besides alcohol. Today, I have a recovery house and a program full of students battling addiction from [prescription opioids].

I have heard from mothers and families, from teachers and counselors who have struggled to find quality substance abuse treatment programs and behavioral health services for their loved ones. One mother wrote to me about her two sons. Some 8 years ago, her oldest son died from a heroin overdose after a prescription program released him early. Her younger son continues to struggle with addiction but was recently told by his insurance company that he lacked a long enough history of substance abuse to qualify for inpatient treatment.

We must address these problems, and the solution is multifaceted. Supporting law enforcement is part of the solution, with resources and with other measures that will enable interdiction

of the supplies of heroin and cracking down on the illicit supplies of painkillers. But law enforcement has told me, as a former colleague, that we are not going to arrest our way out of this problem. The jails and prisons alone do not provide a solution.

There is a need for more treatment and services. I hear that point again and again and again, but that source of solution alone will not be the panacea. There is no one solution. Education for our doctors and providers and prescribers is part of what is needed. Again, alone, no single solution is sufficient.

I want to thank the bill sponsors for incorporating the provision that I wrote with Senator COATS, the Expanding Access to Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs Act. This provision would allow nurse practitioners and physician assistants to access the information they need. Specifically, they would be able to access State prescription drug monitoring programs to consult a patient's prescription opioid history and determine if that patient has a history of addiction or is receiving multiple prescriptions from multiple sources. It is critical that we recognize the key role that nurse practitioners and physician assistants play in curbing prescription drug abuse and diversion.

I propose a number of amendments that attack other elements of this problem. I am going to continue to advocate for them, whether they are in the final package or not—and some of them may well be. I will continue the effort to make them real and adopt them as law, whether or not they are included in this measure.

Over and again, we have heard that many struggling with addiction start by abusing those prescription drugs after receiving a legitimate prescription. That is why Senator MARKEY and I have submitted amendment No. 3382, which would cut down on overprescribing opioids by requiring providers, when they apply for a license from the DEA to prescribe these controlled substances, to first complete education programs so they are encouraged to adopt responsible prescribing practices. Those practices can be as simple as keeping track and scrutinizing the use of these painkillers. Every licensee, every provider, every nurse practitioner, everyone writing out a slip of paper that enables somebody to purchase these powerful prescription painkillers would have to take a course and complete this training.

In Blumenthal amendment No. 3327, a separate measure that I am proposing as ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, there would be better access to naloxone, known as Narcan, by veterans. We have seen how naloxone or Narcan is a lifesaver. It can bring people back from the brink of death. There should be more of it. It should be more available to our police, firefighters, and first responders on the streets of Connecticut and in neighborhoods and communities across the country. It is insufficiently available. It has skyrocketed in price, and there have been shortages. But I have seen how the opioid epidemic has affected, particularly, our veterans, and often, again, with overprescriptions in certain parts of the country.

We have moved to address that problem. In Wisconsin, for example, and with the great help of Senator BALDWIN, my colleague on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, we have worked to craft legislation that will help contain and cut that abusive prescription of opioids. I believe that this measure will give information to veterans and the tools they need also to prevent deaths in case of an overdose.

Much of the work of the Veterans' Affairs Committee is focused on the opioid epidemic and the Jason Simcakoski Memorial Opioid Safety Act we are working to pass into law. But safe prescribing of opioids is vital because many veterans, even when legitimately prescribed, have serious pain issues that can lead to abuse once those issues are addressed.

So I have filed this amendment that would eliminate the requirement that veterans pay a copay for naloxone kits and for education for providers as to how to use them. In other words, the providers will provide education, along with providing the prescriptions, as to how to use the Narcan kits that veterans could receive without any copay. Naloxone is necessary for those first responders, and the underlying bill includes provisions that would help to provide it, but this measure would focus particularly on veterans, where the need is great and growing greater.

I wish to point out that the cost of this measure would be less than $100,000 per year. The savings in dollars long term would vastly exceed that amount, and the savings in lives more than justifies this, even without the savings in dollars. We are talking here about the ability to save veterans' lives. We have an obligation to leave no veteran behind, to keep faith with our veterans, and to make sure that a minimum amount of spending will enable the saving of lives.

I appreciate again the work of my colleagues in crafting this bill. I hope we will move forward in passing it and that the amendments I have suggested will be adopted to strengthen it even further.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATION OF ROBERTA JACOBSON

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, it has now been 7 months since the United States has had an Ambassador to Mexico. As we all know, Mexico is our third largest trading partner. Bilateral trade totals more than half a trillion dollars. There is more than $1 billion in two-way trader exchanges between the United States and Mexico every day.

The border States obviously enjoy a close relationship and robust trade with Mexico. My home State of Arizona exports about $9.2 billion in goods every year. Arizona has expanded its trade relationship with Mexico by reopening a trade office in Mexico City. Mexico has reciprocated by opening an office in Arizona. Yet, for more than half of the year, we have not had a representative in place with the Mexican Government to deal with issues of mutual cooperation, issues of importance and concern.

The bilateral relationship between the United States and Mexico is not the only issue of importance, obviously, between our two countries. Transportation issues, security threats, national resource management, and environmental issues are just a few of the fronts on which we can cooperate with Mexico, and such cooperation requires a close partnership between our countries. The longer we go without an Ambassador there, the more this partnership will suffer.

The relationship between the United States and Mexico has historically been important, and previous administrations have acknowledged this by appointing top-notch candidates to serve as our envoy to Mexico. The current nominee to serve in Mexico is no exception to this historical trend. As a career member of the Senior Executive Service, Roberta Jacobson has spent more than three decades working on Latin American policy for Presidents on both sides of the aisle. She is obviously fluent in Spanish. She has earned the respect of her colleagues. I can attest to her professionalism and her experience. She was reported out of the Foreign Relations Committee by a vote of 12 to 7 in November; yet the post with Mexico City remains open 3 months later.

Our relationship with Mexico is far too important to let this post go vacant any longer, particularly when we have a qualified candidate who has been vetted by the Foreign Relations Committee and reported to the Senate with a majority of its members. I urge the Senate to take up this matter expeditiously.

I yield back.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 3420 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3378

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 3420.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from West Virginia [Mr. MANCHIN] proposes an amendment numbered 3420 to amendment No. 3378.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To strengthen consumer education about the risks of opioid abuse and addiction)

On page 14, line 10, insert ''consumers,'' after ''patients,''.

On page 14, line 12, strike ''prescribed.'' and insert ''prescribed, including opioid and methadone abuse. Such education and awareness campaigns shall include information on the dangers of opioid abuse, how to prevent opioid abuse including through safe disposal of prescription medications and other safety precautions, and detection of early warning signs of addiction.''.

On page 16, line 22, strike ''or''.

On page 17, line 2, insert ''or'' at the end.

On page 17, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

''(C) a sudden increase in opioid-related deaths, as documented by local data;

On page 18, line 23, strike ''1997.'' and insert ''1997, and may also include an evaluation of the effectiveness at reducing abuse of opioids, methadone, or methamphetamines.''.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to vote in favor of my amendment No. 3420 to the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2015.

As my colleagues know, our country is facing a prescription drug epidemic. Every one of our States—all 50—is having a horrific problem. The CARA Act that we are working on and are about to pass is a good start to addressing this crisis, which is why I am a proud cosponsor.

My amendment simply does what you would think common sense would already entail. My amendment improves the bill by helping those on the frontlines of this terrible epidemic provide their communities with the information they need to help stop the spread of opioid addiction and help seek treatment.

It will better enable us to educate individuals about the dangers of opioid abuse, practices to help prevent opioid abuse, including the safe disposal of unused medication, and how to detect the early warning signs of addiction.

This amendment will help to save lives by raising awareness about the dangers of prescription opioid medications to prevent opiate addiction in the first place and ensuring that loved ones will know how to help when a friend or family member becomes addicted.

We have over 2 million Americans who are addicted to opioids. Many of these individuals began the road to addiction with a seemingly innocent prescription and little or no warning about the dangers from their physicians. Or it began when a friend offered a pill that they thought couldn't be that dangerous because it was prescribed by their doctor.

There is simply too little understanding about the dangers of these drugs. Too many people get sucked into opioid addiction because they don't understand the risks. Likewise, the people close to them don't recognize the signs of addiction or know how to access the resources to help their loved ones.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time for debate has expired.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 30 additional seconds.

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

Mr. MANCHIN. I thank Senator MURRAY, Senator ALEXANDER, Senator GRASSLEY, and all the people who have helped me in considering this bipartisan amendment with a bipartisan piece of legislation.

If we want to stop opioid addiction, we ought to start by preventing it. Preventing it starts with information and education that people do not have today. This helps every one of us in all parts of this great country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question occurs on agreeing to the amendment.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) would have voted ''yea'' and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) would have voted ''yea.''

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 90, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 31 Leg.]

YEAS—90

Alexander	Brown	Cochran
Ayotte	Burr	Collins
Baldwin	Cantwell	Coons
Barrasso	Capito	Corker
Bennet	Cardin	Cotton
Blumenthal	Carper	Crapo
Blunt	Casey	Daines
Booker	Cassidy	Donnelly
Boozman	Coats	Durbin
Enzi	Klobuchar	Risch
Ernst	Lankford	Rounds
Feinstein	Leahy	Sasse
Fischer	Lee	Schatz
Flake	Manchin	Schumer
Franken	Markey	Scott
Gillibrand	McCain	Sessions
Graham	McConnell	Shaheen
Grassley	Menendez	Shelby
Hatch	Merkley	Stabenow
Heinrich	Mikulski	Sullivan
Heitkamp	Moran	Tester
Heller	Murkowski	Thune
Hirono	Murphy	Tillis
Hoeven	Murray	Udall
Inhofe	Paul	Vitter
Isakson	Perdue	Warner
Johnson	Peters	Warren
Kaine	Portman	Whitehouse
King	Reed	Wicker
Kirk	Reid	Wyden

NOT VOTING—10

Boxer	McCaskill	Sanders
Cornyn	Nelson	Toomey
Cruz	Roberts	
Gardner	Rubio	

The amendment (No. 3420) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 365; that the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, on behalf of myself and Senator RUBIO, from the great State of Florida, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized in morning business for such time as I may consume.

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

NOMINATION OF ROBERTA JACOBSON

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, my good friend, Senator JEFF FLAKE from Arizona, appeared here just an hour or so before and also spoke on the issue that I am going to speak about today. That issue is the ambassadorship to Mexico and the woman who has been nominated by President Obama, Roberta Jacobson. Senator FLAKE made a very strong case. It has been a pleasure working with him in a bipartisan way. We believe this nomination has very strong bipartisan support, and we look forward to working together to get this to the floor and get an up-or-down vote.

So I rise again today to urge support for Roberta Jacobson. She is a dedicated public servant. She is more than ready to be our Ambassador to Mexico. The Los Angeles Times has called Roberta Jacobson ''among the most qualified people ever to be tapped to represent the U.S. in Mexico.''

We have a distinguished candidate, a career member of the Senior Executive Service. She is ready to serve. We have strong support for her on both sides of the aisle. What we need now is an up-or-down vote. Once again, we failed to get one.

It is hard to explain this dysfunction when I talk to my constituents in New Mexico. They just don't understand this kind of dysfunction. They don't understand it, and, frankly, neither do I. We are a border State. This is a critical position. It is critical to our security, and it is critical to our economy.

Earlier today, Senators FLAKE, KLOBUCHAR, HEINRICH, and I met with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce about the urgent need to confirm this nomination. Our business leaders in New Mexico, Arizona, and every other State in our country are telling us they need an ambassador in Mexico City. We have ongoing border-related business issues that need attention. From time to time, we will call on the Mexican government to take some action, to work with us on coordinating with ports of entry, infrastructure, and other important issues. We are at a disadvantage without an advocate for America in Mexico City. It is very frustrating.

This is not the first time we have faced this kind of dysfunction. I pushed for reform of the Senate rules in the last two Congresses, and we did change the rules to allow majority votes for executive and judicial nominees to the lower courts. But that does no good if they remain blocked, and that is what is happening in this Congress. The line gets longer and longer of perfectly qualified nominees who are denied a vote, denied an opportunity to be heard.

Roberta Jacobson was approved by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee months ago with bipartisan support. Yet the weeks go by, and still we wait. What is holding up her nomination? It isn't her qualifications; those aren't the problem. A big part of the problem is Presidential politics and the policy differences with the administration over her work with Cuba.

This year, we reopened diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba. As the Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Roberta helped negotiate on behalf of the administration. After 50 years of failed policy toward Cuba, we have opened a 21st-century relationship with the people of Cuba, one that is already seeing change as more Cubans enter the private sector. And more Americans, who are our best diplomats, continue to increase their engagement with the Cuban people. I congratulate the President for leading this historic change. Some disagree. I understand that. But their objection is with the President's Cuba policy. We are talking here about Mexico and an important position that has been unfilled since last summer because a few Senators would rather return to the failed policies of yesterday and are using Roberta to make a political point.

FAIR ELECTIONS

Mr. President, just when we think things can't get any worse, they do. Now a seat on the Supreme Court is empty, and the majority leader is actually arguing that it should stay empty for over a year, no matter who is nominated by the President. This isn't governing; this is a failure to do one's job.

Is it any wonder that the American people are frustrated, fed up with political games, with obstruction in the Senate, with special deals for insiders, and with campaigns that are being sold to the highest bidder? They see this obstruction as just another example of how our democracy is being taken away from the people.

Each year we have a Student Leadership Institute in my State. High school juniors and seniors attend to learn about and discuss the challenges affecting our State and the Nation. I always look forward to meeting with these bright, young people. They are smart and committed, and they raise thoughtful points about how government works and how sometimes it doesn't work. One thing we talked about this year was how important it is to listen. This is one of the most underrated virtues, especially in politics—stating your views but also listening to the views of others. I am always optimistic when I see students engaged in that process. I only wish we could see more of it in Washington.

The art of politics is standing your ground, but also finding common ground and listening to the American people. Our democracy depends on every voice being heard and on every vote being counted. We are losing that. We have to get it back or we will continue to pay a heavy price. We can be sure of one thing: Beyond all the money, beyond all the special interests, these students and all Americans deserve to be heard, and they deserve a democracy that works.

Campaigns should be about the best ideas, not the biggest checkbooks or rigged districts. The U.S. Supreme Court created a Wild West of campaign finance regulations with their decision in Citizens United and their 2014 McCutcheon decision. It opened a fire sale of super PACs trying to buy elections nationwide. We are seeing the results—from the Iowa caucuses to local elections in Las Cruces, NM.

We need to overturn those bad decisions. That is why I have led efforts to amend the Constitution to restore power to Congress and to the States to pass commonsense campaign finance laws. We need to listen to the voters, not to the billionaires hiding in dark corners. That is why earlier this week I introduced legislation to abolish the broken Federal Election Commission.

Congress created the Federal Election Commission to fight political corruption when they created it after Watergate. But today, partisan gridlock leaves the agency powerless and dysfunctional. It even fails to enforce the few campaign finance laws remaining on the books. The Federal Election Administration Act would create a new agency, with five members appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. A chair would lead the agency, and the remaining members would equally represent both political parties. It is modeled after a bipartisan proposal previously introduced by Senator JOHN MCCAIN and former Senator Russ Feingold.

Super Tuesday was just 2 days ago. Once again, we are seeing record spending, including millions of dollars in undisclosed dark money. Without a strong watchdog looking over their shoulders, super PACs and billionaire donors have free rein to push the limits.

It is clear that the FEC has outlived its usefulness. We need a new agency, one with the power and the will to crack down on campaign finance violations.

The Supreme Court has put billionaires and other special interests on a galloping horse. They are running away with our democracy—running away with our elections. We have created a dark money, special interest, gerrymandered train wreck, and the losers are the American people. That is why I have also introduced the Fairness and Independence in Redistricting Act, because part of that train wreck is the secretive and highly partisan congressional redistricting process, and we need to end it.

The President highlighted this issue in his State of the Union address, saying, ''We've got to end the practice of drawing our congressional districts so that politicians can pick their voters and not the other way around.'' In most States today, congressional maps are drawn behind closed doors by partisan lawmakers. Their aim is to keep incumbents in office, and they do that. Pick almost any district in the country, and we will see that almost every one is skewed to favor one party or another.

We can end the gerrymandering status quo. Redistricting commissions should be independent. They should be led by citizens, not politicians. Arizona and California voted for reform, and they are already bringing new faces to Congress. The American people deserve fair elections—elections that are free of unlimited and hidden special interest money and free of rigged district lines.

Next year, I will meet again with students in my State. We will talk about leadership, about challenges, and about how government works. I hope I will be able to say to them that we have moved forward; we have reformed a broken system. I hope I can say to them that we have done our job and made sure that voters, not powerful elites, have their say.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of amendment No. 3391 to the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2015. I am proud to join Senator DAINES in filing this important amendment.

The Daines-Peters amendment would make it possible for certain dishonorably discharged veterans to be eligible for veterans treatment courts. Specifically, the amendment would allow the Attorney General to determine veterans treatment court eligibility on a case-by-case basis for dishonorably discharged veterans who have been diagnosed with service-connected post-traumatic stress disorder, military sexual trauma, or traumatic brain injuries.

Currently, veterans treatment courts are open to any veteran with a discharge other than dishonorable or a dishonorable discharge that can be attributed to substance abuse. However, studies have shown a direct connection to PTSD, TBI, and MST are a leading cause of substance abuse disorder. In general, drug courts reduce correctional costs, protect community safety, and improve public welfare. Veterans treatment courts take the work of drug courts one step further.

According to the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, veterans treatment courts bring the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs health care networks, the Veterans Benefits Administration, the State departments of veterans affairs, volunteer veteran mentors and veterans family support organizations together in one place in order to provide support for veterans. These are resources that speak to the unique needs of this Nation's veterans.

In my home State of Michigan, Judge Michelle Friedman Appel's veterans treatment court in Oak Park is the site of weekly accountability, encouragement, and rehabilitation, and I commend her work.

Our veterans treatment court judges are committed to the well-being of this Nation's veterans, connecting them to services they need to reach their full potential. Servicemembers suffering from the invisible wounds of war who are discharged, regardless of the characterization of that discharge, truly need the assistance provided by veterans treatment courts. That is why the Daines-Peters amendment is so important. Former servicemembers, particularly those suffering from PTSD, TBI, and MST should have access to veterans treatment centers and courts.

I urge my colleagues to support the Daines-Peters amendment No. 3391.

FAIRNESS FOR VETERANS ACT

Mr. President, I wish to stay on the subject of veterans for a moment longer. Behavioral changes are often seen in individuals suffering from mental traumas, such as PTSD and traumatic brain injury, or TBI. Unfortunately, those individuals will often receive a less-than-honorable discharge, also known as a bad paper discharge rather than an honorable discharge. This discharge status makes veterans ineligible for certain benefits, including GI benefits and VA home loans. This is simply unacceptable, and we need to make a change. Our Nation's heroes who honorably serve their country deserve access to the care and benefits they have earned, and that is why I introduced the Fairness for Veterans Act, which will help these veterans.

The Fairness for Veterans Act will create a presumption in favor of the veteran with a bad paper discharge when petitioning the Secretary of Defense for an upgrade in discharge status based on hard medical evidence that is certified by the VA or appropriate medical professional. This bill has the support of both parties in both Chambers.

I introduced the Fairness for Veterans Act with my Republican colleagues, STEVE DAINES from Montana and THOM TILLIS from North Carolina. I appreciate the many Senators who have cosponsored the bill since its introduction, particularly Senator GILLIBRAND, who has been a champion for the bill on the Armed Services Committee.

Today, in the House of Representatives, MIKE COFFMAN, a Republican from Colorado; TIM WALZ, a Democrat from Minnesota; LEE ZELDIN, a Republican from New York; and KATHLEEN RICE, a Democrat from New York, led a number of Members introducing the bipartisan bill.

This legislation is also supported by a number of veterans groups, including Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America, the American Legion, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Vietnam Veterans of America, the Veterans Health Council, United Soldiers and Sailors of America, and the Military-Veterans Advocacy, Inc.

Improperly discharged servicemembers should not lose access to the benefits they have earned through their service. That is why we must ensure they are getting the fairness they deserve when petitioning for an upgraded discharge status. This is a nonpartisan issue, and I am committed to fighting on behalf of our Nation's veterans.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, the bill we are debating today is an important step forward in helping to combat addiction and opioid abuse.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, 20 percent of veterans with PTSD also have a substance abuse disorder. Let me repeat that statistic. In our country, 20 percent of veterans, or one in five, with PTSD have a substance abuse disorder, and that is why we need to ensure that they have all the avenues to care and treatments available to them. We cannot allow them to suffer in silence. That is why I have offered two amendments to the bill that will help our veterans struggling with the invisible wounds of war.

My first amendment, No. 3390, makes sure that these veterans are not forgotten, including their struggles in the findings. My second amendment, No. 3391, allows veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, military sexual trauma, and service-related traumatic brain injuries that received a dishonorable discharge to have access to veterans treatment courts.

I am proud to be joined by Senator PETERS in ensuring that veterans at risk of substance abuse have access to the veterans treatment courts, particularly those most at risk. We cannot turn our backs on those who answer the call to protect our country and are now struggling, many of whom are struggling in silence. We must do everything we can to uphold the promises our government made to our veterans, and I am honored to be doing just that.

I thank Senator PETERS for this bipartisan effort we are moving forward here to fight on behalf of our veterans.

I yield back my time.

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. CASSIDY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss two amendments I am submitting to S. 524, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act.

Across the country, including in my home State of North Dakota, families are experiencing the devastating effects of opioid and heroin addiction. In fact, in 2014, 61 percent of all overdose deaths in the United States were related to opioids. In North Dakota alone, overdose deaths have tripled in the past decade. It is no mystery why. In 2014, the North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation seized 1,549 dosage units of opioids. In 2015, they seized 5,593. That is a 3½-fold increase in just 1 year, so an increase of more than three times in just 1 year.

Similarly, law enforcement seizures of heroin from Canada have grown exponentially. But our data about cross-border drug smuggling is limited. To battle drug abuse effectively, we need to know not just how much but how those drugs are getting into our country. The amendments I am proposing today will strengthen the overall bill by providing law enforcement with additional resources to address security vulnerabilities at the northern border that could be exploited by drug traffickers.

My first amendment allows State law enforcement to use grant funds to partner with local and Federal law enforcement agencies. In the underlying bill, the Attorney General may make grants to State law enforcement agencies to investigate the distribution of heroin and prescription opioids. My amendment allows States to use those grants to partner with local agencies, as well as the Drug Enforcement Administration—the DEA—and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In North Dakota, our law enforcement has faced increased challenges in combatting the flow of illegal drugs, including prescription opioids and heroin; however, our State has had a successful track record of partnering with local, State and Federal law enforcement to investigate and prevent criminal activities, specifically drug-related offenses. One successful example of these partnerships is the Bakken Organized Crime Strike Force. This task force was created in part by North Dakota's attorney general, Wayne Stenehjem, along with the Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force, to address the increased drug activity in the Bakken oil-producing region in western North Dakota.

My amendment will give States greater opportunities to partner with local and Federal agencies to investigate the trafficking of heroin, opioids, and other illicit drugs, as we have done successfully by creating these task forces in North Dakota.

My next amendment also addresses drug smuggling. It requires a study of drug trafficking in States along the northern border. While there is much attention and energy focused on the trafficking of drugs through our southern border, there are vulnerabilities that exist on our northern border as well.

My amendment directs the Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the Attorney General, to conduct a study on the trafficking of narcotics, specifically opioids and heroin, in States along the northern border. The Secretary of DHS and the Attorney General must submit a report on those findings to Congress. Those findings will give Congress greater insight into the security needs at our northern border to prevent the trafficking of illegal drugs into the United States.

Opioid and heroin addiction is a scourge that ruins lives and crushes the spirit. S. 524 is a potent weapon in the fight against them. I urge my colleagues to support the underlying bill, as well as my amendments, which seek to make the legislation even stronger by increasing collaboration among law enforcement and addressing the security needs of our northern border.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MAHAN AIR AND IRAN

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, earlier this week, I joined a bipartisan group of Senate colleagues, including Senator GRAHAM, Senator AYOTTE, and Senator BLUMENTHAL—Republicans and Democrats alike—to send a letter to the United States Department of the Treasury. In our letter, we urged Secretary Jack Lew to continue the Obama administration's necessary and vital efforts to crack down on Mahan Air, a private Iranian airline that provides support for Iran's terrorist proxies and funnels weapons to Hezbollah and the murderous Assad regime in Syria.

Mahan Air is only the latest example of a pattern of behavior we have come to expect from Iran: Supporting terrorism and conducting destabilizing activities in the Middle East, conducting illegal ballistic missile tests in violation of U.N. Security Council resolution 1929, and committing ongoing, major human rights violations.

Indeed, as we wrote in the letter to the Secretary of the Treasury: ''Strong and swift sanctions enforcement is vital to hold Iran to account for its ongoing support of terrorism, ballistic missile development, and human rights violations.''

Today I would like to dive further into Mahan Air activities and explain why it is important that America work with our allies to continue to push back on Iran's bad behavior and to hold Tehran to the terms of the agreement reached last summer with regard to Iran's nuclear agreement.

I will also explain why it is critical that the Senate confirm Adam Szubin, Treasury's now-Acting Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, who plays a key role in pressuring our allies to push back on Iran and who, in the absence of confirmation, is weakened in that vital role. If we are serious about our shared intentions to hold Iran accountable, then this Senate must confirm Adam Szubin, and our European allies must work with us to sanction Mahan Air.

Although Mahan Air is technically a private Iranian airline, it supports the operations of the IRGC—the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps—the hardline military force committed to the preservation of the revolutionary and extremist Iranian regime. Mahan Air also provides services to the Quds Force, an elite IRGC military force that is designated as a terrorist group by the U.S. Treasury Department under Executive Order 13224.

Through its ties to the IRGC and the Quds Force, Mahan Air directly and indirectly provides men and materiel to Hezbollah, a terrorist organization based in Lebanon, and to the murderous regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria. Yet, despite these known ties, Mahan Air is still flying into 24 airports in countries around the region and world, including the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Italy, and it is successfully procuring aircraft and equipment using front companies—an evasive approach that mirrors Iran's strategy in a number of industries, not just in airlines.

Since October of 2011, the Treasury Department has taken key steps to sanction Mahan Air. In that month—October of 2011—Mahan Air provided travel for members of the Quds Force, who flew to and from Iran and Syria for military training, and other suspected officers who flew covertly in and out of Iran.

Less than a year later, in September of 2012, Treasury further cracked down on Mahan Air and two other airlines for a series of bad actions, including sending military and crowd control equipment to the Assad regime in Syria in coordination with Hezbollah, often under the cover of being humanitarian aid. Later, in both February of 2014 and May of 2015, our Department of the Treasury took further action against two front companies that helped Mahan Air procure equipment and parts. The 2014 action penalized personnel and companies in the United Arab Emirates who helped Mahan Air transfer money and procure aircraft and other parts.

This ongoing, long-term pattern of behavior by Iran and its IRGC makes clear why the United States and our other vital allies must work together to cut off Mahan Air's access to international markets and airports, and I commend our Department of Treasury for taking these important steps to designate Mahan and its employees.

These actions alone are important—but not sufficient. Both the United States and our European allies must do more. To start, I urge governments across the European Union to also designate Mahan Air and its many front companies for their support for terrorism.

By continuing to support Syria's violent and discredited President, Bashar al-Assad, Iran has directly contributed to the slow and grinding collapse of Syria, to the enormous humanitarian crisis that has resulted, and to the destabilization of the region. There is a direct correlation between Iran's destabilizing actions in Syria, but also in Yemen, Lebanon, and Iraq, and the migrant crisis now facing all of Western Europe. The more that Iran uses Mahan Airlines to transport the very goods that supply Hezbollah, the longer the instability inside Syria will persist and the more refugees and migrants will flee Syria toward our allies in Western Europe.

Without the support of companies such as Mahan Air and the many front companies that it depends on, Iran and the IRGC would find supporting the Assad regime substantially more difficult and expensive. We must work together to keep Mahan Air from purchasing engines, aircraft, and other

equipment for these maligning purposes.

The second step our allies can and should take is simple: to stop allowing Mahan Air to land at their airports. A company like Mahan Air, which supports terrorism in defiance of international norms, should not have easy access to international airports.

More broadly, combating Iran's destabilizing actions in the Middle East and successfully and rigorously enforcing the terms of the nuclear deal with Iran will require meaningful international coordination.

As I recently wrote in an editorial that ran in the Guardian, while I understand that many European companies will seek to do business with Iran, now that certain economic sanctions have been lifted in compliance with the terms of the nuclear agreement, I urge our allies to remember three simple things.

First, the United States and the U.N. continue to maintain and enforce economic sanctions against Iran. The United States' designation of Mahan Air is one of many unilateral sanctions examples, and many that we continue to keep in place.

Second, stopping Iran's quest for a nuclear weapon must always remain a top priority. We are counting on our European allies to continue to share this view and to act in accordance with it—a view that they stated they shared during our negotiations that led up to the nuclear deal.

Third, as Iran's relationship with Mahan Air shows, the Iranian Government remains a revolutionary regime with a long history of pursuing nuclear weapons and a long track record of supporting terrorism and destabilization in the Middle East.

Iran's use of Mahan Air to evade international scrutiny is yet another reminder that we must remain vigilant in our oversight of Iran. Here in the United States, we appreciate the partnership of our European allies. In fact, the strength of this allegiance and our ability to act as one were key factors that led Iran to agree to the strict terms of the nuclear agreement. We must continue to advocate for and keep front of mind the idea that the most important contract with Iran is the one we have already signed in the nuclear agreement. We must pursue every possible means of enforcing it, and that means cracking down on front companies that facilitate Mahan Air, and companies that are playing a direct role in fomenting instability in the Middle East.

Just as importantly, I urge my colleagues today to put politics aside and confirm Adam Szubin, who oversees the implementation of sanctions in the Treasury Department. With experience in both the Bush and Obama administrations, Adam Szubin is the definition of an outstanding career public servant: nonpartisan, dedicated to his job, and committed to his country. He has been widely praised by Senators of both parties, but his confirmation has been blocked for nearly a year for reasons utterly unrelated to his capabilities or his performance of the job.

The cause of this hold is and has been raw politics, but the consequences of the hold go far beyond that.

When Acting Under Secretary Szubin sits down at the negotiating table, the individuals on the other side, whether from the private sector or a foreign government, friend or foe, should know that he speaks for the American people and has the weight of the Senate and the whole Government of the United States behind him. When Adam Szubin travels around the world to ask senior officials from foreign governments to sanction Mahan Air and its front companies or to prevent Mahan from flying into their airports, he is trying to convince foreign governments to do something difficult, but necessary. Those foreign officials should know that he speaks not just for the Obama administration but for the executive and legislative branches of our whole government and that we as a people stand united against Iranian aggression.

Let's demonstrate to our allies and to Iran that Congress takes these issues as seriously as we proclaim. Let's confirm Adam Szubin and other nominees who are vital to this effort and whose confirmations have been stalled for too long. Let's work together to crack down on Mahan Air and other Iranian avenues for sowing terror throughout the Middle East. And, in the same spirit of collaboration that led to the nuclear agreement, let's come together to rigorously enforce the terms of the deal.

Thank you, Mr. President.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Delaware, Mr. COONS, for his leadership on this very important topic. I could not agree with him more that we need to fund the IAEA, that we need to confirm Adam Szubin for the position of Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, and that our European allies must join us in sanctions against Mahan Air.

The JCPOA is focused upon one clear goal: preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. The fact that an agreement like this was able to be achieved at the negotiating table is a testament to the strong economic sanctions that were imposed on Iran in direct response to Iran's past illicit nuclear activities.

The JCPOA required Iran to complete key nuclear-related steps, verified by the IAEA, before any sanctions were removed. Iran has shipped out 25,000 pounds of low-enriched uranium, thereby tripling its breakout time. Iran has removed the core of the Arak heavy water plutonium reactor and has rendered it unusable. Iran is also limited to 300 kilograms of uranium enriched to only 3.67 percent, which is below weapons grade. These are positive steps toward preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

But they came at a time when the world community possessed the most leverage, and Iran had the most to lose by not complying with the deal. Now, in the aftermath of implementation day and with certain sanctions relief provided to Iran, we must remain increasingly vigilant in our efforts to counter the Iranian regime's support for terrorism and violations of human rights of their own people.

The Iranian regime must understand that there will be consequences for violations, however minor, of the JCPOA. If Iran seeks a nuclear weapon, the world community, led by the United States, is ready to implement the snapback of sanctions in response. And if Iran attempts to test our resolve through small but persistent violations of the JCPOA, they need to be punished swiftly.

I recently traveled to Vienna, along with Senator COONS and several of my colleagues, to meet directly with the U.S. Mission to the International Organization in Vienna, including the International Atomic Energy Agency, the IAEA. The IAEA is the world's ''nuclear watchdog'' and the organization that, under the terms of the JCPOA, is responsible for verifying Iran's compliance with the terms of the deal. We must ensure that the IAEA, which serves as our eyes and ears on the ground in Iran, with direct access and 24/7 online monitoring capabilities of nuclear sites, has the resources necessary to execute its critical mission.

It is incredibly important that we continue to ensure strict compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The terms of the JCPOA do not change, regardless of progress or setbacks in Iran's politics, and our resolve to vigorously enforce the deal will not waver. We will judge Iran's leadership by its actions and not words.

Last week, Iran conducted some elections. But let's be clear: Many of the Iranian candidates being touted as so-called moderates are labeled that way simply because of their support for, or connections to, Iranian President Rouhani. But it is important to remember that, according to the United Nations, Iran continues to ''execute more individuals per capita than any other country in the world.''

Executions peaked at 753 in 2014, during President Rouhani's second year in office, including those conducted in public, along with executions of women and at least one juvenile. Amnesty International has reported on continued crackdowns against artists and activists who were tortured into confessions to crimes such as ''spreading propaganda against the system'' and ''insulting Islamic sanctities.'' And we know that Iran remains a leading state sponsor of terrorism.

Unfortunately, I do not believe that the election results in Iran are in any way transformational. I agree with my colleague's assessment that Iran's elections are neither free nor fair. The

Guardian Council, a top clerical body of the Iranian regime, disqualified thousands of candidates from standing for election. We cannot reasonably expect a transformational shift in Iran's foreign policy, human rights record or support for terrorism when the hardline regime elements that promote these disturbing policies are allowed to prescreen and disqualify candidates for office.

Iran's support for terrorism and the ability to foster instability in the region has serious consequences for our European allies and for our own homeland security. I served in the U.S. Navy Reserve, including time in the Persian Gulf, where I saw firsthand the Strait of Hormuz and the strategic chokepoint that exists there. Last year Iran seized a commercial vessel in the States, requiring the U.S. Navy to accompany vessels and provide security when moving in and out of the Persian Gulf. The Iranian regime is a threat not just to the Middle East but to the security and stability of the entire world.

In closing, I want to reiterate the need to confirm highly qualified nominees like Alan Szubin, who will oversee Treasury Department sanctions against Iran and the front companies used to support illicit activities, and we need to urge our allies to join us in imposing these sanctions. We need to ensure that we provide the IAEA with the resources required to do its job and conduct rigorous daily oversight of the JCPOA.

Most importantly, we must continue to provide strict oversight of the JCPOA and ensure compliance with its terms. We cannot let up or be distracted by perceived improvements or setbacks in Iran's politics. We made a commitment to the American people that Iran must never be allowed to acquire a nuclear weapon. This is a commitment we must uphold and be focused on each and every day.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARDIN. 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. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time to explain four amendments that I have filed and would like to make pending on S. 524. I understand we are in a position now that we need consent in order to have these amendments pending. I am not going to ask for consent, but I will explain the four amendments in hopes I will have an opportunity to present these amendments and have them considered by the full Senate. I know Leader MCCONNELL wants an open amendment process, and I think all four of these amendments are very much relevant to the underlying bill which is aimed at authorizing the Attorney General to address the national epidemic of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use.

The first amendment I wish to talk about is an amendment on which I am joined by Senator CORNYN. It is amendment No. 3421, which would allow grants for 24/7 treatment centers.

I am proud to join with my colleague Senator CORNYN on this amendment, which clarifies that grants under section 301 of CARA may be awarded for the establishment and support of treatment centers that operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide immediate access to behavioral health services.

The epidemic of opioid abuse and addiction impacts every State in our country. Many of us know individuals and families who have been deeply affected by this tragic crisis. Heroin and opioid drug dependency has more than doubled in Maryland over the last decade. The number of deaths related to heroin and opioid drug dependency has increased by more than 100 percent in the last 5 years. In 2013, there were 464 heroin-related overdose deaths in Maryland, greater than the number of homicides. Some parts of Maryland have had the highest per capita rate of heroin and opioid drug use in the United States. In some regions of the State an estimated 1 in 10 citizens are addicted to heroin.

Improving access to behavioral health care—meaning both mental health and substance abuse treatment—is essential in combating this epidemic. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, more than half of the individuals with substance use disorders also have at least one serious mental health condition. There is often a small window of opportunity for getting an individual with substance abuse or mental health issues into treatment. If treatment cannot be provided on demand, often the opportunity is lost. Allowing grants for the establishment and support of 24/7 treatment centers providing behavioral health services on demand will help ensure those individuals in need have access to behavioral health services at the time they need it.

I ask my colleagues to join me in helping to get this amendment pending and adopted. It is a bipartisan amendment, as I said. I am joined by Senator CORNYN in presenting it to our colleagues.

The second amendment is pretty simple. It requests a GAO report on naloxone price increases. I am pleased this amendment I would offer would require a study of the most recent dramatic increase in the price of this medicine. Naloxone is a lifesaving drug that is used to reverse the effects of opioid overdose. However, according to the Baltimore City Health Department, the cost per dose in Baltimore has quadrupled over the past 2 years—quadrupled in 2 years. This GAO study would evaluate the impact of the ability of States and local health departments to reduce the number of deaths due to opioid overdose. It is a pretty simple amendment, and I would hope we could get it pending and included in this legislation because I think it would save lives.

The next amendment I wish to talk about is again a bipartisan amendment that is being offered with Senator HELLER. This amendment would repeal the therapy cap. I was in the House of Representatives when the therapy cap was imposed on therapeutic rehab services. It was included in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 and imposed annual financial limits on outpatient physical therapy and speech-language pathology services, as well as occupational therapy services. The decision to impose those caps was not based upon data, concerns about quality of care or clinical judgment. The sole purpose was to limit spending in order to balance the Federal budget.

I was in the Ways and Means Committee room when Chairman Thomas brought this issue up to include in the Balanced Budget Act, and I asked the question: Why are we doing this? He said: Well, we need these dollar amounts to equal the numbers. I said: What is the policy reason? None could be given.

These arbitrary caps create an unnecessary and burdensome financial barrier to Medicare beneficiaries who rely on essential rehab services such as physical and occupational therapy to live healthy and productive lives. Chronic pain, which is defined as pain that lasts for several months or in some cases years, affects at least 116 million Americans each year. Physical therapy plays an important role in managing chronic pain.

Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published draft clinical guidelines on the use of opioids for chronic pain, making it clear nondrug approaches, such as physical therapy, are ''preferred'' treatment paths for chronic pain. Approaches such as physical therapy ''have been underutilized and, therefore, can serve as a primary strategy to reduce prescription drug medication abuse and improving the lives of individuals with chronic pain.''

I urge my colleagues to join me and Senator HELLER to permanently repeal the therapy cap and ensure that Medicare beneficiaries, including those suffering from chronic pain, continue to have access to medically necessary outpatient physical therapy services.

The fourth amendment I would like to offer is in title IV of this legislation. It addresses the so-called collateral consequences. Section 402 directs the Attorney General to establish a ''Task Force on Recovery and Collateral Consequences.'' Collateral consequences refer to a penalty, disability or disadvantage experienced by an individual because of a criminal conviction, but that is separate from the court's judgment or sentencing. The commission will study these consequences and

whether they affect the ability of individuals to resume their personal and professional lives. In other words, we are talking about reentry into society.

But we do not have to wait for the results of a commission to take action to ameliorate one of the collateral consequences of a criminal conviction. Here, I am talking about the fundamental right to vote. An estimated 5.85 million citizens cannot vote as a result of criminal convictions, and nearly 4.4 million of those have already been released from prison. So 4.4 million people in our communities are denied the right to vote. Nationwide, 1 in 13 African Americans of voting age have lost the right to vote, a rate 4 times higher than the national average. Latino citizens are also impacted in an extreme way because they are disproportionately overrepresented in the criminal justice system. States have vastly different approaches to voting with a criminal conviction. This patchwork of State laws has caused confusion among election officials and the public, sometimes resulting in the disenfranchisement of even eligible voters. Some of these State laws are a holdover from the era of Jim Crow laws, where even misdemeanor convictions could take away an individual's right to vote. In some cases, the right to vote is lost permanently, with no ability for rehabilitation. This is just plain wrong.

The amendment I wish to offer would provide much-needed information into the hands of citizens returning from incarceration. My amendment would direct the Justice Department to provide to individuals released from the custody of the Bureau of Prisons information regarding their right to vote following release. It would require notifications to individuals of the impact on their voting rights when they accept a plea agreement from the U.S. attorney and require the Department of Justice to report on the disproportionate impact of both Federal and State criminal disenfranchisement laws on minority populations, including data on voter disenfranchisement rates by race and ethnicity.

My amendment does not change any existing Federal or State voting rights laws. It does not. It simply requires the Justice Department to provide additional information to ex-offenders upon their release from prison, and it makes sure that defendants are aware of the impact on their voting rights when accepting a plea agreement. The Department of Justice study can provide us additional information on the patchwork of State and Federal disenfranchisement laws, which Congress and the States can use to make further changes in the statute.

So I urge my colleagues to have a process where this amendment, along with the other three I have discussed, can be made pending so that we can vote on these amendments. I think they all would improve the underlying bill, and it is certainly consistent with the majority leader's commitment to an open amendment process. I hope there will be a way that I will be able to offer these amendments and the full Senate will be able to vote on these amendments.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

FILLING THE VACANCY ON THE SUPREME COURT

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, earlier this week and last week I joined a number of my colleagues on the floor and spoke at length about the need for our fellow Senators on the other side of the aisle to do something simple—to do their jobs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator does not have on his microphone.

Mr. BROWN. I thank the Presiding Officer.

Earlier this week and last I spoke at length about the need for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to do their job and to move forward with hearings and an up-or-down vote on whomever the President nominates to the Supreme Court. The outcry from the public continues from every corner of our justice system. Let's just recount quickly what happened after the tragic and untimely death of Justice Scalia.

Within an hour or so, the Republican leader of the Senate said: Don't bother sending up a nominee. History suggests that we won't do this in the last year of the Presidency. We are not going to do hearings. Don't even bother.

Other Republican Senators, sort of like one bird flying off the telephone wire—they all fly off a telephone wire—one Republican Senator after another, first said no hearings. Then, after the majority leader said that he would not even meet with prospective nominees, other Republican Senators said they wouldn't meet with nominees.

Just imagine that. We work hard to run for these offices. It is hard to get to the Senate. When we win, within a month and a half or 2 months later, we take an oath of office. We get paid to do our jobs. But they are just not doing their job.

The Constitution says the President shall nominate to fill a vacancy on the Supreme Court, and the Constitution says the Senate shall advise and consent—not except in the last year of the President's term, not only if we feel like it. We are just saying to our Senate colleagues—along with Americans saying to Senate Republicans: Do your job.

It is pretty simple. We are not saying you have to vote for the President's nominee. Understandably, you may not want to, but at least meet the nominee, at least hold hearings on the nominee. Then let's bring him or her to the Senate floor and have a debate and vote up or down.

Earlier this week I quoted from four former U.S. attorneys from my State of Ohio, from Washington State, California, and Virginia. They wrote: ''It is unfair and unsafe to expect good federal agents, police and prosecutors to spend more than a year guessing whether their actions will hold up in court.'' These are criminal prosecutors, U.S. attorneys, saying how important it is that, ultimately, when something goes to the Supreme Court, there will be a decision made because there is an odd number of justices.

The last time there was a 1-year vacancy—which is what the Republican leader, MITCH MCCONNELL, is calling for—on the Supreme Court was 150 years ago, and that was because we were at war. It was during the Civil War. It is unprecedented to do what they are doing.

On Tuesday, former Ohio Court of Appeals Judge Mark Painter wrote an op-ed in the very conservative, very Republican Cincinnati Inquirer, sharing some of the same concerns. He wrote:

> It would be irresponsible and unprecedented to let a vacancy on the court extend into 2017. If Congress fails to act, the Supreme Court will go two terms—well over a year—with a vacancy. The court will hear significant cases in the coming months and issue rulings that will impact our everyday lives.
>
> As a judge for 30 years, I learned that it is important for the law to be settled.

Settled—not held in abeyance, not deadlocked, but settled—that is why we have an ultimate Supreme Court.

> Uncertainty is bad for businesses, individuals and for commerce. Two court terms of possible 4–4 votes would be a nightmare.

There is no precedent for causing this damaging uncertainty. The only reason is politics.

That is the same Republican leader who some years ago said: My No. 1 political goal is to keep Barack Obama from being reelected, not, my No. 1 goal is to help improve the economy or to help wages go up or to preserve our freedom, our families or our economic security from attack. He said: My No. 1 goal is to make sure that Barack Obama isn't reelected.

Then this same crowd shut down the government in 2013, after Barack Obama was reelected. They didn't like that—understandably. But they shut the government down—not understandable. Now they want to shut the Supreme Court down by locking it in with an even number where we will see 4-to-4 votes.

Judge Painter points out that we elected Barack Obama to a 4-year term:

> The nomination to fill the seat of Supreme Court Justice Scalia is bigger than party or politics. And there is no doubt that Scalia himself would interpret the Constitution as requiring a nomination and a vote by the Senate. It's that simple.
>
> That's why President Obama will do the job that the American people elected him to do. And that's why the Senate should do its job also.
>
> Under our Constitution, we elect presidents for four-year terms. Obama has almost a quarter of his term left. Should the process of government stop for a year?

Should the process of government stop for a year? It should not. My colleagues, pure and simple, ought to do

their jobs. They ought to meet the nominee. They ought to hold hearings. They ought to give an up-or-down vote to whomever the President nominates. Let's do our job.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I want to join my colleague from Ohio, Senator BROWN, in his message about our responsibility to do our job. It is very simple: Do our job. Do what the people of our State elected us to do.

Senator BROWN is absolutely correct. Article II, section 2 of the Constitution states that the President ''shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint . . . Judges of the supreme Court.'' The last time I checked, the President was elected for a term of 4 years, not 3 years and 2 months. We still have 10 months left of President Obama's Presidency. There is plenty of time for the Senate to consider his nomination for the Supreme Court of the United States.

I find it shocking that my colleagues would suggest, even before the President has submitted a nomination, that the Senate would not conduct hearings or consider the nomination of the President to the Supreme Court, even though that is our constitutional responsibility and even though we were elected for a 6-year term. The last time I checked, we are in session until the end of this year. We don't adjourn in March. The President has 10 months left in office, and Senators should do our work and do our job. I think the American people will ultimately demand that the Senate do its job and not threaten to stop working simply to coddle and pander to the most extreme and fringe elements of its base.

Senators should look to the Constitution for the history and the precedents of the Senate on how to proceed. I say that because if we do not hold a hearing on President Obama's nomination for the Supreme Court, it will be the first time in the history of the United States that a nominee who requested a hearing is denied a hearing—the first time ever. This is a matter of what is the appropriate role in the Constitution of the United States. We all took an oath of office to uphold the Constitution of the United States, and it is our responsibility to respond with a serious effort.

The majority leader said that when we get a nomination, we should act with dignity. Well, we are not acting with dignity if we don't hold a hearing. Let me remind us that the last time a President nominated in an election year of the opposite party, President Reagan's nomination of Justice Kennedy was considered by a Democratic-controlled Senate and approved by a Democrat-controlled Senate.

Let me also remind us that there have been times where a nominee of the President has not been approved by the Judiciary Committee. They have still come to the floor of the Senate for action. Justice Thomas was approved by a majority vote of the Senate even though he was not recommended by the Judiciary Committee. It was short of the 60-vote threshold, which means that if the Democratic majority had wanted to filibuster, they could have. So we are on uncharted waters here with what the Republicans are doing.

We have separation of branches of government. That is the history of our country. That is the democracy in which we live. It is our responsibility to preserve that. We, the legislative branch of the government, have the responsibility to advise and consent on the independent judiciary. The Supreme Court operates with nine justices, not with eight. It is an abuse of power of the majority in the Senate—the Republicans—to say that we are going to reduce the Supreme Court of the United States to eight by inaction. What happens when we have conflicting decisions made by different circuits and the only court that can determine the law is the Supreme Court in its interpretation and they are 4-to-4 deadlocked? If we do not take up this appointment and we go the full year into next year, it will be two terms of the U.S. Supreme Court without the full complement of justices.

Do your job, my colleagues. That is all we have to do. You don't have to vote yes. Vote. Have a hearing. Have the courage to vote yes or no on the President's nominee. They are saying we are not even going to have a chance for a hearing or vote, and we don't even know who the nominee is, and that is just plain wrong. I think the American people will speak with a clear voice and say that is not what the Senate should be doing.

I hope the Republican leadership will provide the dignity of the Senate, hold hearings, and allow the full Senate to vote up-or-down on the President's nominee for the Supreme Court.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, addiction to prescription opioid pain relievers and heroin is a growing public health epidemic that is taking a heartbreaking toll on families and communities in every State of this country. In 2014, more than 47,000 Americans died because of prescription opioid and heroin overdoses.

This crisis is very real in my home State of New Mexico. For years, without adequate treatment resources, communities in my State have suffered through some of the highest rates of heroin and opioid addiction in the country. Far too many New Mexico families have lost loved ones, and many more are struggling to find treatment and recovery resources for a father, a mother, a son, a daughter, or for themselves.

Two weeks ago, I visited Espanola Valley in Rio Arriba County. Rio Arriba, which is largely rural and has predominantly Hispanic and tribal communities, is filled with beautiful mountain and desert landscapes, the kinds of places that attract artisan visitors from around the world. Families from Rio Arriba can trace their lineage to Spanish settlers who came to New Mexico in the 1600s and to Indian Pueblos and tribes who have lived in this region for millennia. Tragically, Rio Arriba County has also long been home to the highest rates of heroin addiction and overdose deaths in the Nation. In fact, between 2010 and 2014, the county's overdose death rate was more than five times the national average. This is not only tragic, it is simply unacceptable.

Last month, I convened a roundtable discussion in the area with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Region 6 Director Marjorie Petty and a number of local stakeholders, including the Rio Arriba Community Health Council. We gathered at the Delancey Street Foundation in Ohkay Owingeh to discuss ongoing efforts and ways to better address the heroin and prescription drug crisis in my State. What I heard loud and clear from public health officials, from law enforcement and first responders, and, probably most importantly, from people who have coped directly with addiction, is that this crisis is hitting entire communities and hitting them hard. Everyone knows a family who has a child suffering through addiction or in recovery, and many have literally lost loved ones to drug-related deaths.

For decades, drug addiction and substance abuse have been passed down generation to generation in too many families in Rio Arriba and in communities across New Mexico. The introduction of prescription opioid pain medications such as oxycodone and hydrocodone into the market over the last two decades has poured fuel on this fire, creating even more cases of opioid abuse and heroin addiction. These prescription opioid pain medications, which are so chemically similar to heroin, have produced whole new onramps onto the highway of addiction. In many instances, by the time someone has finished their first prescription drug treatment, they are literally already hooked, so they turn to purchase new pills, legally or illegally, either through a new prescription or through other means. When they can't afford the pills anymore, all too often they turn to heroin.

Overprescription of opioid drugs and the widespread trafficking of lethal black tar heroin have both contributed enormously to the ongoing public health crisis in New Mexico and now across our Nation. The statistics alone should get our attention. From 2002 to 2013, opioid-related deaths quadrupled nationally. Drug overdoses were the leading cause of injury death in 2013. Among Americans ages 25 to 64 years

old, drug overdoses caused more deaths than motor vehicle crashes. Think about that.

Over this same period, New Mexico families and communities have borne the brunt of this epidemic. Between 2011 and 2013, New Mexico ranked second nationally for drug overdose deaths, and it is getting worse by the year. More New Mexicans died of drug overdoses in 2014 than in any other year on record. Some 547 people died in New Mexico due to drug poisoning, including deaths from prescription opioids and heroin overuse.

Rather than focus solely on these statistics, I want to talk a little bit about some of the people I met in my visit to Rio Arriba County because I think it puts a much more human and real face on the very nature of this problem.

Jesus toured me around Delancey Street.

The Delancey Street Foundation is a national residential self-help rehab organization that helps former substance abusers, ex-convicts, and others who have literally hit rock bottom turn their lives around, get clean, and learn academic and vocational and life skills. Residents have to commit to a minimum stay of at least 2 years. During that period, a comprehensive treatment program often produces dramatic results.

Delancey Street's facility in New Mexico is located on a 17-acre ranch in Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo. Residents there learn vocational skills to get jobs in livestock management, culinary arts, retail sales, construction, wastewater management, and landscaping.

Jesus came to Delancey Street after getting caught up using and selling pills and heroin in the Espanola Valley. He had two DUIs and suffered through alcoholism and substance abuse. In 2011, when a judge gave him the option of going to Delancey Street instead of serving a 9-year prison sentence, he took the chance. Through a long process, he received treatment and learned how to cope with his addiction. Jesus has stayed at Delancey Street well past his 2-year commitment and has taken on new responsibilities. He now serves as a mentor and a role model to new residents who are trying to overcome their addictions.

I met another man named Josh. He is a peer-to-peer support worker at Inside Out Recovery Center in Espanola. Josh was born and raised in Espanola, where he saw drug and alcohol use as the way of life in his community. When he was 14 years old, a high school friend with a prescription for hydrocodone offered him some pills. Josh quickly became addicted. Over time, his opioid addiction led him to the point where he was shooting 7 grams of heroin every day, stealing from family and friends to pay for that addiction, and going in and out of the prison system at the same time. At one point, while going through withdrawal in a jail cell, Josh was unable to eat for weeks. He literally lost over a third of his body weight. He remembers later attempting suicide in an act of desperation to end his addiction and failing when his gun didn't go off.

In his late twenties, after going through these intense struggles, Josh was introduced to the Inside Out Recovery Center. He met a peer-to-peer support worker named Alex, who had done the same drugs and been through the same struggles. Josh realized there was a way to stop using, and he turned his life around. He got clean.

When a judge sentenced Josh to probation instead of prison for an offense, he was released from jail and went straight to Inside Out and committed to treatment. He said it was the first time he had been released and hadn't immediately returned to drug and alcohol abuse. At Inside Out, Josh received peer support and learned conflict resolution and coping skills. He credits the program with actually saving his life. Now that Josh has his life back, he is working to help others in his community to get their lives back from addiction.

Finally, I want to tell you about Rufus. Rufus is a 22-year-old Navajo Hopi man who lives in Pojoaque. When I met Rufus during my visit, he was getting ready to graduate from his treatment at New Moon Lodge treatment facility in Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo.

New Moon Lodge is a residential addiction treatment center that serves clients from New Mexico's American Indian communities. Although the center treats different types of addiction and substance abuse, including alcoholism, recently they have seen many more cases of opioid and heroin addiction.

Rufus's addiction to opioids began when he was prescribed hydrocodone to help with a hand injury he received when he was 16. He became addicted. Once his prescription ran out, he turned to buying pills illegally, moved up to higher dosages, and eventually moved on to heroin. He got expelled from high school his senior year and fell even deeper into this addiction.

After years of use and going in and out of jail for various offenses, Rufus came before the Pojoaque Tribal Court last year and was given the option to go to New Moon for treatment. New Moon helped him see the person he could be without the drugs. Rufus just graduated from his treatment at New Moon last week. Now he is looking forward to building a stable home life for his girlfriend and his baby by going back to school to get his GED and working toward being a mechanic or an artist.

I tell these stories to demonstrate that when we provide an opportunity to receive comprehensive treatment and receive rehabilitation, people who have suffered through the trials of opioid addiction can turn their lives around and help their communities heal in the process.

Sadly, in addition to hearing these success stories, I have heard far too often that people who are looking to get help have absolutely nowhere to go. Particularly in New Mexico's rural, tribal, and impoverished communities, there is a severe lack of access to proven treatment and rehabilitation resources. We desperately need more detoxification centers, more transitional housing facilities, more outpatient services, and more behavioral health facilities.

We as a nation are not doing even close to enough to provide adequate treatment facilities and resources to communities like those in the Espanola Valley that are struggling to meet the challenges of the growing heroin and opioid addiction crisis. That is why I am a cosponsor of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, championed by our colleagues Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island and ROB PORTMAN of Ohio.

This legislation provides a series of incentives and resources designed to encourage States and local communities to pursue a full array of proven strategies that combat addiction. To ensure that this effort meets the needs of rural and tribal communities such as those in New Mexico, I submitted a bipartisan amendment with my friend, the senior Senator from Wyoming, Mr. MIKE ENZI, to require that rural health professionals are included in the Pain Management Best Practices Interagency Task Force that is created by this legislation.

But, frankly, in order to truly provide local communities the tools they need to tackle this crisis head-on, we need funding, which is why I am also cosponsoring emergency funding legislation, championed by my colleague Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN of New Hampshire, to provide supplemental appropriations of $600 million for drug prevention and treatment programs. I understand that Senator SHAHEEN's efforts to include her funding legislation as an amendment failed to get enough votes this week, which frankly I find deeply disappointing, but I think the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act is still a good first step toward addressing this epidemic. You can be sure I will continue to fight to address it in the Senate and back in New Mexico.

Addiction is a disease that can happen to anyone. It transcends region, race, gender, and socioeconomic status. It is a vicious cycle we have seen all too frequently in New Mexico. By taking a comprehensive approach to combat this epidemic, we can ensure that people have the opportunity to get back on the road to recovery.

I yield the floor.

AMENDMENT NO. 3345

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the American people sent all of us here to solve problems, to strengthen and support our Nation and its people, and to help make ours a more perfect union. They expect us to govern responsibly

and to work together to improve our communities. This week we are considering the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, or CARA. Few problems in our country have had as devastating an impact on American families as opioid addiction. From Vermont, to Kentucky, to Ohio, communities across the country are struggling, and they are reaching for answers and for help.

It is clear there is a strong, bipartisan interest in Congress to address the problems associated with opioid addiction. The legislation before us is a good bill. It demonstrates that Congress now sees addiction for what it is—a public health crisis. But CARA will not by itself pull our communities out of addiction. CARA is an unfunded framework. Addiction is too knotted and massive a challenge to address with a mere change in philosophy. We cannot pretend that solving a problem as large as opioid addiction costs nothing. The emergency funding amendment by Senator SHAHEEN is an essential part of this effort. It puts real dollars behind the rhetoric to ensure that the carefully crafted programs authorized in CARA can actually be implemented and can succeed.

Congress has approved much larger emergency funding bills in the past. Just last year we approved more than $5 billion to combat the Ebola outbreak in Africa, far from our shores. To be clear, I believe this funding was appropriate. But we must now turn our attention to the public health crisis here at home, in our own communities. More than 40,000 Americans are dying each year from drug overdoses. In Vermont, State leaders like Governor Shumlin have tackled opioid addiction with an all-hands-on-deck approach. Other community leaders, like the Boys & Girls Club of Burlington, have done wonderful work expanding education efforts to prevent young people from becoming addicted in the first place. I am proud of their efforts, but they will be the first to acknowledge that many challenges remain. As in other States, addiction has spread across our State, and more Vermonters are dying from drug overdoses. Several have died while on waitlists for treatment.

Addiction is nothing less than an epidemic, and to solve it, this crisis must be treated as an epidemic. More resources for targeted efforts will save lives and help stabilize families, neighborhoods, and communities. That is why we need Senator SHAHEEN's amendment. This amendment would have provided resources to strengthen both the law enforcement and public health components needed to tackle the crisis. Her legislation would have delivered support to State and local law enforcement agencies, anti-heroin task forces, and treatment alternatives to incarceration. It would have also delivered necessary resources to health care professionals who are overwhelmed by a need they cannot meet. No one should be turned away when seeking treatment for the terrible disease of addiction. If cancer patients were refused treatment, we would not hesitate to act, and this should be no different.

We must make a real investment in combatting this ravaging epidemic, and the Shaheen amendment would have ensured that. Actions speak louder than words, action requires resources, and budgets are where we set priorities. The American people are watching and waiting. It is time for us to stop talking and start acting. It is time for us to start investing in our own country, our own communities' needs, and our own people.

VOTE EXPLANATION

● Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for today's vote on the Manchin amendment No. 3420 to S. 524, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Bill. I would have voted yea.●

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

● Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for today's amendment vote in relation to S. 524, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2015.

On amendment No. 3420 by Senator MANCHIN, I would have voted yea.●

Mr. HEINRICH. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the role.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WORLD WILDLIFE DAY

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, on a day that was sadly often marked by partisan differences, I thought I would take a moment near the end of this legislative day and simply remark on something where there has recently been some bipartisan progress, and I think it is worthy of some brief comment.

Today is the third annual World Wildlife Day. This day was declared by the United Nations and will soon be celebrated in another place on this Capitol complex by a wide range of organizations from all over the United States and the world that are dedicated to preserving wildlife in places in the world where it is under distinct pressure.

As I said, this is the third annual celebration of World Wildlife Day. It was first declared by the United Nations, and I want to briefly remark that a bipartisan delegation of this Senate recently went to Southern Africa. It was led by Senator FLAKE of Arizona, and he and Senator CARDIN, the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator COCHRAN, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and I had an opportunity to meet with leaders from four different countries. They are working tirelessly to try and contain an epidemic of poaching that has reached nearly catastrophic levels.

Nearly 100 elephants are killed every day now so their ivory tusks can be sold on the black market at prices higher than heroin or gold. In 2014 alone, more than 1,000 rhinoceroses were illegally killed in South Africa, which is a 9,000-percent increase in the poaching of rhinos since 2007.

I think this is of concern to all of us, not just because of the loss of these remarkable and iconic wildlife species but because it is also funding and fueling a multibillion-dollar industry of organized crime that also traffics in drugs, people, and weapons and destabilizes critical parts of the world.

We have a chance to make real progress. There is a bipartisan bill, the END Wildlife Trafficking Act, that Senator FLAKE and I have introduced, and that I am hopeful Senator CORKER and Senator CARDIN, as the chair and ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, will take up, consider, and markup in our next business meeting. I do think this legislation offers us a real opportunity to show that we can come together to support the President's plan for combating wildlife trafficking and can make a modest and responsible investment in helping countries on the other side of the world that are facing the same sort of scourge of lawlessness and violence that marks those places in America where drug trafficking is at its peak, but instead of trafficking illegal drugs, the actions they are carrying out is the slaughter and the export of the pieces of killed animals, whether elephant tusks or rhino horns.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, ''Adopt the pace of nature: Her secret is patience.'' It is my hope that with patience, persistence, and bipartisanship, we can celebrate this World Wildlife Day by doing something together to make progress in combating the scourge of illegal wildlife trafficking.

I thank the Presiding Officer and 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. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order to call up the following amendments: No. 3336, Johnson, as modified; No. 3329, Durbin; further, that at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, March 7, the Senate vote in relation to the amendments in the order listed and that there be no second-degree amendments in order to these amendments prior to the votes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

Our respective cloakrooms have been working for the better part of this week to get a list of amendments that could get votes.

As everyone knows, we have had, on our side, more than 60 amendments filed. So I want to hold my friend to an often-expressed promise that we would have a robust amendment process. Now, I know we aren't going to get 60 amendments—I got that—but there have been objections from Republicans to a number of amendments my Senators want to offer. They want to do a few votes on a number of their amendments.

First of all, everyone should understand we are not holding up this bill. The leader has indicated he is going to file cloture today or tomorrow, so I got that. We are not going to oppose cloture, but we are not going to have the other side determine what amendments should be offered. We should be able to pick what amendments we want to offer. And I don't think it is appropriate—for example, one of the amendments he chose is from a Senator running for reelection. Is there some purpose to that? I think we should have a process where we have alternating amendments, and we pick our amendments.

So I would ask my colleague to agree to changing his unanimous consent request so that it would be in order to call up the amendments I mention now. There would be an hour of debate on each amendment. We could certainly even shorten that time significantly prior to a vote in relation to the amendments in the order listed, and no second-degree amendments be in order prior to the votes: Durbin No. 3329, Gillibrand No. 3354, Markey No. 3384—who has been begging me for 4 days now to get a vote on his amendment—Blumenthal No. 3327, Cardin No. 3421, McCaskill No. 3375, Wyden No. 3402, Heinrich No. 3372, Schatz No. 3413, and Markey No. 3382—10 out of 60.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator so modify his request?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I object to the modification.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard to the modification.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to the original request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard to the original request.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I might just point out that apparently the amendment that was in my consent request that was objectionable to the other side was a simple amendment from the Senator from Wisconsin to include a representative of the Indian Health Service in the Pain Management Best Practices Inter-Agency Task Force.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I understand, I am sure, the importance of this amendment, but the other amendments are important also.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order to call up the following amendments: No. 3334, Kirk; No. 3336, Johnson, as modified; No. 3329, Durbin; No. 3337, Johnson, as modified; No. 3354, Gillibrand; No. 3366, Lankford; Markey-Paul related to the TREAT Act; No. 3407, McCain; and No. 3408, McCain; further, that at 5:30 p.m., Monday, March 7, the Senate vote in relation to the Durbin amendment No. 3329 and the Johnson amendment No. 3336; and that there be no second-degree amendments in order to these amendments prior to the votes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object. I don't like to admit this publicly that I have learned anything from the Republican leader, but I have. One of the things I have learned is that it is not right to have the majority pick the votes of the minority, so I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk for the Grassley substitute amendment No. 3378.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on Senate amendment No. 3378, the substitute amendment to S. 524, a bill to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use.

Mitch McConnell, Chuck Grassley, Deb Fischer, John Barrasso, Shelley Moore Capito, Roy Blunt, Johnny Isakson, John Boozman, Mike Crapo, David Vitter, Mike Rounds, Bill Cassidy, James E. Risch, Lindsey Graham, John McCain, Thom Tillis, Orrin G. Hatch.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk for the underlying bill, S. 524.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on S. 524, a bill to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use.

Mitch McConnell, Chuck Grassley, Deb Fischer, John Barrasso, Shelley Moore Capito, Roy Blunt, Johnny Isakson, John Boozman, Mike Crapo, David Vitter, Mike Rounds, Bill Cassidy, James E. Risch, Lindsey Graham, John McCain, Thom Tillis, Orrin G. Hatch.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls with respect to the cloture motions be waived.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the filing deadline for first-degree amendments to amendment No. 3378 and S. 524 be at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, March 7.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the cloture vote on the Grassley substitute amendment No. 3378 occur at 5:30 p.m., Monday, March 7.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

REMEMBERING BERTA CACERES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last night Honduras lost one of its most courageous, charismatic indigenous leaders, Berta Caceres. Ms. Caceres was the general coordinator of the National Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras, and she was assassinated in her hometown of La Esperanza, Intibuca.

According to initial reports, at least two people broke down the door of the house where she was staying for the evening and shot and killed her.

Berta Caceres spent her life fighting in defense of indigenous rights, particularly to land and natural resources. In 2015, she won the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize for her outstanding activism and leadership.

This horrific crime demonstrates that no one, not even an internationally known social activist, is safe in Honduras if they speak out against corruption or abuse of authority. Her death will have a profound impact on the many communities she worked with, her organization, Honduran civil society, and all who knew her.

Berta Caceres and COPINH have been supporting land struggles throughout western Honduras. In the last few weeks, threats and violence towards Berta and the communities she and her organization support had escalated.

In Rio Blanco on February 20, Berta, her organization, and the community of Rio Blanco were threatened as they engaged in a peaceful protest to protect the river and their way of life from the construction of a large hydroelectric dam by an internationally financed Honduran company.

As a result of supporting the Rio Blanco struggle, Berta had received many threats against her life and was granted, like dozens of other endangered Honduran social activists, precautionary measures by the Inter-

American Commission on Human Rights.

Berta Caceres was an inspiration to people around the world, and her death is a great loss for all the people of Honduras. The immediate question is what President Hernandez and his government, which has too often ignored or passively condoned attacks against Honduran social activists, will do to support an independent investigation, prosecution, and punishment of those responsible for this despicable crime and, beyond that, what steps will the government take to protect the many others, including members of COPINH, who are in need of protection, and to stand up for the rights of people like Berta who risk their lives peacefully defending the environment and their livelihoods.

The answers to those questions will weigh heavily on the Congress's support for future assistance for that government.

REMEMBERING JUSTICE ANTONIN SCALIA

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, with the passing of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, our Nation has lost an exceptional jurist and unshakable defender of the U.S. Constitution.

Justice Scalia will be remembered for using his substantial intellect to affect how the American public views the Constitution and the role of the courts in interpreting the law. His thoughtful opinions over nearly 30 years on the Court shaped modern jurisprudence and helped facilitate a larger discussion on the role of the Constitution in contemporary terms and application.

Justice Scalia had an accomplished career as an attorney, law professor, general counsel for the Office of Telecommunications Policy, chairman of the Administrative Conference, Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legal Counsel for the Department of Justice, and as a judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. It was an honor for me to support his confirmation as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court following his nomination by President Reagan in 1986.

Justice Scalia, who had a great love for the arts, education, and hunting, developed an affinity for the State of Mississippi and made many friends during his visits to my State. Many Mississippians shared Justice Scalia's interest in hunting deer, duck, quail, and turkey, but his most important influence on Mississippi may result from the generous time he invested speaking to young scholars during his visits to university campuses in my State.

We mark Justice Scalia's passing by rightfully acknowledging his many years of public service, his defense of the founding principles of our Nation, and his steadfast adherence to a conservative view of our Constitution. I am proud to have known and supported him.

I extend to his family sincere condolences and the thanks of a grateful Nation for Justice Scalia's distinguished contributions and service to our Nation.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO JOHN MATTHEWS

• Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor John Matthews on his recent retirement from Madison Teachers Incorporated, MTI, after serving the local teachers union for an impressive 48 years as executive director. Hired in 1968 as MTI's first executive secretary, a title subsequently changed to executive director, it is believed that John is one of the longest serving full-time heads of a teachers' union in the country.

Formed as the Madison Education Association, MEA, in the 1930s, MTI served as a predominantly professional organization until 1964 when it became certified as the exclusive collective bargaining agent for teachers serving in the Madison Metropolitan School District, MMSD. In rapid succession, the first professional negotiations committee, PNC, was elected in 1965, followed by a name change to Madison Teachers Incorporated, MTI, in 1966. With an expanding membership of approximately 1,125, MTI realized the need for professional staff, hiring John to lead their efforts in June of 1968.

Growing up in Billings, MT, as the son of the State budget director and the grandson of a Montana Supreme Court justice, John began to develop his passion for fighting injustice within his grandfather's chambers, as well as in and around the Montana State Capitol. In 1968, as a high school history and English teacher, John almost immediately found himself involved in negotiations regarding health care coverage for teachers. It was a path that would define both the man and his career in a profound way.

His almost five decades as MTI executive director have been dedicated to protecting MTI's employees and the teachers of Madison's public schools. His strong belief in the power of contracts, especially in a school district where contracts govern schools, has guided his every decision. Under his leadership, MTI has negotiated for the enforcement of strong contracts that uphold and strengthen the rights of teachers. His undeniable dedication to the teachers' union has been demonstrated in his fiery leadership style and tenacity to speak out and protect workers' rights to collectively bargain.

Described by others as engaged, insightful, and ever ready to not only listen to teachers' concerns but act on them, John's leadership exemplifies an unwavering dedication to the rights of public school teachers and public workers. His success in leading MTI is evidenced by the positive actions and outcomes achieved by organized labor, particularly in a State where the role of unions has recently been challenged.

Over the years, I have been honored to stand in solidarity with John on the issues and am proud to call him my friend. On the occasion of his retirement, I am pleased to recognize John Matthew's longstanding dedication to Madison Teachers Incorporated and his fight to protect the rights and personal livelihood of the Madison teachers he served. He has impacted lives through his constant engagement, personal kindness, and fiery leadership. I wish John and his family all the best in his retirement and happiness for many years to come.•

TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT TIM LINGLE

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Sergeant Tim Lingle of the Roosevelt County Sheriff's office. Sergeant Lingle has recently been named the Montana American Legion Law Enforcement Officer of the Year.

Sergeant Lingle has been living and working in Roosevelt County for 15 years, 9 of those years has been for the county's sheriff's office. He started his Montana law enforcement career with Poplar Police Department in 2000, then moved to the Fort Peck Department of Law and Justice before transferring to Roosevelt County Sheriff's Office.

Sergeant Lingle serves the Roosevelt County Sheriff's Office not only as a sergeant but also as deputy coroner, firearms instructor, and as the Culbertson-Bainville-Froid contract deputy. He has also served the State of Montana as a member of the American Legion and has attended training as a driving instructor and a DARE instructor.

Sergeant Lingle has always gone the extra mile for the county, community, and the sheriff's office. He never fails to show his loyalty and passion to the citizens of Roosevelt County.

I would also like to highlight the recent efforts by Sergeant Lingle and the entire Roosevelt County Sheriff's Office in the search of missing 4-year-old Maci Lilley, who I am happy to report has been found and reunited with her family.

Thank you Sergeant Lingle and all of Roosevelt County Sheriff's Office for their tireless efforts and dedication to law enforcement for the State of Montana.•

TRIBUTE TO PAULA FRANCIS

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Paula Francis on her retirement after bringing the great State of Nevada accurate and reliable news coverage for the last 30 years. Ms. Francis was an important icon in Nevada journalism, bringing local residents nightly news at 5, 6, and 11 p.m. Her passionate and in-depth coverage of southern Nevada's news will be sorely missed.

Ms. Francis's career began in Madison, WI, immediately after graduating

from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In 1985, she moved to Las Vegas, beginning her experience in broadcast journalism for southern Nevada at KTNV. In 1988, Ms. Francis joined KLAS's news team, initially starting her extended tenure with the news station as a health reporter. After proving to be an invaluable resource to the news team, she moved into the anchor chair. During her time on air, Ms. Francis placed a special emphasis on health care issues, familiarizing viewers with important health information, in addition to bringing southern Nevada breaking news coverage.

Throughout her tenure, Ms. Francis was recognized as Best TV Anchor in Las Vegas by Las Vegas Review Journal readers more than 15 times and was inducted into the Nevada Broadcasters Association hall of fame and the KLAS TV Hall of Fame. Ms. Francis went above and beyond in her ambitions to bring Nevadans up-to-date and truthful news coverage. The accolades she has received are awarded to only the greatest of Nevada journalists, and without a doubt, she deserves each one.

For the past 30 years, Ms. Francis has been a tremendous contributor to southern Nevada journalism. Her commitment to the local community is without question, creating a great amount of trust between the viewers and the station. She stands as a role model to journalists across Nevada with her unwavering dedication to familiarizing herself with the local issues. The knowledge she gained throughout her tenure is irreplaceable to the newsroom. Ms. Francis's legacy both at KLAS and within Nevada journalism will be felt for years to come.

Outside of her career, Ms. Francis continues to be highly involved in a number of activities for the betterment of the local community. She is a founding member of the Nevada chapter of the International Women's Forum and serves as a member of the board of trustees for the Shade Tree Endowment Fund. She has also received numerous humanitarian awards for her efforts and spearheaded Buddy Check 8, a campaign to increase breast cancer awareness. I extend my deepest gratitude for all of her efforts on behalf of the Silver State.

I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in thanking Ms. Francis for her tireless dedication to bringing southern Nevada excellent news coverage and in congratulating her on her retirement. I wish her well in all of her future endeavors.●

TRIBUTE TO LEN STEVENS

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Len Stevens on his retirement after serving as CEO of the Chamber for nearly 14 years. It gives me great pleasure to recognize his years of dedication to creating growth and success for northern Nevada's business community.

Before joining the Chamber, Mr. Stevens served as a basketball coach for 34 years, guiding teams at both Washington State University and the University of Nevada, Reno successfully through numerous seasons. In 2002, he was chosen for the role of CEO at the Chamber, and he served the State of Nevada in this position for over a decade. As CEO, Mr. Stevens led the Chamber through challenging times, including the merger of chambers of commerce in Reno and Sparks. This merger, which was one of the largest and most complex mergers in northern Nevada history, led to creation of the Chamber in 2011. This incredible organization has helped businesses through times of economic downturn to stay on their feet and succeed. Through the incredible work of the Chamber, northern Nevada's business community continues to thrive and maintain a high quality of life for residents. We are fortunate to have had someone like Mr. Stevens leading the way at this important establishment.

Throughout his tenure, Mr. Stevens served as a powerful voice, advocating for businesses across northern Nevada. His hard work brought greater attention to the needs of this community, and I am grateful for everything he has done to support it. Under his leadership, the Chamber saw consistent growth in membership, as well as additional opportunities for business leaders to come together. He also implemented new programs to helps residents, including the Young Entrepreneurs Academy, which is a yearlong program that teaches middle school and high school students the mechanics of operating a business. His work for northern Nevada is invaluable.

Mr. Stevens has demonstrated professionalism, commitment to excellence, and dedication to the highest standards during his tenure at the Chamber. I am both humbled and honored by his service and am proud to call him a fellow Nevadan. Today I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. Stevens on his retirement from the Chamber and in wishing him well in his future endeavors. I give my deepest appreciation for all that he has done for the Silver State.●

TRIBUTE TO EDITH TUCKER

● Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, last month, one of New Hampshire's most respected veteran journalists retired after two decades of prolific work at the Coos County Democrat, a weekly newspaper based in Lancaster, in my State's North Country. I have had the privilege of knowing Edith and admiring her work since I first ran for Governor in 1996. In particular, I have respected her extraordinary work ethic. She was the only full-time reporter with the Democrat, often filing several stories a day. At times, the front page would be filled with stories carrying her byline.

No story was too big or too small for Edith. She covered Presidential campaigns, select board meetings, festivals, factory openings, and, among her last stories, a characteristically detailed and colorful article on a proposal to renew bobcat hunting in the North Country.

Over the years, Edith became a fixture on the landscape of New Hampshire's first-in-the-Nation primary. Presidential candidates knew that to gain credibility with North Country voters, they needed to successfully navigate a grilling from Edith. She has been a regular public affairs commentator on ''The Exchange with Laura Knoy,'' a popular New Hampshire Public Radio call-in show.

As State Representative Rebecca Brown, a longtime colleague of hers, noted: ''Edith embraced small town reporting. She was indefatigable, including putting countless miles on the old Jeep, in which she took to carrying a step ladder in case she needed to get a better camera vantage over a taller crowd.''

Edith speaks with unrivaled knowledge and insight about her beat, the North Country. No reporter has better captured the struggle and indomitable spirit of that region. In her early years with the Democrat, her stories documented the pain and upheaval of too many devastating factory closings and job losses. More recently, she has covered heartening stories of new businesses and development projects flowing to the region, creating new jobs and opportunities.

In many retirement tributes, Edith Tucker has been described as a North Country institution and icon, but I suspect Edith would prefer to be recognized simply as a skilled, hard-working beat journalist, always determined to get the story right and keep her community informed. She did exactly that for two decades.

Edith Tucker has made the Granite State a better place, both by what she has accomplished and by who she is. There are many more stories—and chapters—yet to be written in the life of this beloved and accomplished journalist. I join with people across the North Country in thanking Edith for a job superbly done and wishing her many happy years in retirement.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and withdrawals which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:35 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3716. An act to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to require States to provide to the Secretary of Health and Human Services certain information with respect to provider terminations, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 11:58 a.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:

S. 1596. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2082 Stringtown Road in Grove City, Ohio, as the ''Specialist Joseph W. Riley Post Office Building''.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 3716. An act to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to require States to provide to the Secretary of Health and Human Services certain information with respect to provider terminations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–4597. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Zoxamide; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9942–18–OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2016; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4598. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Penoxsulam; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9940–36–OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2016; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4599. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pendimethalin; Tolerance Actions; Correction'' (FRL No. 9942–24–OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2016; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4600. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fluensulfone; Pesticide Tolerance for Emergency Exemption'' (FRL No. 9942–10–OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2016; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4601. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Alpha-[2,4,6-Tris[1-(phenyl)ethyl]phenyl]-OMEGA-hydroxypoly(oxyethylene)poly(oxypropylene)copolymer; Tolerance Exemption'' (FRL No. 9942–48–OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2016; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4602. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Trifloxystrobin; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9941–92–OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2016; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4603. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''D-Glucitol, 1-deoxy-1-(methylamino)-, N–C8–10 acyl derivatives; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9942–43–OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2016; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4604. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Golden Nematode; Removal of Regulated Areas in Orleans, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties, New York'' (Docket No. APHIS–2015–0040) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2016; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4605. A communication of from the Director of the Transparency and Accountability Reporting Division, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards'' (RIN0505–AA15) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2016; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4606. A communication from the Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting a report on the approved retirement of General Lloyd J. Austin III, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4607. A communication from the Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Mary A. Legere, United States Army, and her advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4608. A communication from the Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting the report of ten (10) officers authorized to wear the insignia of the grade of major general or brigadier general in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4609. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting the report of an officer authorized to wear the insignia of the grade of brigadier general in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4610. A communication from the Program Specialist of the Legislative and Regulatory Activities Division, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Expanded Examination Cycle for Certain Small Insured Depository Institutions and U.S. Branches and Agencies of Foreign Banks'' (RIN1557–AE01) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4611. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Rulemaking to Affirm Interim Amendments to Dates in Federal Implementation Plans Addressing Interstate Transport of Ozone and Fine Particulate Matter'' ((RIN2060–AS40) (FRL No. 9943–36–OAR)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4612. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval of Arizona Air Plan Revisions; Phoenix, Arizona; Second 10-Year Carbon Monoxide Maintenance Plan'' (FRL No. 9942–17–Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4613. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Plan Disapproval; Georgia: Disapproval of Automatic Rescission Clause'' (FRL No. 9943–35–Region 4) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4614. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Plan Approval; Wisconsin; Base Year Emission Inventories for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard'' (FRL No. 9943–31–Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4615. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Plan Approval; Ohio; Regional Haze Glatfelter BART SIP Revision'' (FRL No. 9943–29–Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4616. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Plan Approval; Illinois; Base Year Emission Inventories for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard'' (FRL No. 9943–33–Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4617. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Federal Plan Requirements for Sewage Sludge Incineration Units Constructed on or Before October 14, 2010'' ((RIN2060–AR77) (FRL No. 9940–50–OAR)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4618. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division,

Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval of Iowa's Air Quality Implementation Plans; Iowa Plan for the 2008 Lead Standard'' (FRL No. 9942–79–Region 7) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4619. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Virginia; Prevention of Significant Deterioration; Fine Particulate Matter'' (FRL No. 9942–90–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4620. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; State of Utah; Revisions to the Utah Division of Administrative Rules, R307–300 Series; Area Source Rules for Attainment of Fine Particulate Matter Standards'' (FRL No. 9935–54–Region 8) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4621. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Quality: Revision to the Regulatory Definition of Volatile Organic Compounds—Requirements for t-Butyl Acetate'' ((RIN2060–AR65) (FRL No. 9942–80–OAR)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4622. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report of the Attorney General to the Congress of the United States on the Administration of the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as amended, for the six months ending June 30, 2015''; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4623. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (P.L. 107–243) and the Authorization for the Use of Force Against Iraq Resolution of 1991 (P.L. 102–1) for the August 15, 2015—October 13, 2015 reporting period; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4624. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a petition to add workers who were employed at Battelle Laboratories at the King Avenue site in Columbus, Ohio, to the Special Exposure Cohort; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4625. A communication from the Acting Director, Pay and Leave, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Prevailing Rate Systems; Definition of Hancock County, Mississippi, to a Nonappropriated Fund Federal Wage System Wage Area'' (RIN3206–AN20) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2016; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4626. A communication from the Report to the Nation Delegation Director, Boy Scouts of America, transmitting, pursuant to law, the organization's 2015 annual report; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–4627. A communication from the Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, transmitting proposed legislation entitled ''Beijing Treaty Implementation Act of 2016''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–4628. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) Quarterly Report to Congress; First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2016''; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–4629. A communication from the Secretary of the Commission, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Automotive Fuel Ratings, Certification and Posting'' (RIN3084–AB39) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 1, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petition or memorial was laid before the Senate and was referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–132. A petition from a citizen of the State of Minnesota relative to the election of a Senator; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. THUNE for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

*Thomas F. Scott Darling, III, of Massachusetts, to be Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

*Daniel B. Maffei, of New York, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner for a term expiring June 30, 2017.

*Coast Guard nomination of Francis S. Pelkowski, to be Rear Admiral .

*Coast Guard nomination of Rear Adm. Fred M. Midgette, to be Vice Admiral.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

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 Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 2622. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of Fort Ontario in the State of New York; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. UDALL):

S. 2623. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to deny the deduction for advertising and promotional expenses for prescription drugs; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. CASEY, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 2624. A bill to establish the ''Biomedical Innovation Fund'', and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. TOOMEY:

S. 2625. A bill to protect our servicemembers' children from convicted pedophiles and other felons infiltrating the classroom; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mr. MORAN):

S. 2626. A bill to authorize the operation of unmanned aircraft systems by institutions of higher education for educational and research purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. REID):

S. 2627. A bill to adjust the boundary of the Mojave National Preserve; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. COONS:

S. 2628. A bill to authorize the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. COONS, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2629. A bill to establish in the United States Agency for International Development an entity to be known as the United States Global Development Lab, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 2630. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to require certain disclosures be included on employee pay stubs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 2631. A bill to amend the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992 to define environmental intervention blood lead level, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CASSIDY:

S. 2632. A bill to promote freedom, human rights, and the rule of law as part of United States-Vietnam relations and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BENNET, Mr. UDALL, Mr. BROWN, and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 2633. A bill to improve the ability of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide health care to veterans through non-Department health care providers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. FRANKEN:

S. 2634. A bill to establish an interagency One Health Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 2635. A bill to enhance the ability of the United States to carry out icebreaking in the polar regions and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. TESTER:

S. 2636. A bill to amend the Act of June 18, 1934, to require mandatory approval of applications for land to be taken into trust if the

land is wholly within a reservation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 2637. A bill to amend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to clarify the treatment of authentic Alaska Native articles of handicraft containing nonedible migratory bird parts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. SULLIVAN:

S. 2638. A bill to provide for the issuance of a Battle of Midway 75th Anniversary Semipostal Stamp; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself and Mr. MCCAIN):

S. 2639. A bill to direct the Director of the Government Publishing Office to provide members of the public with Internet access to Congressional Research Service reports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Ms. CANTWELL, and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 2640. A bill to amend the market name of genetically altered salmon in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. 2641. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act, in relation to requiring adrenoleukodystrophy screening of newborns; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 2642. A bill to require air carriers to provide training to certain employees and contractors to combat human trafficking; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mr. NELSON, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. Res. 385. A resolution recognizing the historic achievement of astronaut Scott Joseph Kelly of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration as the first person of the United States to complete a continuous 1-year mission in space; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. REID, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. COONS, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. NELSON, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. UDALL, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. WARREN, Mr. KING, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. CARPER):

S. Res. 386. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the United States should establish a goal of more than 50 percent clean and carbon-free electricity by 2030 to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, grow the economy, increase shared prosperity, improve public health, and preserve the national security of the United States; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. Res. 387. A resolution congratulating the Historic Columbia River Highway on its 100th year; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. KIRK, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MURPHY, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. Res. 388. A resolution supporting the goals of International Women's Day; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. Res. 389. A resolution designating March 6, 2016, as the first annual ''World Lymphedema Day'' ; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. INHOFE):

S. Res. 390. A resolution designating March 3, 2016 as ''World Wildlife Day'' ; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 578

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 578, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 901

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) 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. 1506

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1506, a bill to provide for youth jobs, and for other purposes.

S. 1661

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1661, a bill to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to preserve consumer and employer access to licensed independent insurance producers.

S. 1775

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1775, a bill to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to accept additional documentation when considering the application for veterans status of an individual who performed service as a coastwise merchant seaman during World War II, and for other purposes.

S. 1890

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1890, a bill to amend chapter 90 of title 18, United States Code, to provide Federal jurisdiction for the theft of trade secrets, and for other purposes.

S. 1989

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1989, a bill to improve access to primary care services.

S. 2185

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2185, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition of the fight against breast cancer.

S. 2235

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2235, a bill to repeal debt collection amendments made by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015.

S. 2373

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) 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. 2426

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2426, a bill to direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to obtain observer status for Taiwan in the International Criminal Police Organization, and for other purposes.

S. 2536

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2536, a bill to require the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to issue a notice of proposed rulemaking regarding the inclusion in aircraft medical kits of medications and equipment to meet the emergency medical needs of children.

S. 2544

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2544, a bill to increase public safety by punishing and deterring firearms trafficking.

S. 2551

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2551, a bill to help prevent acts of genocide and mass atrocities, which threaten national and international security, by enhancing United States civilian capacities to prevent and mitigate such crises.

S. 2600

At the request of Mr. LEE, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr.

VITTER) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) were added as cosponsors of S. 2600, a bill to amend the Military Selective Service Act to provide that any modification to the duty to register for purposes of the Military Selective Service Act may be made only through an Act of Congress, and for other purposes.

S. 2611

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2611, a bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to replace the Federal Election Commission with the Federal Election Administration, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 4

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 4, a concurrent resolution supporting the Local Radio Freedom Act.

S. RES. 383

At the request of Mr. PERDUE, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 383, a resolution recognizing the importance of the United States-Israel economic relationship and encouraging new areas of cooperation.

AMENDMENT NO. 3402

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3402 intended to be proposed to S. 524, a bill to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself and Mr. MCCAIN):

S. 2639. A bill to direct the Director of the Government Publishing Office to provide members of the public with Internet access to Congressional Research Service reports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Senator MCCAIN and I are introducing bipartisan, bicameral legislation to make reports published by the Congressional Research Service, CRS, available to the American public online. This legislation will open up an invaluable, taxpayer-funded resource for use by schools, universities, researchers, libraries, and individuals across the country.

The CRS was founded more than 100 years ago to provide comprehensive, non-partisan information on vital issues affecting national policy. In 2015, CRS issued over 1200 new reports and updated almost 2500 existing products, on matters ranging from the structure of government agencies, to summaries of legislative proposals, foreign policy primers, and everything in between. These reports are posted on an internal website for use by Members of Congress and their staff, but they are not distributed directly to the public. In an informal arrangement that is all too familiar in Washington, this unnecessary restriction has created a cottage industry of services that make copies of the reports available to lobbyists for a subscription fee. Schools and the general public cannot access them, nor do readers know whether the scattering of CRS reports they can find online through third-party websites are authentic, complete, or up-to-date. That's not very 'public' and does nothing for the average citizen in Vermont or the rest of the country who does not have easy access to Washington.

Our bipartisan, bicameral legislation stops this unequal access by providing for CRS Reports to be published online in a comprehensive free, and searchable database on the website of the Government Publishing Office, GPO. This straightforward but important step has long been called for by libraries, educators, and public interest groups across the country. It is also supported by retired and former CRS employees, who note that ''CRS reports are widely available on Capitol Hill to staff and lobbyists alike, are released with no expectation of confidentiality, and could be of immense value to the general public.''

The century-old CRS was founded on the principles of nonpartisanship and respect for accurate, thoughtful information to inform the policy conversations of the day. It is a testament to the best ideals of Congress, and all Americans should benefit from the work and resources it provides. When I think of my grandchildren working on research reports for school, I want them to have access to this resource. I also want the American people to know what information their Members of Congress are receiving on leading policy issues of the day.

The legislation includes several important measures—responsive to concerns from CRS—to ensure that only appropriate materials are shared online. It makes clear that the GPO website will include only final, non-confidential CRS Reports and similar written, non-confidential CRS products that are intended for general Congressional distribution. It firmly excludes from publication any memoranda or other custom materials that CRS provides in response to a research request from an individual Member of Congress. The bill allows for identifying information for individual CRS researchers to be redacted so that CRS, not individual staffers, is the named author of a work. It also requires the inclusion of a written notification in all CRS Reports to explain that the materials were prepared by CRS for use by Congress, and should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role.

This is an exciting time for the Library of Congress and its divisions such as CRS. For the first time since 1987, the President has nominated, and I hope the Senate Rules Committee will soon consider, a new Librarian of Congress to lead one of the largest libraries in the world. As we move further into the digital age, now is an important moment to consider the promise of this great American institution and the resources it provides.

I thank Senator MCCAIN for his long partnership with me on this effort, as well as Representatives LANCE and QUIGLEY who today are introducing bipartisan companion legislation in the House. I hope members will join us in supporting this straightforward, but important, step to make CRS reports available to the public so that all Americans may enjoy this invaluable resource equally.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that letters of support be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

OCTOBER 22, 2015.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BLUNT, CHAIRMAN CAPITO, CHAIRMAN MILLER, CHAIRMAN GRAVES, RANKING MEMBER SCHUMER, RANKING MEMBER SCHATZ, RANKING MEMBER BRADY, RANKING MEMBER WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, AND VICE CHAIRMAN HARPER: We are former employees of the Congressional Research Service (CRS), with more than a collective five hundred years with the agency. We write in strong support of timely, comprehensive free public access to CRS reports. In doing so, we distinguish between CRS reports, which are non-confidential, and other CRS products, such as memoranda, which are confidential.

CRS plays a vital role in our legislative process by informing lawmakers and staff about important policy issues. To that end, nothing should impair CRS's ability to provide confidential support to members of Congress, such as through briefings and confidential memoranda. Nor should Congress take any steps to weaken the Constitutionally-protected status of CRS's work product. In contrast, CRS reports are widely available on Capitol Hill to staff and lobbyists alike, are released with no expectation of confidentiality, and could be of immense value to the general public.

Longstanding congressional policy allows Members and committees to distribute CRS products to the public, which they do in a variety of ways. In addition, CRS provides reports upon request to the judicial branch, to journalists, and to the executive branch, which often publishes them on agency websites. Insiders with relationships to congressional staff can easily obtain the reports, and well-resourced groups pay for access from third-party subscription services. Members of the public, however, can freely access only a subset of CRS reports, usually via third parties.

It is difficult for the public to know the scope of CRS products they could obtain from Congress. A Google search returned over 27,000 products including 4,260 hosted on .gov domains, but there is no way to know if those documents are up to date, whether the search is comprehensive, or when the documents might disappear from view.

We believe Congress should provide a central online source for timely public access to CRS reports. That would place all members of the public on an equal footing to one another with respect to access. It would resolve concerns around public and congressional use of the most up-to-date version. Additionally, it would ensure the public can verify it is using an authentic version. And it would diminish requests to analysts to provide a copy of the most recent report. Other legislative support agencies, i.e., the Congressional Budget Office and the Government Accountability Office, publish non-confidential reports on their websites as a matter of course. Doing so does not appear to harm their ability to perform their mission for Congress.

We thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on implementing full public access to non-confidential CRS reports. If you wish to discuss this further, please contact Daniel Schuman, Demand Progress policy director, at daniel@demandprogress.org, or Kevin Kosar, R Street Institute senior fellow and governance director, at kkosar@rstreet.org. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

With best regards,

Henry Cohen, George Costello, Heather Durkin, Gregg Esenwein, Louis Fisher, Peggy Garvin, Bernie Gelb, Jeffrey C. Griffith, Pamela Hairston, Glennon J. Harrison, Kevin Holland, Thomas Hungerford, W. Jackson, Kevin Kosar, Jon Medalia, Elizabeth Palmer, Harold Relyea, Morton Rosenberg, Daniel Schuman, Christine Scott, Sherry Shapiro, Nye Stevens.

NOVEMBER 12, 2015.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BLUNT, CHAIRMAN MILLER, RANKING MEMBER SCHUMER, RANKING MEMBER BRADY, AND VICE CHAIRMAN HARPER: We write in support of expanded public access to Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports. Longstanding congressional policy allows Members and committees to use their websites to disseminate CRS products to the public, although CRS itself may not engage in direct public dissemination. This results in a disheartening inequity. Insiders with Capitol Hill connections can easily obtain CRS reports from any of the 20,000 congressional staffers and well-resourced groups can pay for access from subscription services. However, members of the public can access only a small subset of CRS reports that are posted on an assortment of not-for-profit websites on an intermittent basis. Now is the time for a systematic solution that provides timely, comprehensive free public access to and preservation of non-confidential reports while protecting confidential communications between CRS and Members and committees of Congress.

CRS reports—not to be confused with confidential CRS memoranda and other products—play a critical role in our legislative process by informing lawmakers and staff about the important issues of the day. The public should have the same access to information. In 2014 CRS completed over 1,000 new reports and updated over 2,500 existing products. (CRS also produced nearly 3,000 confidential memoranda.)

Our interest in free public access to non-confidential CRS reports illustrates the esteem in which the agency is held. CRS reports are regularly requested by members of the public and are frequently cited by the courts and the media. For example, over the last decade CRS reports were cited in 190 federal court opinions, including 64 at the appellate level. Over the same time period, CRS reports were cited 67 times in the Washington Post and 45 times the New York Times. CRS reports often are published in the record of legislative proceedings.

Taxpayers provide more than $100 million annually in support of CRS, and yet members of the public often must look to private companies for consistent access. Some citizens are priced out of these services, resulting in inequitable access to information about government activity that is produced at public expense.

In fact, while CRS generates a list of all the reports it has issued over the previous year, it silently redacts that information from the public-facing version of its annual report, making it difficult for the public to even know the scope of CRS products they could obtain from Congress. A Google search returned over 27,000 reports including 4,260 hosted on .gov domains, but there is no way to know if those documents are up to date, what might be missing, or when they might disappear from view.

Comprehensive free public access to non-confidential CRS reports would place the reports in line with publications by other legislative support agencies in the United States and around the globe. The Government Accountability Office, the Congressional Budget Office, the Law Library of Congress, and 85% of G–20 countries whose parliaments have subject matter experts routinely make reports available to the public.

We hasten to emphasize that we are not calling for public access to CRS products that should be kept confidential or are distributed only to a small network on Capitol Hill. Memoranda produced at the request of a Member or committee and provided to an office in direct response to a request should remain confidential unless the office itself chooses to release the report. By comparison, we believe no such protection should attach to reports typically published on CRS' internal website or otherwise widely disseminated.

We value the work of CRS and in no way wish to impede its ability to serve Congress. CRS reports already undergo multiple levels of administrative review to ensure they are accurate, non-partisan, balanced, and well-written. Authors of every CRS product are aware of the likelihood that reports will become publicly available.

We do not make a specific recommendation on who should comprehensively publish non-confidential CRS reports online, although the approaches outlined in H. Res. 34 (114th Congress) and S. Res. 118 (111th Congress) are reasonable. The Clerk of the House, the Secretary of the Senate, the Government Publishing Office (GPO), the Library of Congress and libraries in the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) are all reasonable places for the public to gain access to these documents. Even bulk publication on GPO's website would be a major step forward.

We ask only that all non-confidential reports be published as they are released, updated, or withdrawn; that they be published in their full, final form; that they are freely downloadable individually and in bulk; and that they be accompanied by an index or metadata that includes the report ID, the date issued/updated, the report name, a hyperlink to the report, the division that produced the report, and possibly the report author(s) as well.

In the attached appendix we briefly address concerns often raised by CRS regarding public access to reports. In doing so, we note that many committees, including the Senate Rules Committee, have published CRS reports on their websites. Also, that many CRS reports are available through third parties. We urge you to give great weight to the significant public benefit that would result from comprehensive, timely access.

We welcome the opportunity to further discuss implementing systematic public access to non-confidential CRS reports. Please contact Daniel Schuman, Demand Progress policy director, at daniel@demandprogress.org, or Kevin Kosar, R Street Institute senior fellow and governance director, at kkosar@rstreet.org. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this matter.

With best regards,

American Association of Law Libraries, American Civil Liberties Union, American Library Association, Americans for Tax Reform, Association of Research Libraries, Bill of Rights Defense Committee, California State University San Marcos, Cause of Action, Center for Democracy and Technology, Center for Effective Government, Center for Media and Democracy, Center for Responsive Politics, Citizens Against Government Waste, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, Congressional Data Coalition, Data Transparency Coalition, Defending Dissent Foundation, Demand Progress, Engine, Essential Information.

Federation of American Scientists, Freedom Works, Free Government Information, Government Accountability Project, Middlebury College Library, Minnesota Coalition On Government Information, National Coalition for History, National Security Archive, National Security Counselors, National Taxpayers Union, NewFields Research Library, Niskanen Center, OpenTheGovernment.org, Project on Government Oversight, Public Citizen, R Street Institute, Sunlight Foundation, Taxpayers for Common Sense, Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) at Syracuse University, Union of Concerned Scientists, Western Illinois University Libraries.

Amy Spare, Andrew Lopez, Connecticut College, Barbara Jones, Ben Amata, California State University, Sacramento, Ben Doherty, Bernadine Abbott Hoduski, Professional Staff Member, Joint Committee on Printing, retired, Bert Chapman, Purdue University Libraries, Bill Olbrich, Bradley Seybold, Brandon Burnette, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Brenda Ellis, BWS Johnson, Carol Bredemeyer, Carrie Russell, Christine Alvey, Maryland State Archives, Claire King, Kansas Supreme Court Law Library, Crystal Davidson, King College, Daniel Barkley, University of New Mexico, Danya Leebaw, Dave Morrison, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

Deborah Melnick, LLAGNY, Dianne Oster, Donna Burton, Union College, Dorothy Ormes, Edward Herman, Eileen Heaser, CSUS Library, Ellen Simmons, Eric Mill, Francis Buckley, former Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Gail Fithian, Gail Whittemore, Genevieve Nicholson, Helen Burke, Jacque Howell, Jane Larrington, Janetta Paschal, Jeanette Sparks, Jennifer Pesetsky, JoAnne Deeken, Joy T. Pile, Middlebury College.

Judith Downie, Julia Hughes, Karen Heil, Government Information Librarian, Middletown Thrall Library, Karen Russ, Kathleen L. Amen, Kathy Carmichael, KC Halstead, Kelly McGlynn, Kristine R. Kreilick, LaRita Schandorff, Larry Romans, Laura G. Harper, Linda Johnson, University of New Hampshire, Lois Fundis, Mary H. Weir Public Library, Lori Gwinett, Lori L. Smith, Louise Buckley, University of New Hampshire Library, Louise England, Marna Morland, Mamita Simpson, University of Virginia Law Library.

Mary Anne Curlee, Mary Jo Lazun, Megan Brooks, Melissa Pinch, Michael J. Malbin, Professor of Political Science, SUNY Albany, Michele Hayslett, UNC at Chapel Hill, Mike Lynch, Mohamed Haian Abdirahman, Norman Ornstein, P. Duerr, Patricia J. Powell, Government Documents Librarian, Roanoke College Library, Professor Patricia B.M. Brennan, Rachel H. Carpenter, Reference Government Documents Librarian,

Rhode Island College, Rebecca Richardson, Robert Sippel, Florida Institute of Technology, Rosemary Campagna, Sandy Schiefer, University of Missouri—Columbia, Schuyler M. Cook, Scott Casper, Shari Laster.

Stephanie Braunstein, Stephen Hayes, Hesburgh Libraries, University of Notre Dame, Susan Bucks, Monmouth University, Susan Udry, Tammy Savinski, Taylor Fitchett, Thomas E. Hickman, Thomas E. Mann, Victoria Mitchell, Wendy Swanberg, Wilhelmina Randtke.

FEBRUARY 29, 2016.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MILLER, CHAIRMAN BLUNT, AND VICE CHAIRMAN HARPER: As a coalition of 12 conservative, free market organizations we urge you to expand public access to Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports.

Each year CRS receives $100 million in taxpayer funding to produce and update thousands of nonpartisan reports describing government agencies, explaining public policy, and tallying government spending. They are an invaluable resource to Congress in its efforts to oversee our massive federal government and hold it accountable.

Members of Congress and their staff have easy access to CRS reports. So too do lobbyists and other Beltway insiders, who often pay for the reports through expensive subscription services. But taxpayers cannot easily get copies of CRS reports.

This policy is unfair and outdated. It also stands in stark contrast to other legislative branch agencies: both the Congressional Budget Office and the Government Accountability Office release their reports to the public.

Making CRS reports easily accessible by the public will increase transparency in government, and allow everyday citizens access to important information that will better educate them on the issues before Congress. The bottom line is taxpayers pay for these reports. It is only fair that they have easy access to them.

Sincerely,

Phil Kerpen, President, American Commitment; Grover Norquist, President, Americans for Tax Reform; Norm Singleton, President, Campaign for Liberty; Neil Bradley, Chief Strategy Officer, Conservative Reform Network; Tom Schatz, President, Council for Citizens Against Government Waste; Adam Brandon, President and CEO, Freedom Works; Michael Needham, CEO, Heritage Action for America; Michael Ostrolenk, Co-Founder, Liberty Coalition; Brandon Arnold, Executive Director, National Taxpayers Union; Jerry Taylor, President, Niskanen Center; Kevin Kosar, Senior Fellow and Director of the Governance Project, R Street Institute; David Williams, President, Taxpayers Protection Alliance.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 385—RECOGNIZING THE HISTORIC ACHIEVEMENT OF ASTRONAUT SCOTT JOSEPH KELLY OF THE NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION AS THE FIRST PERSON OF THE UNITED STATES TO COMPLETE A CONTINUOUS 1-YEAR MISSION IN SPACE

Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mr. NELSON, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. MENENDEZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:

S. RES. 385

Whereas Scott Joseph Kelly was born on February 21, 1964, to Richard and Patricia Kelly in Orange, New Jersey, and raised in West Orange, New Jersey;

Whereas Scott Kelly received—

(1) a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering from the State University of New York Maritime College in 1987; and

(2) a Master of Science degree in aviation systems from the University of Tennessee in 1996;

Whereas in July 1989, Scott Kelly was designated as a naval aviator in Beeville, Texas, and subsequently made overseas deployments aboard the *USS Dwight D. Eisenhower* to—

(1) the North Atlantic Ocean;

(2) the Mediterranean Sea;

(3) the Red Sea; and

(4) the Persian Gulf;

Whereas since completing training at the United States Naval Test Pilot School in June 1994, Scott Kelly has—

(1) logged over 8,000 hours in not fewer than 40 different aircraft and spacecraft; and

(2) made not fewer than 250 carrier landings;

Whereas in 2012, Scott Kelly retired from the Navy as a captain;

Whereas since being selected by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (referred to in this preamble as ''NASA'') for astronaut training in 1996, Scott Kelly has served—

(1) in 1999, as a pilot of the Space Shuttle Discovery on STS–103 to service the Hubble Space Telescope;

(2) in 2007, as Mission Commander of the Space Shuttle Endeavor on STS–118 to the International Space Station (referred to in this preamble as the ''ISS'');

(3) as a flight engineer for ISS Expedition 25;

(4) as the Commander of ISS Expedition 26; and

(5) as a 1-year crew member of ISS Expeditions 43, 44, 45, and 46, including 6 months of service as Commander;

Whereas on March 27, 2015, Scott Kelly launched into space for a 340-day mission aboard the ISS;

Whereas during his 340-day voyage aboard the ISS, Scott Kelly—

(1) remained in continuous orbit around the Earth;

(2) achieved the longest continuous amount of time that a United States astronaut has spent living in space;

(3) in addition to his regular duties of ISS maintenance, participated in hundreds of scientific studies; and

(4) conducted 3 space walks;

Whereas Scott Kelly participated in a 1-year twins study in space while his identical twin brother, former NASA astronaut Mark Kelly, acted as a human control specimen on Earth, providing an understanding of the physical, behavioral, microbiological, and molecular reaction of the human body to an extended period of time in space, which could—

(1) be pivotal for the United States goal for humans to explore Mars; and

(2) contribute to unforeseen scientific innovations that benefit all of humanity;

Whereas the 340-day space mission of Scott Kelly—

(1) generated new insight into how the human body adjusts to weightlessness, isolation, radiation, and the stress of long-duration space flight; and

(2) will help support astronaut physical and mental well-being during longer space exploration missions in the future;

Whereas Scott Kelly completed the 340-day mission with Russian cosmonaut Mikhail Kornienko, embodying peaceful international cooperation in outer space;

Whereas on March 1, 2016, Scott Kelly touched down on Earth, ending his 340-day space voyage; and

Whereas, the 1-year mission of Scott Kelly marks a significant step in reaching the goals of NASA of future missions to Mars, elsewhere in the solar system, and beyond: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates National Aeronautics and Space Administration astronaut Scott Kelly for—

(A) the historic achievement in completing a 1-year mission in space; and

(B) a successful return to Earth, the United States, and his family;

(2) recognizes that—

(A) the 1-year mission of Scott Kelly contributed to research on the effects of long-duration space flight on the human body and mind; and

(B) continuing studies of human health are critical to future human exploration of space; and

(3) applauds the contributions of the 1-year journey in space of Scott Kelly to the scientific progress of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 386—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD ESTABLISH A GOAL OF MORE THAN 50 PERCENT CLEAN AND CARBON-FREE ELECTRICITY BY 2030 TO AVOID THE WORST IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, GROW THE ECONOMY, INCREASE SHARED PROSPERITY, IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH, AND PRESERVE THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. REID, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. COONS, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. NELSON, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. UDALL, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. WARREN, Mr. KING, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. CARPER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources:

S. RES. 386

Whereas failing to act on climate change will have a devastating impact on the United States economy, costing billions of dollars in lost gross domestic product;

Whereas extreme weather, intensified by climate change, has already cost taxpayers billions of dollars each year in recovery efforts and the amount will continue to grow if climate change is not addressed;

Whereas decreased economic growth and increased costs of infrastructure repairs and other recovery efforts due to climate change will significantly increase the budget deficit and undermine the fiscal stability of the United States;

Whereas climate change will have devastating public health implications, including—

(1) increased rates of asthma and other respiratory diseases, especially in vulnerable

populations, including children and low income communities;

(2) the spread of infectious diseases;

(3) risks to food and water supplies; and

(4) an increased number of premature deaths;

Whereas inaction on climate change will disproportionately impact communities of color and exacerbate economic inequalities;

Whereas the Secretary of Defense has identified climate change as a threat multiplier that will increase global instability and conflict;

Whereas the transition to a clean energy economy is feasible with existing technology; and

Whereas the transition to clean energy will—

(1) create millions of jobs;

(2) increase—

(A) the gross domestic product of the United States; and

(B) household income;

(3) save—

(A) billions of dollars in avoidable health costs; and

(B) lives and improve public health;

(4) lower energy bills for businesses and consumers;

(5) help the United States achieve the international emissions reduction goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 26 to 28 percent of 2005 levels by 2025; and

(6) unlock billions of dollars in private investment: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that the United States should—

(1) establish a national goal of more than 50 percent clean and carbon-free electricity by 2030; and

(2) enact legislation to accelerate the transition to clean energy to meet that goal.

SENATE RESOLUTION 387—CONGRATULATING THE HISTORIC COLUMBIA RIVER HIGHWAY ON ITS 100TH YEAR

Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works:

S. RES. 387

Whereas June 7, 2016 marks the 100th anniversary of the Historic Columbia River Highway, a 75-mile-long scenic highway designed by Samuel C. Lancaster that runs through the Columbia River Gorge between Troutdale and The Dalles, Oregon;

Whereas the Historic Columbia River Highway, the first scenic highway in the United States and the first modern highway in the Pacific Northwest, is a National Historic Landmark;

Whereas Samuel C. Lancaster wrote that, when engineering the Historic Columbia River Highway, Lancaster aimed ''to find . . . the points where the most beautiful things along the line might be seen to the best advantage, and if possible to locate the road in such a way as to reach them'';

Whereas the Historic Columbia River Highway is an engineering masterpiece that successfully used innovative engineering techniques to complement the magnificent natural landscape of the Columbia River Gorge;

Whereas the Historic Columbia River Highway showcases all aspects of the rich and diverse natural landscape of Oregon, including Multnomah Falls, the fourth-largest waterfall in the United States;

Whereas the construction of a water-level route through the Columbia River Gorge, now Interstate 84, destroyed many sections of the Historic Columbia River Highway;

Whereas, in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act of 1986 (Public Law 99–663; 100 Stat. 4274), Congress directed the Oregon Department of Transportation to prepare a program to preserve and restore the Historic Columbia River Highway for public use as a historic road;

Whereas the State of Oregon is working to connect intact and usable highway segments with recreation trails, where feasible, to create a continuous historic road route through the Columbia River Gorge that links local, State, and Federal recreation facilities; and

Whereas the continued preservation and restoration of the Historic Columbia River Highway will provide greater access to the Columbia River Gorge for recreation and tourism, which will help to boost the economies of the region: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the Historic Columbia River Highway on its 100th year;

(2) recognizes the cultural, economic, and environmental importance of the Historic Columbia River Highway;

(3) expresses support for the continued success of the restoration of the Historic Columbia River Highway; and

(4) requests that the Secretary of the Senate prepare an official copy of this resolution for presentation to Senator Wyden, Senator Merkley, and Kevin Gorman of Friends of the Columbia Gorge.

SENATE RESOLUTION 388—SUPPORTING THE GOALS OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. KIRK, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MURPHY, and Ms. CANTWELL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 388

Whereas, in March 2016, there are more than 3,640,000,000 women in the world;

Whereas women around the world—

(1) have fundamental rights;

(2) participate in the political, social, and economic lives of their communities;

(3) play a critical role in providing and caring for their families;

(4) contribute substantially to economic growth and the prevention and resolution of conflict; and

(5) as farmers and caregivers, play an important role in the advancement of food security for their communities;

Whereas the advancement of women around the world is a foreign policy priority for the United States;

Whereas, on July 28, 2015, in Mandela Hall at the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the President told individuals in Africa—

(1) ''if you want your country to grow and succeed, you have to empower your women. And if you want to empower more women, America will be your partner''; and

(2) ''girls cannot go to school and grow up not knowing how to read or write—that denies the world future women engineers, future women doctors, future women business owners, future women presidents—that sets us all back'';

Whereas 2015 marked the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration at the Fourth World Conference on Women, in September 1995, which reaffirmed—

(1) the commitment of the international community to the full implementation of the rights of women and girls as an inalienable, integral, and indivisible part of all human rights; and

(2) that local, regional, national, and global peace is attainable and inextricably linked to the advancement of women, who are a fundamental force for leadership, conflict resolution, and the promotion of lasting peace at all levels;

Whereas 2016 will mark the 5-year anniversary of the establishment of the first United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, which includes a comprehensive set of commitments by the United States to advance the meaningful participation of women in decisionmaking relating to matters of war or peace;

Whereas the first United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security states that, ''Deadly conflicts can be more effectively avoided, and peace can be best forged and sustained, when women become equal partners in all aspects of peace-building and conflict prevention, when their lives are protected, their experiences considered, and their voices heard.'';

Whereas there are 58 national action plans around the world, and there are 15 national action plans known to be in development;

Whereas at the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism in February 2015, leaders from more than 60 countries, multilateral bodies, civil society, and private sector organizations agreed to a comprehensive action agenda against violent extremism that—

(1) highlights the importance of the inclusion of women in countering the threat of violent extremism; and

(2) notes that ''women are partners in prevention and response, as well as agents of change'';

Whereas women remain underrepresented in conflict prevention and conflict resolution efforts, despite the proven success of women in conflict-affected regions in—

(1) moderating violent extremism;

(2) countering terrorism;

(3) resolving disputes through nonviolent mediation and negotiation; and

(4) stabilizing societies by improving access to peace and security—

(A) services;

(B) institutions; and

(C) venues for decisionmaking;

Whereas peace negotiations are more likely to end in a peace agreement when women's groups play an influential role in the negotiation process;

Whereas studies show that a peace agreement is 35 percent more likely to last not less than 15 years if women participate in the development of the peace agreement;

Whereas according to the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the Department of State, the full and meaningful participation of women in security forces vastly enhances the effectiveness of the security forces;

Whereas, on August 30, 2015, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom highlighted, ''our goal must be to build societies in which sexual violence is treated—legally and by every institution of authority—as the serious and wholly intolerable crime that it is. We have seen global campaigns and calls to action draw attention to this issue and mobilize governments and organizations to act. But transformation requires the active participation of men and women everywhere. We must settle for nothing less than a united world saying no to sexual violence and yes to justice, fairness and peace.'';

Whereas, in 2014—

(1) 700,000,000 women or girls had been married before the age of 18; and

(2) 250,000,000 women or girls had been married before the age of 15;

Whereas, on October 11, 2013, the President strongly condemned the practice of child marriage;

Whereas approximately ¼ of girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are victims of physical violence;

Whereas it is estimated that 1 in 3 women around the world has experienced some form of physical or sexual violence;

Whereas according to the 2012 report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime entitled the ''Global Report on Trafficking in Persons''—

(1) adult women account for between 55 and 60 percent of all known trafficking victims worldwide; and

(2) adult women and girls account for approximately 75 percent of all known trafficking victims worldwide;

Whereas according to the United Nations, women are subjected to physical or sexual violence, including rape, other forms of sexual violence, and human trafficking, as a weapon of war;

Whereas 603,000,000 women live in countries in which domestic violence is not criminalized;

Whereas, on August 10, 2012, the President announced the United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally, the first interagency strategy to address gender-based violence around the world;

Whereas, in December 2015, the Department of State released a report on the implementation of the United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally that states, ''Addressing GBV is intimately tied to a range of global efforts that address gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, whether in peacetime or in the midst of conflict. This includes addressing GBV as part of efforts to raise the status of adolescent girls and through women's economic empowerment activities.'';

Whereas the ability of women and girls to realize their full potential is critical to the ability of a country to achieve—

(1) strong and lasting economic growth; and

(2) political and social stability;

Whereas according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, ⅔ of the 775,000,000 illiterate individuals in the world are female;

Whereas 150,000,000 children currently enrolled in school will drop out before completing primary school, not less than 100,000,000 of whom are girls;

Whereas according to the United States Agency for International Development, in comparison with uneducated women, educated women are—

(1) less likely to marry as children; and

(2) more likely to have healthier families;

Whereas a goal of the United Nations Millennium Project, to eliminate gender disparity in primary education, was achieved in most countries not later than 2015, but more work remains;

Whereas gender equality is 1 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on September 25, 2015;

Whereas according to the United Nations, women have access to fewer income earning opportunities and are more likely to manage the household or engage in agricultural work than men, making women more vulnerable to economic insecurity caused by—

(1) natural disasters;

(2) long term changes in weather patterns; or

(3) environmental degradation;

Whereas according to the World Bank Group, women own or partially own more than ⅓ of small- and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries, and 40 percent of the global workforce is female, but female entrepreneurs and employers have disproportionately less access to capital and other financial services than men;

Whereas in the United States, women account for 45 percent of the overall labor force of companies included in the Standard & Poor's 500 Index, and 37 percent of the first or mid-level officials and managers in those companies are women, but—

(1) only 25 percent of the executive and senior level officials and managers in those companies are women;

(2) women only hold 19 percent of the seats on the boards of those companies; and

(3) only 4.6 percent of the Chief Executive Officers of those companies are women;

Whereas globally women earn an average of 24 percent less than men;

Whereas despite the achievements of individual female leaders—

(1) women around the world remain vastly underrepresented in—

(A) high-level positions; and

(B) national and local legislatures and governments; and

(2) according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, women account for only 22 percent of national parliamentarians and 17.7 percent of government ministers;

Whereas according to the World Health Organization, during the period beginning in 1990 and ending in 2015, global maternal mortality decreased by approximately 44 percent, but approximately 830 women die from preventable causes relating to pregnancy or childbirth each day, and 99 percent of all maternal deaths occur in developing countries;

Whereas a target of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on September 25, 2015, is to reduce global maternal mortality to less than 70 deaths for every 100,000 live births not later than 2030;

Whereas according to the World Health Organization—

(1) suicide is the leading cause of death for girls between the ages of 15 and 19; and

(2) complications from pregnancy or childbirth is the second-leading cause of death for those girls;

Whereas the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports that approximately ½ of—

(1) refugees and internally displaced or stateless individuals are women; and

(2) the 59,500,000 displaced individuals in the world are women;

Whereas it is imperative—

(1) to alleviate violence and discrimination against women; and

(2) to afford women every opportunity to be full and productive members of their communities;

Whereas, on October 10, 2014, Malala Yousafzai became the youngest ever Nobel Peace Prize laureate for her work promoting the access of girls to education; and

Whereas March 8, 2016, is recognized as International Women's Day, a global day—

(1) to celebrate the economic, political, and social achievements of women in the past, present, and future; and

(2) to recognize the obstacles that women face in the struggle for equal rights and opportunities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals of International Women's Day;

(2) recognizes that the empowerment of women is inextricably linked to the potential of a country to generate—

(A) economic growth;

(B) sustainable democracy; and

(C) inclusive security;

(3) recognizes and honors individuals in the United States and around the world, including women human rights defenders and civil society leaders, that have worked throughout history to ensure that women are guaranteed equality and basic human rights;

(4) reaffirms the commitment—

(A) to end discrimination and violence against women and girls;

(B) to ensure the safety and welfare of women and girls;

(C) to pursue policies that guarantee the basic human rights of women and girls worldwide; and

(D) to promote meaningful and significant participation of women in every aspect of society and community;

(5) supports inclusive, sustainable development, including through the promotion of the access of women to each tool, skill, and bargaining power needed—

(A) to promote peace and stability in society;

(B) to sustain long term economic prosperity; and

(C) to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women; and

(6) encourages the people of the United States to observe International Women's Day with appropriate programs and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 389—DESIGNATING MARCH 6, 2016, AS THE FIRST ANNUAL ''WORLD LYMPHEDEMA DAY''

Mr. SCHUMER (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 389

Whereas lymphedema is a condition that—

(1) occurs when—

(A) the natural lymphatic drainage system of the body is damaged, blocked, or does not develop properly; and

(B) the lymphatic fluid within a certain area, such as the arm, leg, torso, head, or neck, is unable to drain properly;

(2) results in extreme swelling that impairs mobility and function; and

(3) can cause pain and significantly impair the quality of life of the affected individual;

Whereas the total number of individuals living with or at risk for lymphedema is difficult to establish because lymphedema is underreported and often misdiagnosed;

Whereas the underdiagnosis and undertreatment of lymphedema patients costs healthcare providers and healthcare insurers, including the Medicare program, millions of dollars each year because if lymphedema is left untreated—

(1) the potential for infection is greatly increased;

(2) infection may occur in the course of a few hours; and

(3) immediate treatment on an emergency basis is required;

Whereas the World Health Organization estimates that—

(1) more than 150,000,000 individuals worldwide have secondary lymphedema; and

(2) 120,000,000 individuals worldwide are infected with lymphatic filariasis, which leads to lymphedema;

Whereas Stanford University estimates that as many as 10,000,000 individuals in the United States are affected by lymphedema;

Whereas lymphedema can—

(1) as primary lymphedema, be inherited and either be present at birth or manifest itself later in life; or

(2) as secondary lymphedema, develop after cancer treatment, radiation therapy, major

surgery, severe burn, or certain other traumatic injuries, including injuries affecting combat-tested veterans of the United States;

Whereas the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that a high percentage of elderly cancer survivors will develop lymphedema;

Whereas the National Cancer Institute predicts that, not later than 2020—

(1) the number of cancer survivors aged 65 or older will increase by 42 percent; and

(2) as many as 3,000,000 Medicare beneficiaries that are cancer survivors will require treatment for lymphedema;

Whereas lymphedema affects an estimated 15 percent of all cancer survivors and 40 percent of all breast cancer patients; and

Whereas, in recognition of the financial, physical, and psychological impact that lymphedema has on each individual afflicted with lymphedema, it is incumbent on the people of the United States to support—

(1) each courageous individual living and coping with lymphedema, a debilitating condition; and

(2) each caregiver, whether a professional or not a professional, of each individual afflicted with lymphedema: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) it is the sense of the Senate that each tireless advocate and healthcare provider that spends much time and many resources battling lymphedema, a painful and destructive condition that affects many individuals, should be recognized; and

(2) the Senate designates March 6, 2016, as ''World Lymphedema Day''.

SENATE RESOLUTION 390—DESIGNATING MARCH 3, 2016 AS ''WORLD WILDLIFE DAY''

Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. INHOFE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 390

Whereas wildlife has provided numerous economic, environmental, social, and cultural benefits during the course of human history, and wildlife conservation will secure these gifts for future generations;

Whereas plant and animal species play an important role in the stability of diverse ecosystems around the world, and the conservation of this biodiversity is critical to maintain the delicate balance of nature and keep complex ecosystems thriving;

Whereas observation of wild plants and animals in their natural habitat provides individuals with a more enriching world view and a greater appreciation of the wonders of the natural environment;

Whereas tens of millions of individuals in the United States strongly support the conservation of wildlife, both domestically and abroad, and wish to ensure the survival of species in the wild, such as rhinoceroses, tigers, elephants, pangolins, turtles, seahorses, sharks, ginseng, mahogany, and cacti;

Whereas the trafficking of wildlife, including timber and fish, comprises the fourth largest global illegal trade after narcotics, the counterfeiting of products and currency, and human trafficking, and has become a major transnational organized crime with an estimated worth of as much as $19,000,000,000 annually;

Whereas increased demand in Asia for high-value illegal wildlife products, particularly elephant ivory and rhinoceros horns, has recently triggered substantial and rapid increases in poaching of these species, particularly in Africa;

Whereas trafficking of wildlife is a primary threat to many wildlife species, including elephants, rhinoceroses, tigers, pangolins, and sharks;

Whereas many different kinds of criminals, including some terrorist entities and rogue security personnel, often in collusion with corrupt government officials, are involved in wildlife poaching and the movement of ivory and rhinoceros horns across Africa;

Whereas wildlife poaching presents significant security and stability challenges for military and police forces in African nations that are often threatened by heavily armed poachers and the criminal and extremist allies of those poachers;

Whereas wildlife poaching negatively impacts local communities that rely on natural resources for economic development, including tourism;

Whereas penal and financial deterrents can improve the ability of African governments to reduce poaching and trafficking and enhance their capabilities of managing their resources;

Whereas assisting institutions in developing nations, including material, training, legal, and diplomatic support, can reduce illegal wildlife trade;

Whereas wildlife provides a multitude of benefits to all nations, and wildlife crime has wide-ranging economic, environmental, and social impacts;

Whereas, between 2010 and 2013, the number of elephants killed in Africa by poachers is estimated to have been 100,000 out of a remaining population of roughly 500,000 elephants;

Whereas, from 2007 to 2012, the number of elephants killed in Kenya increased by more than 800 percent, from 47 to 387 elephants killed;

Whereas the number of forest elephants in the Congo Basin in Central Africa declined by approximately ⅔ between 2002 and 2012, placing forest elephants on track for extinction in the next decade;

Whereas the number of rhinoceroses killed by poachers in South Africa increased by almost 10,000 percent between 2007 and 2014, from 13 to more than 1,200 rhinoceroses killed;

Whereas as few as 3,200 tigers remain in the wild throughout all of Asia;

Whereas pangolins are often referred to as the most trafficked mammal in the world and all 8 pangolin species spanning Africa and Asia are faced with extinction because pangolin scales are sought after in the practice of traditional Chinese medicine and pangolin meat is considered a delicacy;

Whereas approximately 100,000,000 sharks are killed annually, often targeted solely for their fins, and unsustainable trade is the primary cause of serious population decline in several shark species, including scalloped hammerhead sharks, great hammerhead sharks, and oceanic whitetip sharks;

Whereas the United States is developing and implementing measures to address the criminal, financial, security, and environmental aspects of wildlife trafficking;

Whereas Congress has allocated specific resources to combat wildlife trafficking and address the threats posed by poaching and the illegal wildlife trade;

Whereas, in December 2013, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed March 3 as World Wildlife Day to celebrate and raise awareness of the wild fauna and flora around the world;

Whereas March 3, 2016 represents the third annual celebration of World Wildlife Day;

Whereas, in 2016, the theme of World Wildlife Day is ''The future of wildlife is in our hands''; and

Whereas, in 2016, World Wildlife Day commemorations will ''celebrate the many beautiful and varied forms of wild fauna and flora, raise awareness of the multitude of benefits that wildlife provides to people, and raise awareness of the urgent need to step up the fight against wildlife crime, which has wide-ranging economic, environmental, and social impacts'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 3, 2016 as ''World Wildlife Day'';

(2) supports raising awareness of the benefits that wildlife provides to people and the threats facing wildlife around the world;

(3) supports escalating the fight against wildlife crime, including wildlife trafficking;

(4) applauds the domestic and international efforts to escalate the fight against wildlife crime;

(5) commends the efforts of the United States to mobilize the entire Government in a coordinated, efficient, and effective manner for dramatic progress in the fight against wildlife crime; and

(6) encourages continued cooperation between the United States, international partners, local communities, nonprofit organizations, private industry, and other partner organizations in an effort to conserve and celebrate wildlife, preserving this precious resource for future generations.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3417. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 524, to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3418. Mr. FRANKEN (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. MARKEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 524, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3419. Ms. COLLINS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 524, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3420. Mr. MANCHIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3378 proposed by Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. DURBIN) to the bill S. 524, supra.

SA 3421. Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. CORNYN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3378 proposed by Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. DURBIN) to the bill S. 524, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3422. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 524, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3423. Mr. KIRK submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3378 proposed by Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. DURBIN) to the bill S. 524, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3424. Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 524, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3425. Mr. HOEVEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3378 proposed by Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. DURBIN) to the bill S. 524, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3426. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3378 proposed by Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. DURBIN) to the bill S. 524, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3427. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mrs. FISCHER (for herself, Mr. DAINES, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. PETERS, Mrs. BOXER, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 2276, to amend title 49, United States Code, to provide enhanced safety in pipeline transportation, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3417. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 524, to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title VII, add the following:

SEC. 705. COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES STUDY ON VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS AND VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH PROGRAM.

(a) STUDY AND REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) complete a study on the effectiveness of Veterans Treatment Courts and the Veterans Justice Outreach Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(2) submit to Congress a report on the findings of the Comptroller General with respect to the study completed under paragraph (1).

(b) ELEMENTS.—As part of the study required by subsection (a), the Comptroller General shall assess the following:

(1) The extent to which Veterans Treatment Courts—

(A) provide a benefit to veterans with a mental illness or substance abuse problem; and

(B) provide timely access to services furnished by the Veterans Health Administration.

(2) The number of Veterans Treatment Courts in operation.

(3) The number of Veterans Treatment Courts in the process of being established.

(4) What is known about the effectiveness of Veterans Treatment Courts and what data are reported to the Federal Government about the use and performance of such courts.

(5) The number of veterans assigned to each Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist that is assigned to a Veterans Treatment Court.

(6) The method by which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs allocates the number and location of Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists and whether such method adequately ensures appropriate representation in Veterans Treatment Courts.

(7) To what extent would having additional Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists—

(A) provide veterans with better access to services furnished by the Veterans Health Administration; and

(B) allow for the establishment of additional Veterans Treatment Courts.

SA 3418. Mr. FRANKEN (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. MARKEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 524, to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. REMOVAL OF INMATE LIMITATION ON BENEFITS UNDER MEDICAID.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The subdivision (A) of section 1905(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d(a)) that follows paragraph (29) is amended by inserting ''or in custody pending disposition of charges'' after ''patient in a medical institution''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the first day of the first calendar quarter beginning more than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply to items and services furnished for periods beginning on or after such date.

SA 3419. Ms. COLLINS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 524, to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In section 101, strike subsection (c)(5) and all that follows through the end of the section, and insert the following:

(5) representatives of hospitals;

(6) representatives of—

(A) pain management professional organizations;

(B) the mental health treatment community;

(C) the addiction treatment community;

(D) pain advocacy groups;

(E) groups with expertise around overdose reversal;

(F) State agencies that manage State prescription drug monitoring programs; and

(G) State agencies that administer grants under subpart II of part B of title XIX of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300x–21 et seq.); and

(7) other stakeholders, as the Secretary determines appropriate.

(d) DUTIES.—The task force shall—

(1) not later than 180 days after the date on which the task force is convened under subsection (b), review, modify, and update, as appropriate, best practices for pain management (including chronic and acute pain) and prescribing pain medication, taking into consideration—

(A) existing pain management research;

(B) recommendations from relevant conferences and existing relevant evidence-based guidelines;

(C) ongoing efforts at the State and local levels and by medical professional organizations to develop improved pain management strategies, including consideration of alternatives to opioids to reduce opioid monotherapy in appropriate cases;

(D) the management of high-risk populations, other than populations who suffer pain, who—

(i) may use or be prescribed benzodiazepines, alcohol, and diverted opioids; or

(ii) receive opioids in the course of medical care;

(E) whether the State prescription drug monitoring programs are sufficiently available, functional, and useful to be integrated into the process for prescribing pain medication; and

(F) the Proposed 2016 Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (80 Fed. Reg. 77351 (December 14, 2015)) and any final guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;

(2) solicit and take into consideration public comment on the practices developed under paragraph (1), amending such best practices if appropriate; and

(3) develop a strategy for disseminating information about the best practices to stakeholders, as appropriate.

(e) LIMITATION.—The task force shall not have rulemaking authority.

(f) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the date on which the task force is convened under subsection (b), the task force shall submit to Congress a report that includes—

(1) the strategy for disseminating best practices for pain management (including chronic and acute pain) and prescribing pain medication, as reviewed, modified, or updated under subsection (d);

(2) the results of a feasibility study on linking the best practices described in paragraph (1) to receiving and renewing registrations under section 303(f) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 823(f)); and

(3) recommendations for effectively applying the best practices described in paragraph (1) to improve prescribing practices at medical facilities, including medical facilities of the Veterans Health Administration.

(g) GAO REPORT ON STATE PRESCRIPTION DRUG MONITORING PROGRAMS.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall prepare and submit to Congress a report examining the variations that exist across State prescription drug monitoring programs that have been supported by Federal funds. The Comptroller General shall review, and include in the report recommendations on, best practices to maximize the effectiveness of such programs and State strategies to increase queries to such programs by health care providers.

SA 3420. Mr. MANCHIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3378 proposed by Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. DURBIN) to the bill S. 524, to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use; as follows:

On page 14, line 10, insert ''consumers,'' after ''patients,''.

On page 14, line 12, strike ''prescribed.'' and insert ''prescribed, including opioid and methadone abuse. Such education and awareness campaigns shall include information on the dangers of opioid abuse, how to prevent opioid abuse including through safe disposal of prescription medications and other safety precautions, and detection of early warning signs of addiction.''.

On page 16, line 22, strike ''or''.

On page 17, line 2, insert ''or'' at the end.

On page 17, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

''(C) a sudden increase in opioid-related deaths, as documented by local data;

On page 18, line 23, strike ''1997.'' and insert ''1997, and may also include an evaluation of the effectiveness at reducing abuse of opioids, methadone, or methamphetamines.''.

SA 3421. Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. CORNYN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3378 proposed by Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr.

COONS, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. DURBIN) to the bill S. 524, to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 39, line 1, strike ''other clinically appropriate services,'' and insert ''other clinically appropriate services and through the establishment and support of treatment centers that operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to provide immediate access to behavioral health treatment,''.

SA 3422. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 524, to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. VOTING RIGHTS.

(a) INFORMATION FOR INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS.—The Director of the Bureau of Prisons shall immediately ensure that individuals in the custody of the Bureau of Prisons are provided information regarding the voting rights restoration process upon release and return to their home State.

(b) NOTICE IN CRIMINAL CASES.—The Attorney General shall require that the United States attorneys provide notice to defendants in Federal criminal cases regarding the loss of the right to vote as a result of a plea agreement to any disfranchising offense, whether the offense is a misdemeanor or felony.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report on the disproportionate impact of Federal and State criminal disenfranchisement laws on minority populations, which shall include data on disfranchisement rates by race and ethnicity.

SA 3423. Mr. KIRK submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3378 proposed by Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. DURBIN) to the bill S. 524, to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title V, add the following:

SEC. 504. MANDATORY DISCLOSURE OF CERTAIN VETERAN INFORMATION TO STATE CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE MONITORING PROGRAMS.

Section 5701(l) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking ''may'' and inserting ''shall''.

SA 3424. Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 524, to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. COMBAT HEROIN EPIDEMIC AND BACKLOG ACT.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Combat Heroin Epidemic and Backlog Act of 2016''.

(b) CONFRONTING THE USE OF HEROIN AND ASSOCIATED DRUGS.—Title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3711 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''PART LL—CONFRONTING THE USE OF HEROIN AND ASSOCIATED DRUGS

''SEC. 3021. AUTHORITY TO MAKE GRANTS TO ADDRESS PUBLIC SAFETY AND HEROIN DISTRIBUTION, SALE, AND USE.

''(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to assist States and Indian tribes to—

''(1) carry out programs to address the distribution, sale, and use of heroin, fentanyl, and associated synthetic drugs; and

''(2) improve the ability of State, tribal, and local government institutions to carry out such programs.

''(b) GRANT AUTHORIZATION.—The Attorney General, through the Bureau of Justice Assistance, may make grants to States and Indian tribes to address the distribution, sale, and use of heroin, fentanyl, and associated synthetic drugs to enhance public safety.

''(c) GRANT PROJECTS TO ADDRESS DISTRIBUTION, SALE, AND USE OF HEROIN, FENTANYL, AND ASSOCIATED SYNTHETIC DRUGS.—Grants made under subsection (b) may be used for programs, projects, and other activities to—

''(1) reimburse State, local, or other public crime laboratories and medical examiners to help address backlogs of untested samples of heroin, fentanyl, and associated synthetic drugs as well as associated toxicology testing;

''(2) reimburse State, local, or other public crime laboratories and medical examiners for procuring equipment, technology, or other support systems if the applicant for the grant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Attorney General that expenditures for such purposes would result in improved efficiency of laboratory testing and help prevent future backlogs;

''(3) reimburse State, tribal, and local law enforcement agencies for procuring field-testing equipment for use in the identification or detection of heroin, fentanyl, and associated synthetic drugs;

''(4) investigate, arrest, and prosecute individuals violating laws related to the distribution or sale of heroin, fentanyl, and associated synthetic drugs; and

''(5) support State, tribal, and local health department services deployed to address the use of heroin, fentanyl, and associated synthetic drugs.

''(d) LIMITATION.—Not less than 60 percent of the amounts made available to carry out this section shall be awarded for the purposes under paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection (c).

''(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2017, 2018, and 2019.

''(f) ALLOCATION.—

''(1) POPULATION ALLOCATION.—Seventy-five percent of the amount made available to carry out this section in a fiscal year shall be allocated to each State that meets the requirements of section 2802 so that each State shall receive an amount that bears the same ratio to the 75 percent of the total amount made available to carry out this section for that fiscal year as the population of the State bears to the population of all States.

''(2) DISCRETIONARY ALLOCATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Twenty-five percent of the amount made available to carry out this section in a fiscal year shall be allocated pursuant to the Attorney General's discretion for competitive awards to States and Indian tribes.

''(B) CONSIDERATIONS.—In making awards under subparagraph (A), the Attorney General shall consider—

''(i) the average annual number of part 1 violent crimes reported by each State to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the 3 most recent calendar years for which data is available; and

''(ii) the existing resources and current needs of the potential grant recipient.

''(3) MINIMUM REQUIREMENT.—Each State shall receive not less than 0.6 percent of the amount made available to carry out this section in each fiscal year.

''(4) CERTAIN TERRITORIES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of the allocation under this section, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands shall be considered as 1 State.

''(B) ALLOCATION AMONGST CERTAIN TERRITORIES.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), 67 percent of the amount allocated shall be allocated to American Samoa and 33 percent shall be allocated to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.''.

SA 3425. Mr. HOEVEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3378 proposed by Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. DURBIN) to the bill S. 524, to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 36, line 12, insert ''and partnerships with law enforcement agencies of a unit of local government (including an Indian tribe), the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Drug Enforcement Administration'' after ''collaboration''.

On page 36, line 19, insert ''including through partnerships with law enforcement agencies of a unit of local government (including an Indian tribe), the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Drug Enforcement Administration,'' after ''activities,''

SA 3426. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3378 proposed by Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. DURBIN) to the bill S. 524, to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

TITLE VIII—ACCESS TO MEDICATION-ASSISTED THERAPY

SEC. 801. EXPANDING PATIENT ACCESS TO MEDICATION-ASSISTED TREATMENT.

Section 303(g)(2) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 823(g)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) in clause (iii)—

(i) by inserting ''(I)'' before ''The total'';

(ii) by striking ''30'' and inserting ''100'';

(iii) by striking '', unless, not sooner'' and all that follows through the end and inserting a period; and

(iv) by adding at the end the following:

''(II) If a patient is referred by a qualifying physician to another physician that provides short-term services, such as induction or titration, the patient shall only be included in

the total number of such patients of the qualifying physician that makes the referral.

''(III) In this clause, the term 'the total number of such patients' does not include a patient to whom a qualifying physician meeting the requirements described in clause (iv)(I), or an authorized agent of such qualifying physician, directly administers such drugs or combination drugs that are formulated to have a therapeutic effect lasting 7 days or more.''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(iv) Not earlier than 1 year after the date on which a qualifying physician obtained an initial waiver pursuant to clause (iii), the qualifying physician may submit a second notification to the Secretary of the need and intent of the qualifying physician to treat up to 500 patients, if the qualifying physician—

''(I)(aa) satisfies the requirements of subclause (I), (II), (III), or (IV) of subparagraph (G)(ii); and

''(bb) agrees to fully participate in the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program of the State in which the qualifying physician is licensed, pursuant to applicable State guidelines; or

''(II)(aa) satisfies the requirements of subclause (V), (VI), (VII), or (VIII) of subparagraph (G)(ii);

''(bb) agrees to fully participate in the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program of the State in which the qualifying physician is licensed, pursuant to applicable State guidelines; and

''(cc) has completed not less than 40 hours of training (through classroom situations, seminars at professional society meetings, electronic communications, or otherwise) with respect to the treatment and management of opiate-dependent patients for substance use disorders provided by the American Society of Addiction Medicine, the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry, the American Medical Association, the American Osteopathic Association, the American Psychiatric Association, or any other organization that the Secretary determines is appropriate for purposes of this subclause after providing notice and an opportunity for public comment.

''(v) The qualifying physician shall maintain records relating to the dispensing of drugs or combinations of drugs to treat patients under this paragraph, including not less than 3 of the following:

''(I) The number of patients the qualifying physician treats, as compared to the maximum number of patients the qualifying physician may treat under this paragraph.

''(II) Whether the qualifying physician provides counseling services on-site, and how frequently patients are using such services.

''(III) Whether the qualifying physician referred patients for counseling services off-site, the percentage of the patients of the qualifying physician using such services, and how frequently the patients are using such services.

''(IV) Whether the qualifying physician uses toxicology testing, if applicable, to guide therapeutic dosing and treatment decision making.

''(V) The median period during which patients being treated under this paragraph have received treatment.

''(VI) The median period during which patients being treated under this paragraph with buprenorphine have received treatment.

''(VII) The rate at which patients being treated under this paragraph terminate the treatment against medical advice.

''(vi) The qualifying physician shall—

''(I) participate in not less than 24 hours of continuing education training during the 3-year period beginning on the date of the notification; and

''(II) when the qualifying physician completes the continuing education training described in subclause (I), submit a certification to that effect to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and, if required by the State in which the qualifying physician is licensed, to the State.''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(K) Notwithstanding section 708, nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to preempt any State law that—

''(i) permits a qualifying physician to dispense narcotic drugs in schedule III, IV, or V or combinations of such drugs to a total number of patients for maintenance or detoxification treatment in accordance with this paragraph that is fewer than or more than the applicable number described in clause (iii) or (iv) of subparagraph (B); or

''(ii) requires a qualifying physician to comply with additional requirements relating to the dispensing of narcotic drugs in schedule III, IV, or V or combinations of such drugs, including requirements relating to the practice setting in which the qualifying physician practices and education, training, and reporting requirements.''.

SEC. 802. DEFINITIONS.

Section 303(g)(2)(G)(ii) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 823(g)(2)(G)(ii)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subclauses (IV), (V), (VI), and (VII) as subclauses (V), (VI), (VII), and (VIII), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subclause (III) the following:

''(IV) The physician holds a board certification from the American Board of Addiction Medicine.''.

SEC. 803. EVALUATIONS.

(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''appropriate committees of Congress'' means—

(1) the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives.

(b) HHS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in coordination with the Attorney General, shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the effect on the amendments made by this title on the availability of evidence-based treatment and any increased risk in diversion.

(c) GAO.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Four years after the date on which the first notification under clause (iv) of section 303(g)(2)(B) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 823(g)(2)(B)), as added by this Act, is received by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Comptroller General of the United States shall initiate an evaluation of the effectiveness of the amendments made by this Act, which shall include an evaluation of—

(A) any changes in the availability and use of medication-assisted treatment for opioid addiction;

(B) the quality of medication-assisted treatment programs;

(C) the integration of medication-assisted treatment with routine healthcare services;

(D) diversion of opioid addiction treatment medication;

(E) changes in State or local policies and legislation relating to opioid addiction treatment;

(F) the use of nurse practitioners and physician assistants who prescribe opioid addiction medication;

(G) the use of Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs by waived practitioners to maximize safety of patient care and prevent diversion of opioid addiction medication;

(H) the findings of Drug Enforcement Agency inspections of waived practitioners, including the frequency with which the Drug Enforcement Agency finds no documentation of access to behavioral health services; and

(I) the effectiveness of cross-agency collaboration between Department of Health and Human Services and the Drug Enforcement Agency for expanding effective opioid addiction treatment.

(2) REPORT.—The Comptroller General shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report regarding the evaluation conducted under paragraph (1).

SEC. 804. DEMONSTRATION PROJECT.

Section 303(g)(2) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 823(g)(2)), as amended by section 801(2), is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(L)(i) In this subparagraph, the term 'covered provider' includes a person that—

''(I) is not a physician; and

''(II) is authorized to dispense narcotic drugs in schedule III, IV, or V or combinations of such drugs for maintenance or detoxification treatment by the jurisdiction in which the provider is licensed.

''(ii) Notwithstanding subparagraph (B)(i), the Secretary may establish and carry out a demonstration project for the purposes of allowing each covered provider participating in the demonstration project to dispense narcotic drugs in schedule III, IV, or V or combinations of such drugs for maintenance or detoxification treatment under this paragraph—

''(I) during an initial period, to be determined by the Secretary, to treat not more than 30 patients; and

''(II) after the initial period, to treat not more than 100 patients.

''(iii) The Secretary may enter into grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements with 1 or more research institutions, departments of health of a State, and public and nonprofit entities to assist in carrying out the demonstration project under this subparagraph.

''(iv) Amounts made available to the Attorney General for carrying out this section or to the Secretary of Health and Human Services for carrying out title V of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 290aa) shall also be made available to carry out the demonstration project under this subparagraph.

''(v) The demonstration project under this subparagraph, including any authority to dispense narcotic drugs in schedule III, IV, or V or combinations of such drugs for maintenance or detoxification treatment under this subparagraph, shall terminate on September 30, 2021.''.

SA 3427. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mrs. FISCHER (for herself, Mr. DAINES, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. PETERS, Mrs. BOXER, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 2276, to amend title 49, United States Code, to provide enhanced safety in pipeline transportation, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS; REFERENCES.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Securing America's Future Energy: Protecting our Infrastructure of Pipelines and Enhancing Safety Act'' or the ''SAFE PIPES Act''.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents; references.

Sec. 2. Authorization of appropriations.
Sec. 3. Regulatory updates.
Sec. 4. Hazardous materials identification numbers.
Sec. 5. Statutory preference.
Sec. 6. Natural gas integrity management review.
Sec. 7. Hazardous liquid integrity management review.
Sec. 8. Technical safety standards committees.
Sec. 9. Inspection report information.
Sec. 10. Pipeline odorization study.
Sec. 11. Improving damage prevention technology.
Sec. 12. Workforce of Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.
Sec. 13. Research and development.
Sec. 14. Information sharing system.
Sec. 15. Nationwide integrated pipeline safety regulatory database.
Sec. 16. Underground natural gas storage facilities.
Sec. 17. Joint inspection and oversight.
Sec. 18. Response plans.
Sec. 19. High consequence areas.
Sec. 20. Surface transportation security review.
Sec. 21. Small scale liquefied natural gas facilities.
Sec. 22. Report on natural gas leak reporting.
Sec. 23. Comptroller General review of State policies relating to natural gas leaks.
Sec. 24. Provision of response plans to appropriate committees of Congress.
Sec. 25. Consultation with FERC as part of pre-filing procedures and permitting process for new natural gas pipeline infrastructure.
Sec. 26. Maintenance of effort.
Sec. 27. Aliso Canyon natural gas leak task force.

(c) REFERENCES TO TITLE 49, UNITED STATES CODE.—Except as otherwise expressly provided, wherever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of title 49, United States Code.

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) GAS AND HAZARDOUS LIQUID.—Section 60125(a) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''there is authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Transportation for each of fiscal years 2012 through 2015, from fees collected under section 60301, $90,679,000, of which $4,746,000 is for carrying out such section 12 and $ 36,194,000 is for making grants.'' and inserting the following: ''there are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Transportation from fees collected under section 60301—

''(A) $127,060,000 for fiscal year 2016, of which $9,325,000 shall be expended for carrying out such section 12 and $42,515,000 shall be expended for making grants;

''(B) $129,671,000 for fiscal year 2017, of which $9,418,000 shall be expended for carrying out such section 12 and $42,941,000 shall be expended for making grants;

''(C) $132,334,000 for fiscal year 2018, of which $9,512,000 shall be expended for carrying out such section 12 and $43,371,000 shall be expended for making grants; and

''(D) $135,051,000 for fiscal year 2019, of which $9,607,000 shall be expended for carrying out such section 12 and $43,805,000 shall be expended for making grants.''; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking ''there is authorized to be appropriated for each of fiscal years 2012 through 2015 from the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund to carry out the provisions of this chapter related to hazardous liquid and section 12 of the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 (49 U.S.C. 60101 note; Public Law 107–355), $18,573,000, of which $2,174,000 is for carrying out such section 12 and $4,558,000 is for making grants.'' and inserting the following: ''there are authorized to be appropriated from the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund to carry out the provisions of this chapter related to hazardous liquid and section 12 of the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 (49 U.S.C. 60101 note; Public Law 107–355)—''

''(A) $19,890,000 for fiscal year 2016, of which $3,108,000 shall be expended for carrying out such section 12 and $8,708,000 shall be expended for making grants;

''(B) $20,288,000 for fiscal year 2017, of which $3,139,000 shall be expended for carrying out such section 12 and $8,795,000 shall be expended for making grants;

''(C) $20,694,000 for fiscal year 2018, of which $3,171,000 shall be expended for carrying out such section 12 and $8,883,000 shall be expended for making grants; and

''(D) $21,108,000 for fiscal year 2019, of which $3,203,000 shall be expended for carrying out such section 12 and $8,972,000 shall be expended for making grants.''.

(b) EMERGENCY RESPONSE GRANTS.—Section 60125(b)(2) is amended by striking ''2012 through 2015'' and inserting ''2016 through 2019''.

(c) ONE-CALL NOTIFICATION PROGRAMS.—Section 6107 is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''$1,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2012 through 2015'' and inserting ''$1,060,000 for each of the fiscal years 2016 through 2019''; and

(2) in subsection (b), by striking ''2012 through 2015'' and inserting ''2016 through 2019''.

(d) STATE DAMAGE PREVENTION PROGRAMS.—Section 60134(i) is amended by striking ''2012 through 2015'' and inserting ''2016 through 2019''.

(e) COMMUNITY PIPELINE SAFETY INFORMATION GRANTS.—Section 60130(c) is amended by striking ''2012 through 2015'' and inserting ''2016 through 2019''.

(f) PIPELINE INTEGRITY PROGRAM.—Section 12(f) of the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 (49 U.S.C. 60101 note) is amended by striking ''2012 through 2015'' and inserting ''2016 through 2019''.

SEC. 3. REGULATORY UPDATES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, and every 90 days thereafter until a final rule has been issued for each of the requirements described under paragraphs (1), (2), and (3), the Secretary of Transportation shall publish an update on a public website regarding the status of a final rule for—

(1) regulations required under the Pipeline Safety Regulatory Certainty and Job Creation Act of 2011 (Public Law 112–90; 125 Stat. 1904) for which no interim final rule or direct final rule has been issued;

(2) any regulation relating to pipeline safety required by law, other than a regulation described under paragraph (1), for which for more than 2 years after the date of the enacting statute or statutory deadline no interim final rule or direct final rule has been issued; and

(3) any other pipeline safety rulemaking categorized as significant.

(b) CONTENTS.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) a description of the work plan for the outstanding regulation;

(2) an updated rulemaking timeline for the outstanding regulation;

(3) current staff allocations;

(4) any other information collection request with substantial changes;

(5) current data collection or research relating to the development of the rulemaking;

(6) current collaborative efforts with safety experts and other stakeholders;

(7) any resource constraints impacting the rulemaking process for the outstanding regulation; and

(8) any other details associated with the development of the rulemaking that impact the progress of the rulemaking.

SEC. 4. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS.

The Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration shall—

(1) rescind the implementation of the June 26, 2015 PHMSA interpretative letter (#14-0178); and

(2) reinstate paragraphs (4) and (5) of section 172.336(c) of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, without the reference to ''gasohol'', as was originally intended in the March 7, 2013 final rule (PHMSA–2011–0142).

SEC. 5. STATUTORY PREFERENCE.

The Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration shall prioritize the use of Office of Pipeline Safety resources for the development of each outstanding pipeline safety statutory requirement, including requirements for rulemakings and information collection requests, for a rulemaking described in a report under section 3 before beginning any new rulemaking required after the date of the enactment of this Act unless the Secretary of Transportation certifies to Congress that there is a significant need to move forward with a new rulemaking.

SEC. 6. NATURAL GAS INTEGRITY MANAGEMENT REVIEW.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the publication of a final rule regarding the safety of gas transmission pipelines (76 Fed. Reg. 53086), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit a report to Congress regarding the natural gas integrity management program.

(b) CONTENTS.—The report under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) an analysis of the extent to which the natural gas integrity management program under section 60109(c) of title 49, United States Code, has improved the safety of natural gas transmission pipelines;

(2) an analysis or recommendations, including consideration of technical, operational, and economic feasibility, regarding changes to the program that would prevent inadvertent releases from pipelines and mitigate any adverse consequences of an inadvertent release, including changes to the current definition of high consequence area, or would expand integrity management beyond high consequence areas;

(3) a review of the cost effectiveness of the legacy class location regulations;

(4) an analysis of and recommendations regarding what impact pipeline features and conditions, including the age, condition, materials, and construction of a pipeline, should have on risk analysis of a particular pipeline;

(5) a description of any challenges affecting Federal or State regulators in their oversight of the program and how the challenges are being addressed; and

(6) a description of any challenges affecting the natural gas industry in complying with the program, and how the challenges are being addressed.

(c) DEFINITION OF HIGH CONSEQUENCE AREA.—In this section and in section 7, the term ''high consequence area'' means an area described in section 60109(a) of title 49, United States Code.

SEC. 7. HAZARDOUS LIQUID INTEGRITY MANAGEMENT REVIEW.

(a) SAFETY STUDY.—Not later than 18 months after the publication of a final rule regarding the safety of hazardous liquid pipelines (80 Fed. Reg. 61610), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit a report to Congress regarding the hazardous liquid integrity management program.

(b) CONTENTS.—The report under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) an analysis of the extent to which liquid pipeline integrity management in high consequence areas for operators of certain hazardous liquid pipeline facilities, as regulated under sections 195.450 and 195.452 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, has improved the safety of hazardous liquid pipelines;

(2) recommendations, including consideration of technical, operational, and economic feasibility, regarding changes to the program that could prevent inadvertent releases from pipelines and mitigate any adverse consequences of an inadvertent release, including changes to the current definition of high consequence area;

(3) an analysis of how surveying, assessment, mitigation, and monitoring activities, including real-time hazardous liquid pipeline monitoring during significant flood events and information sharing with other Federal agencies, are being used to address risks associated with the dynamic and unique nature of rivers, flood plains, and lakes;

(4) an analysis of and recommendations regarding what impact pipeline features and conditions, including the age, condition, materials, and construction of a pipeline, should have on risk analysis of a particular pipeline and what changes to the definition of high consequence area could be made to improve pipeline safety; and

(5) a description of any challenges affecting Federal or State regulators in their oversight of the program and how the challenges are being addressed.

SEC. 8. TECHNICAL SAFETY STANDARDS COMMITTEES.

Section 60115(b)(4)(A) is amended by striking ''State commissioners. The Secretary shall consult with the national organization of State commissions before selecting those 2 individuals.'' and inserting ''State officials. The Secretary shall consult with national organizations representing State commissioners or governors when making a selection under this subparagraph.''

SEC. 9. INSPECTION REPORT INFORMATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the completion of a pipeline safety inspection, the Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, or the State authority certified under section 60105 of title 49, United States Code, shall—

(1) conduct a post-inspection briefing with the operator outlining concerns, and to the extent practicable, provide written preliminary findings of the inspection; or

(2) issue to the operator a final report, notice of amendment of plans or procedures, safety order, or corrective action order, or such other applicable report, notice, or order.

(b) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall submit an annual report to Congress regarding—

(A) the actions that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration has taken to ensure that inspections by State authorities provide effective and timely oversight; and

(B) statistics relating to the timeliness of the actions described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a).

(2) CESSATION OF EFFECTIVENESS.—Paragraph (1) shall cease to be effective on September 30, 2019.

SEC. 10. PIPELINE ODORIZATION STUDY.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit a report to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives that assesses—

(1) the feasibility of odorizing all combustible gas in transportation;

(2) the impacts of the odorization of all combustible gas in transportation on manufacturers, agriculture, and other end users; and

(3) the relative benefits and costs associated with odorizing all combustible gas in transportation, including impacts on health and safety, compared to using other methods to mitigate pipeline leaks.

SEC. 11. IMPROVING DAMAGE PREVENTION TECHNOLOGY.

(a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with stakeholders, shall conduct a study on improving existing damage prevention programs through technological improvements in location, mapping, excavation, and communications practices to prevent accidental excavation damage to a pipe or its coating, including considerations of technical, operational, and economic feasibility and existing damage prevention programs.

(b) CONTENTS.—The study under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) an identification of any methods that could improve existing damage prevention programs through location and mapping practices or technologies in an effort to reduce unintended releases caused by excavation;

(2) an analysis of how increased use of GPS digital mapping technologies, predictive analytic tools, public awareness initiatives including one-call initiatives, the use of mobile devices, and other advanced technologies could supplement existing one-call notification and damage prevention programs to reduce the frequency and severity of incidents caused by excavation damage;

(3) an identification of any methods that could improve excavation practices or technologies in an effort to reduce pipeline damages;

(4) an analysis of the feasibility of a national data repository for pipeline excavation accident data that creates standardized data models for storing and sharing pipeline accident information; and

(5) an identification of opportunities for stakeholder engagement in preventing excavation damage.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall submit a report to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives regarding the study under this section, including recommendations, that include the consideration of technical, operational, and economic feasibility, on how to incorporate, into existing damage prevention programs, technological improvements and practices that may help prevent accidental excavation damage.

SEC. 12. WORKFORCE OF PIPELINE AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SAFETY ADMINISTRATION.

(a) REVIEW.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration shall submit to Congress a review of Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration staff resource management, including geographic allocation plans, hiring challenges, and expected retirement rates and strategies. The review shall include recommendations to address hiring challenges, training needs, and any other identified staff resource challenges.

(b) CRITICAL HIRING NEEDS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on the date on which the review is submitted under subsection (a), the Administrator may certify to Congress, not less frequently than annually, that a severe shortage of qualified candidates or a critical hiring need exists for a position or group of positions in the Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration.

(2) DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY.—Notwithstanding sections 3309 through 3318 of title 5, United States Code, the Administrator, after making a certification under paragraph (1), may hire a candidate for the position or candidates for the group of positions indicated in the certification, as applicable.

(3) TERMINATIONS OF EFFECTIVENESS.—The direct hire authority provided under paragraph (2) shall terminate on September 30, 2019.

SEC. 13. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In developing a research and development program plan under paragraph (3) of section 12(d) of the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 (49 U.S.C. 60101 note), the Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration, in consultation with the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology, shall—

(1) detail compliance with the consultation requirement under paragraph (2) of such section;

(2) provide opportunities for joint research ventures with non-Federal entities, whenever practicable and appropriate, to leverage limited Federal research resources; and

(3) permit collaborative research and development projects with appropriate non-Federal organizations.

(b) COLLABORATIVE SAFETY RESEARCH REPORT.—Section 60124(a)(6) is amended—

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

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(C) research activities in collaboration with non-Federal entities, including the intended improvements to safety technology, inspection technology, operator response time, and emergency responder incident response time.''.

SEC. 14. INFORMATION SHARING SYSTEM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall convene a working group to consider the development of a voluntary no-fault information sharing system to encourage collaborative efforts to improve inspection information feedback and information sharing with the purpose of improving natural gas transmission and hazardous liquid pipeline integrity risk analysis.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—The working group described in subsection (a) shall include representatives from—

(1) the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration;

(2) industry stakeholders, including operators of pipeline facilities, inspection technology vendors, and pipeline inspection organizations;

(3) safety advocacy groups;

(4) research institutions;

(5) State public utility commissions or State officials responsible for pipeline safety oversight;

(6) State pipeline safety inspectors; and

(7) labor representatives.

(c) CONSIDERATIONS.—The working group described in subsection (a) shall consider and provide recommendations, if applicable, to the Secretary on—

(1) the need for and the identification of a system to ensure that dig verification data is shared with inline inspection operators to the extent consistent with the need to maintain proprietary and security sensitive data in a confidential manner to improve pipeline safety and inspection technology;

(2) ways to encourage the exchange of pipeline inspection information and the development of advanced pipeline inspection technologies and enhanced risk analysis;

(3) opportunities to share data, including dig verification data between operators of pipeline facilities and in-line inspector vendors to expand knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of in-line inspection technology and methodologies;

(4) options to create a secure system that protects proprietary data while encouraging the exchange of pipeline inspection information and the development of advanced pipeline inspection technologies and enhanced risk analysis; and

(5) regulatory, funding, and legal barriers to sharing the information described in paragraphs (1) through (4).

(d) FACA.—The working group shall not be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

(e) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall publish the recommendations provided under subsection (c) on a publicly available website.

SEC. 15. NATIONWIDE INTEGRATED PIPELINE SAFETY REGULATORY DATABASE.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall submit a report to Congress on the feasibility of a national integrated pipeline safety regulatory inspection database to improve communication and collaboration between the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and State pipeline regulators.

(b) CONTENTS.—The report under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) a description of any efforts currently underway to test a secure information-sharing system for the purpose described in subsection (a);

(2) a description of any progress in establishing common standards for maintaining, collecting, and presenting pipeline safety regulatory inspection data, and a methodology for the sharing of the data;

(3) a description of any existing inadequacies or gaps in State and Federal inspection, enforcement, geospatial, or other pipeline safety regulatory inspection data;

(4) a description of the potential safety benefits of a national integrated pipeline database; and

(5) recommendations for how to implement a secure information-sharing system that protects proprietary and security sensitive information and data for the purpose described in subsection (a).

(c) CONSULTATION.—In preparing the report under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consult with stakeholders, including each State authority operating under a certification to regulate intrastate pipelines under section 60105 of title 49, United States Code.

SEC. 16. UNDERGROUND NATURAL GAS STORAGE FACILITIES.

(a) DEFINED TERM.—Section 60101(a) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (21)(B), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (24), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(3) in paragraph (25), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(27) 'underground natural gas storage facility' means a gas pipeline facility that stores gas in an underground facility, including—

''(A) a depleted hydrocarbon reservoir;

''(B) an aquifer reservoir; or

''(C) a solution mined salt cavern reservoir.''.

(b) STANDARDS FOR UNDERGROUND NATURAL GAS STORAGE FACILITIES.—Chapter 601 is amended by inserting after section 60103 the following:

''§ 60103A. Standards for underground natural gas storage facilities

''(a) MINIMUM UNIFORM SAFETY STANDARDS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of the SAFE PIPES Act, the Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall issue minimum uniform safety standards, incorporating, to the extent practicable, consensus standards for the operation, environmental protection, and integrity management of underground natural gas storage facilities.

''(b) CONSIDERATIONS.—In developing uniform safety standards under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

''(1) consider the economic impacts of the regulations on individual gas customers to the extent practicable;

''(2) ensure that the regulations do not have a significant economic impact on end users to the extent practicable;

''(3) consider existing consensus standards; and

''(4) consider the recommendations of the Aliso Canyon Task Force under section 27 of the Securing America's Future Energy: Protecting our Infrastructure of Pipelines and Enhancing Safety Act.

''(c) USER FEES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A fee shall be imposed on an entity operating an underground natural gas storage facility to which this section applies. Any such fee imposed shall be collected before the end of the fiscal year to which it applies.

''(2) MEANS OF COLLECTION.—The Secretary shall prescribe procedures to collect fees under this subsection. The Secretary may use a department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States Government or of a State or local government to collect the fee and may reimburse the department, agency, or instrumentality a reasonable amount for its services.

''(3) USE OF FEES.—

''(A) ACCOUNT.—There is established an underground natural gas storage facility safety account in the Pipeline Safety Fund established under section 60301, in the Treasury of the United States.

''(B) USE OF FEES.—A fee collected under this subsection—

''(i) shall be deposited in the underground natural gas storage facility safety account; and

''(ii) if the fee is related to an underground natural gas storage facility, may be used only for an activity related to underground natural gas storage safety under this section.

''(C) LIMITATION.—Amounts collected under this subsection shall be made available only to the extent provided in advance in an appropriation law for an activity related to underground natural gas storage safety.

''(d) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this section may be construed to affect any Federal regulation relating to gas pipeline facilities that is in effect on the day before the date of enactment of the SAFE PIPES Act.

''(2) LIMITATIONS.—Nothing in this section may be construed to authorize the Secretary—

''(A) to prescribe the location of an underground natural gas storage facility; or

''(B) to require the Secretary's permission to construct a facility referred to in subparagraph (A).''.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 601 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 60103 the following:

''60103A. Standards for underground natural gas storage facilities.''.

SEC. 17. JOINT INSPECTION AND OVERSIGHT.

To ensure the safety of pipeline transportation, the Secretary of Transportation shall coordinate with States to ensure safety through the following:

(1) At the request of a State authority, the Secretary shall allow for a certified state authority under section 60105 of title 49, United States Code, to participate in the inspection of an interstate pipeline facility.

(2) Where appropriate, may provide temporary authority for a certified State authority under that section to participate in oversight of interstate pipeline safety transportation to ensure proper safety oversight and prevent an adverse impact on public safety.

SEC. 18. RESPONSE PLANS.

In preparing or reviewing a response plan under part 194 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, the Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and an operator shall each address, to the maximum extent practicable, the impact of a worse case discharge of oil, or the substantial threat of such a discharge, into or on any navigable waters or adjoining shorelines that may be covered in whole or in part by ice.

SEC. 19. HIGH CONSEQUENCE AREAS.

The Secretary of Transportation shall revise section 195.6(b) of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations to explicitly state that the Great Lakes are a USA ecological resource (as defined in section 195.6(b) of that title) for purposes of determining whether a pipeline is in a high consequence area (as defined in section 195.450 of that title).

SEC. 20. SURFACE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY REVIEW.

Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit a report to Congress on the staffing, resource allocation, oversight strategy, and management of the Transportation Security Administration's pipeline security program and other surface transportation programs. The report shall include information on the coordination between the Transportation Security Administration, other Federal stakeholders, and industry.

SEC. 21. SMALL SCALE LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS FACILITIES.

(a) DEFINED TERM.—Section 60101(a), as amended by section 16, is further amended by inserting after paragraph (25) the following:

''(26) 'small scale liquefied natural gas facility' means a permanent intrastate liquefied natural gas facility (other than a peak shaving facility) that produces liquefied natural gas for—

''(A) use as a fuel in the United States; or

''(B) transportation in the United States by a means other than a pipeline facility; and''.

(b) SITING STANDARDS FOR PERMANENT SMALL SCALE LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS FACILITIES.—Section 60103(a) is amended to read as follows:

''(a) LOCATION STANDARDS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Transportation shall prescribe minimum safety

standards for deciding on the permanent location of a new liquefied natural gas pipeline facility or small scale liquefied natural gas facility.

''(2) LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS FACILITIES.—In prescribing a minimum safety standard for deciding on the permanent location of a new liquefied natural gas facility, the Secretary of Transportation shall consider—

''(A) the kind and use of the facility;

''(B) the existing and projected population and demographic characteristics of the location;

''(C) the existing and proposed land uses near the location;

''(D) the natural physical aspects of the location;

''(E) medical, law enforcement, and fire prevention capabilities near the location that can cope with a risk caused by the facility; and

''(F) the need to encourage remote siting.

''(3) SMALL SCALE LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS FACILITIES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of the SAFE PIPES Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall prescribe minimum safety standards for permanent small scale liquefied natural gas facilities.

''(B) CONSIDERATIONS.—In prescribing minimum safety standards under this paragraph, the Secretary shall consider—

''(i) the value of establishing risk-based approaches;

''(ii) the benefit of incorporating industry standards and best practices;

''(iii) the need to encourage the use of best available technology; and

''(iv) the factors prescribed in paragraph (2), as appropriate.''.

SEC. 22. REPORT ON NATURAL GAS LEAK REPORTING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration shall submit to Congress a report on the metrics provided to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and other Federal and State agencies related to lost and unaccounted for natural gas from distribution pipelines and systems.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required under subsection (a) shall include the following elements:

(1) An examination of different reporting requirements or standards for lost and unaccounted for natural gas to different agencies, the reasons for any such discrepancies, and recommendations for harmonizing and improving the accuracy of reporting.

(2) An analysis of whether separate or alternative reporting could better measure the amounts and identify the location of lost and unaccounted for natural gas from natural gas distribution systems.

(3) A description of potential safety issues associated with natural gas that is lost and unaccounted for from natural gas distribution systems.

(4) An assessment of whether alternate reporting and measures will resolve any safety issues identified under paragraph (3), including an analysis of the potential impact, including potential savings, on rate payers and end users of natural gas products of such reporting and measures.

(c) CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS.—If the Administrator determines that alternate reporting structures or recommendations included in the report required under subsection (a) would significantly improve the reporting and measurement of lost and unaccounted for gas or safety of systems, the Administrator shall, not later than 180 days after making such determination, issue regulations, as the Administrator determines appropriate, to implement the recommendations.

SEC. 23. COMPTROLLER GENERAL REVIEW OF STATE POLICIES RELATING TO NATURAL GAS LEAKS.

(a) REVIEW.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a State-by-State review of State-level policies that—

(1) encourage the repair and replacement of leaking natural gas distribution pipelines or systems that pose a safety threat, such as timelines to repair leaks and limits on cost recovery from ratepayers; and

(2) that may create barriers for entities to conduct work to repair and replace leaking natural gas pipelines or distribution systems.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration a report summarizing the findings of the review conducted under subsection (a) and making recommendations on Federal or State policies or best practices that may improve safety by accelerating the repair and replacement of natural gas pipelines or systems that are leaking or releasing natural gas, including policies within the jurisdiction of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. The report shall consider the potential impact, including potential savings, of the implementation of its recommendations on ratepayers or end users of the natural gas pipeline system.

(c) CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS.—If the Comptroller General makes recommendations in the report submitted under subsection (a) on Federal or State policies or best practices within the jurisdiction of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, the Administrator shall, not later than 90 days after such submission, review such recommendations and report to Congress on the feasibility of implementing such recommendations. If the Administrator determines that the recommendations would significantly improve pipeline safety, the Administrator shall, not later than 180 days after making such determination and in coordination with the heads of other relevant agencies as appropriate, issue regulations, as the Administrator determines appropriate, to implement the recommendations.

SEC. 24. PROVISION OF RESPONSE PLANS TO APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.

(a) PROVISION OF PLANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subsection (a)(2) of section 60138 of title 49, United States Code, and subject to paragraph (2), upon the request of the Chairperson or Ranking Member of an appropriate committee of Congress, the Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration shall provide the Chairperson or Ranking Member, as applicable, a uniquely identifiable, unredacted copy of an oil response plan under that section.

(2) PROTECTION OF INFORMATION.—Any information subject to exclusion under section 60138(a)(2) of title 49, United States Code, that is provided under paragraph (1) shall be afforded appropriate protection against unauthorized public disclosure, consistent with the rules and practices related to the protection of confidential information received by Congress.

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed as affecting the provision of any other report, data, or other information to Congress, or its handling thereof.

SEC. 25. CONSULTATION WITH FERC AS PART OF PRE-FILING PROCEDURES AND PERMITTING PROCESS FOR NEW NATURAL GAS PIPELINE INFRASTRUCTURE.

Where appropriate, the Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration shall consult with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission during its pre-filing procedures and permitting process for new natural gas pipeline infrastructure to ensure the protection of people and the environment from the potential risks of hazardous materials transportation by pipeline.

SEC. 26. MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT.

Section 60107(b) is amended to read as follows:

''(b) PAYMENTS.—After notifying and consulting with a State authority, the Secretary may withhold any part of a payment when the Secretary decides that the authority is not carrying out satisfactorily a safety program or not acting satisfactorily as an agent. The Secretary may pay an authority under this section only when the authority ensures the Secretary that it will provide the remaining costs of a safety program, except when the Secretary waives this requirement.''.

SEC. 27. ALISO CANYON NATURAL GAS LEAK TASK FORCE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF TASK FORCE.—Not later than 15 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Energy shall lead and establish an Aliso Canyon Task Force (referred to in this section as the ''task force'').

(b) MEMBERSHIP OF TASK FORCE.—In addition to the Secretary, the task force shall be composed of—

(1) 1 representative from the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration;

(2) 1 representative from the Department of Health and Human Services;

(3) 1 representative from the Environmental Protection Agency;

(4) 1 representative from the Department of the Interior;

(5) 1 representative from the Department of Commerce; and

(6) 1 representative from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

(c) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the task force shall submit a final report that contains the information described in paragraph (2) to—

(A) the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives;

(C) the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate;

(D) the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives;

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

(F) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives;

(G) the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate;

(H) the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives;

(I) the President; and

(J) relevant Federal and State agencies.

(2) INFORMATION INCLUDED.—The report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include, at a minimum—

(A) an analysis and conclusion of the cause and contributing factors of the Aliso Canyon natural gas leak;

(B) an analysis of measures taken to stop the natural gas leak, with an immediate focus on other, more effective measures that could be taken;

(C) an assessment of the impact of the natural gas leak on health, safety, the environment, and the economy of the residents and property surrounding Aliso Canyon, on wholesale and retail electricity prices, and on the reliability of the bulk-power system;

(D) an analysis of how Federal, State, and local agencies responded to the natural gas leak;

(E) in order to lessen the negative impacts of natural gas leaks from underground storage facilities, recommendations on how to improve—

(i) the response to a future leak; and

(ii) coordination between all appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies in the response to the Aliso Canyon natural gas leak and future natural gas leaks;

(F) an analysis of the potential for a similar natural gas leak to occur at other underground natural gas storage facilities in the United States;

(G) recommendations on how to prevent any future natural gas leaks;

(H) recommendations on whether to continue operations at Aliso Canyon and other underground storage facilities in close proximity to residential populations based on an assessment of the risk of a future natural gas leak; and

(I) a recommendation on information that is not currently collected but that would be in the public interest to collect and distribute to agencies and institutions for the continued study and monitoring of natural gas storage infrastructure in the United States.

(3) PUBLICATION.—The final report under paragraph (1) shall be made available to the public in an electronically accessible format.

(4) FINDINGS.—If, before the final report is submitted under paragraph (1), the task force finds methods to solve the natural gas leak at Aliso Canyon, finds methods to better protect the affected communities, or finds methods to help prevent other leaks, the task force shall immediately submit such findings to the entities described in subparagraphs (A) through (J) of paragraph (1).

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section such sums as may be necessary.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 3, 2016, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 3, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 3, 2016, at 9:45 a.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 3, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SD–215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Free Trade Agreement Implementation: Lessons from the Past.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 3, 2016, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''The Path Forward in Libya.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 3, 2016, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Dogs of DHS: How Canine Programs Contribute to Homeland Security.''

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

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 3, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room 428A of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''The Impacts of Federal Fisheries Management on Small Businesses.''

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 3, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room 345 of the Cannon House Office Building.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 3, 2016, at 2 p.m., in room SH–219 of the Hart Senate Office Building.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SECURITIES, INSURANCE, AND INVESTMENT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on Securities, Insurance, and Investment be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 3, 2016, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Regulatory Reforms To Improve Equity Market Structure.''

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

SAFE PIPES ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 370, S. 2276.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2276) to amend title 49, United States Code, to provide enhanced safety in pipeline transportation, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; REFERENCES; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Securing America's Future Energy: Protecting our Infrastructure of Pipelines and Enhancing Safety Act'' or the ''SAFE PIPES Act''.

(b) REFERENCES TO TITLE 49, UNITED STATES CODE.—Except as otherwise expressly provided, wherever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of title 49, United States Code.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; references; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Authorization of appropriations.
Sec. 3. Regulatory updates.
Sec. 4. Hazardous materials identification numbers.
Sec. 5. Statutory preference.
Sec. 6. Natural gas integrity management review.
Sec. 7. Hazardous liquid integrity management review.
Sec. 8. Technical safety standards committees.
Sec. 9. Inspection report information.
Sec. 10. Pipeline odorization study.
Sec. 11. Improving damage prevention technology.
Sec. 12. Workforce of Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.
Sec. 13. Research and development.
Sec. 14. Information sharing system.
Sec. 15. Nationwide integrated pipeline safety regulatory database.
Sec. 16. Underground natural gas storage facilities.
Sec. 17. Joint inspection and oversight.
Sec. 18. Response plans.
Sec. 19. High consequence areas.
Sec. 20. Surface transportation security review.
Sec. 21. Small scale liquefied natural gas facilities.
Sec. 22. Report on natural gas leak reporting.
Sec. 23. Comptroller General review of State policies relating to natural gas leaks.
Sec. 24. Provision of pipeline oil spill response plans to congressional committees.
Sec. 25. Consultation with FERC as part of prefiling procedures and permitting process for new natural gas pipeline infrastructure.

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) GAS AND HAZARDOUS LIQUID.—Section 60125(a) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''there is authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Transportation for each of fiscal years 2012 through 2015, from fees collected under section 60301, $90,679,000, of which $4,746,000 is for carrying out such section 12 and $ 36,194,000 is for making grants.'' and inserting the following: ''there are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Transportation from fees collected under section 60301—

''(A) $127,060,000 for fiscal year 2016, of which $9,325,000 shall be expended for carrying out such section 12 and $42,515,000 shall be expended for making grants;

''(B) $129,671,000 for fiscal year 2017, of which $9,418,000 shall be expended for carrying out such section 12 and $42,941,000 shall be expended for making grants;

''(C) $132,334,000 for fiscal year 2018, of which $9,512,000 shall be expended for carrying out such section 12 and $43,371,000 shall be expended for making grants; and

''(D) $135,051,000 for fiscal year 2019, of which $9,607,000 shall be expended for carrying out such section 12 and $43,805,000 shall be expended for making grants.''; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking ''there is authorized to be appropriated for each of fiscal years 2012 through 2015 from the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund to carry out the provisions of this chapter related to hazardous liquid and section 12 of the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 (49 U.S.C. 60101 note; Public Law 107–355), $18,573,000, of which $2,174,000 is for carrying out such section 12 and $4,558,000 is for making grants.'' and inserting the following: ''there are authorized to be appropriated from the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund to carry out the provisions of this chapter related to hazardous liquid and section 12 of the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 (49 U.S.C. 60101 note; Public Law 107–355)—''

''(A) $19,890,000 for fiscal year 2016, of which $3,108,000 shall be expended for carrying out such section 12 and $8,708,000 shall be expended for making grants;

''(B) $20,288,000 for fiscal year 2017, of which $3,139,000 shall be expended for carrying out such section 12 and $8,795,000 shall be expended for making grants;

''(C) $20,694,000 for fiscal year 2018, of which $3,171,000 shall be expended for carrying out such section 12 and $8,883,000 shall be expended for making grants; and

''(D) $21,108,000 for fiscal year 2019, of which $3,203,000 shall be expended for carrying out such section 12 and $8,972,000 shall be expended for making grants.''.

(b) EMERGENCY RESPONSE GRANTS.—Section 60125(b)(2) is amended by striking ''2012 through 2015'' and inserting ''2016 through 2019''.

(c) ONE-CALL NOTIFICATION PROGRAMS.—Section 6107 is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''$1,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2012 through 2015'' and inserting ''$1,060,000 for each of the fiscal years 2016 through 2019''; and

(2) in subsection (b), by striking ''2012 through 2015'' and inserting ''2016 through 2019''.

(d) STATE DAMAGE PREVENTION PROGRAMS.—Section 60134(i) is amended by striking ''2012 through 2015'' and inserting ''2016 through 2019''.

(e) COMMUNITY PIPELINE SAFETY INFORMATION GRANTS.—Section 60130(c) is amended by striking ''2012 through 2015'' and inserting ''2016 through 2019''.

(f) PIPELINE INTEGRITY PROGRAM.—Section 12(f) of the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 (49 U.S.C. 60101 note) is amended by striking ''2012 through 2015'' and inserting ''2016 through 2019''.

SEC. 3. REGULATORY UPDATES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, and every 90 days thereafter until a final rule has been issued for each of the requirements described under paragraphs (1), (2), and (3), the Secretary of Transportation shall submit a report to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives regarding the status of a final rule for—

(1) regulations required under the Pipeline Safety Regulatory Certainty and Job Creation Act of 2011 (Public Law 112–90; 125 Stat. 1904) for which no interim final rule or direct final rule has been issued;

(2) any regulation relating to pipeline safety required by law, other than a regulation described under paragraph (1), for which for more than 2 years after the date of the enacting statute or statutory deadline no interim final rule or direct final rule has been issued; and

(3) any other pipeline safety rulemaking categorized as significant.

(b) CONTENTS.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) a description of the work plan for the outstanding regulation;

(2) an updated rulemaking timeline for the outstanding regulation;

(3) current staff allocations;

(4) any other information collection request with substantial changes;

(5) current data collection or research relating to the development of the rulemaking;

(6) current collaborative efforts with safety experts and other stakeholders;

(7) any resource constraints impacting the rulemaking process for the outstanding regulation; and

(8) any other details associated with the development of the rulemaking that impact the progress of the rulemaking.

SEC. 4. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS.

The Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration shall—

(1) rescind the implementation of the June 26, 2015 PHMSA interpretative letter (#14-0178); and

(2) reinstate paragraphs (4) and (5) of section 172.336(c) of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, without the reference to ''gasohol'', as was originally intended in the March 7, 2013 final rule (PHMSA–2011–0142).

SEC. 5. STATUTORY PREFERENCE.

The Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration shall prioritize the use of Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration resources for the completion of each outstanding statutory requirement, including requirements for rulemakings and information collection requests, for a rulemaking described in a report under section 3 before beginning any new rulemaking required after the date of the enactment of this Act unless the Secretary of Transportation certifies to Congress that there is a significant need to move forward with a new rulemaking.

SEC. 6. NATURAL GAS INTEGRITY MANAGEMENT REVIEW.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the publication of a final rule regarding the safety of gas transmission pipelines (76 Fed. Reg. 53086), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit a report to Congress regarding the natural gas integrity management program.

(b) CONTENTS.—The report under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) an analysis of the extent to which the natural gas integrity management program under section 60109(c) of title 49, United States Code, has improved the safety of natural gas transmission pipelines;

(2) an analysis or recommendations, including consideration of technical, operational, and economic feasibility, regarding changes to the program that would prevent inadvertent releases from pipelines and mitigate any adverse consequences of an inadvertent release, including changes to the current definition of high consequence area, or would expand integrity management beyond high consequence areas;

(3) a review of the cost effectiveness of the legacy class location regulations;

(4) an analysis of and recommendations regarding what impact pipeline features and conditions, including the age, condition, materials, and construction of a pipeline, should have on risk analysis of a particular pipeline;

(5) a description of any challenges affecting Federal or State regulators in their oversight of the program and how the challenges are being addressed; and

(6) a description of any challenges affecting the natural gas industry in complying with the program, and how the challenges are being addressed.

(c) DEFINITION OF HIGH CONSEQUENCE AREA.—In this section and in section 7, the term ''high consequence area'' means an area described in section 60109(a) of title 49, United States Code.

SEC. 7. HAZARDOUS LIQUID INTEGRITY MANAGEMENT REVIEW.

(a) SAFETY STUDY.—Not later than 18 months after the publication of a final rule regarding the safety of hazardous liquid pipelines (80 Fed. Reg. 61610), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit a report to Congress regarding the hazardous liquid integrity management program.

(b) CONTENTS.—The report under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) an analysis of the extent to which liquid pipeline integrity management in high consequence areas for operators of certain hazardous liquid pipeline facilities, as regulated under sections 195.450 and 195.452 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, has improved the safety of hazardous liquid pipelines;

(2) recommendations, including consideration of technical, operational, and economic feasibility, regarding changes to the program that could prevent inadvertent releases from pipelines and mitigate any adverse consequences of an inadvertent release, including changes to the current definition of high consequence area;

(3) an analysis of how surveying, assessment, mitigation, and monitoring activities, including real-time hazardous liquid pipeline monitoring during significant flood events and information sharing with other Federal agencies, are being used to address risks associated with the dynamic and unique nature of rivers, flood plains, and lakes;

(4) an analysis of and recommendations regarding what impact pipeline features and conditions, including the age, condition, materials, and construction of a pipeline, should have on risk analysis of a particular pipeline and what changes to the definition of high consequence area could be made to improve pipeline safety; and

(5) a description of any challenges affecting Federal or State regulators in their oversight of the program and how the challenges are being addressed.

SEC. 8. TECHNICAL SAFETY STANDARDS COMMITTEES.

Section 60115(b)(4)(A) is amended by striking ''State commissioners. The Secretary shall consult with the national organization of State commissions before selecting those 2 individuals.'' and inserting ''State officials. The Secretary shall consult with national organizations representing State commissioners or governors when making a selection under this subparagraph.''

SEC. 9. INSPECTION REPORT INFORMATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the completion of a pipeline safety inspection, the Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, or the State authority certified under section 60105 of title 49, United States Code, shall—

(1) conduct a post-inspection briefing with the operator outlining concerns, and to the extent practicable, provide written preliminary findings of the inspection; or

(2) issue to the operator a final report, notice of amendment of plans or procedures, safety order, or corrective action order, or such other applicable report, notice, or order.

(b) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall submit an annual report to Congress regarding—

(A) the actions that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration has taken to ensure that inspections by State authorities provide effective and timely oversight; and

(B) statistics relating to the timeliness of the actions described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a).

(2) CESSATION OF EFFECTIVENESS.—Paragraph (1) shall cease to be effective on September 30, 2019.

SEC. 10. PIPELINE ODORIZATION STUDY.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit a report to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives that assesses—

(1) the feasibility of odorizing all combustible gas in transportation;

(2) the impacts of the odorization of all combustible gas in transportation on manufacturers, agriculture, and other end users; and

(3) the relative benefits and costs associated with odorizing all combustible gas in transportation compared to using other methods to mitigate pipeline leaks.

SEC. 11. IMPROVING DAMAGE PREVENTION TECHNOLOGY.

(a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with stakeholders, shall conduct a study on improving existing damage prevention programs through technological improvements in location, mapping, excavation, and communications practices to prevent accidental excavation damage to a pipe or its coating, including considerations of technical, operational, and economic feasibility and existing damage prevention programs.

(b) CONTENTS.—The study under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) an identification of any methods that could improve existing damage prevention programs through location and mapping practices or technologies in an effort to reduce unintended releases caused by excavation;

(2) an analysis of how increased use of GPS digital mapping technologies, predictive analytic tools, public awareness initiatives including one-call initiatives, the use of mobile devices, and other advanced technologies could supplement existing one-call notification and damage prevention programs to reduce the frequency and severity of incidents caused by excavation damage;

(3) an identification of any methods that could improve excavation practices or technologies in an effort to reduce pipeline damages;

(4) an analysis of the feasibility of a national data repository for pipeline excavation accident data that creates standardized data models for storing and sharing pipeline accident information; and

(5) an identification of opportunities for stakeholder engagement in preventing excavation damage.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall submit a report to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives regarding the study under this section, including recommendations, that include the consideration of technical, operational, and economic feasibility, on how to incorporate, into existing damage prevention programs, technological improvements and practices that may help prevent accidental excavation damage.

SEC. 12. WORKFORCE OF PIPELINE AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SAFETY ADMINISTRATION.

(a) REVIEW.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration shall submit to Congress a review of Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration staff resource management, including geographic allocation plans, hiring challenges, and expected retirement rates and strategies. The review shall include recommendations to address hiring challenges, training needs, and any other identified staff resource challenges.

(b) CRITICAL HIRING NEEDS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on the date on which the review is submitted under subsection (a), the Administrator may certify to Congress, not less frequently than annually, that a severe shortage of qualified candidates or a critical hiring need exists for a position or group of positions in the Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration.

(2) DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY.—Notwithstanding sections 3309 through 3318 of title 5, United States Code, the Administrator, after making a certification under paragraph (1), may hire a candidate for the position or candidates for the group of positions, as applicable.

(3) TERMINATIONS OF EFFECTIVENESS.—The direct hire authority provided under paragraph (2) shall terminate on September 30, 2019.

SEC. 13. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In developing a research and development program plan under paragraph (3) of section 12(d) of the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 (49 U.S.C. 60101 note), the Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration, in consultation with the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology, shall—

(1) detail compliance with the consultation requirement under paragraph (2) of such section;

(2) provide opportunities for joint research ventures with non-Federal entities, whenever practicable and appropriate, to leverage limited Federal research resources; and

(3) permit collaborative research and development projects with appropriate non-Federal organizations.

(b) COLLABORATIVE SAFETY RESEARCH REPORT.—Section 60124(a)(6) is amended—

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

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(C) research activities in collaboration with non-Federal entities, including the intended improvements to safety technology, inspection technology, operator response time, and emergency responder incident response time.''.

SEC. 14. INFORMATION SHARING SYSTEM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall convene a working group to consider the development of a voluntary no-fault information sharing system to encourage collaborative efforts to improve inspection information feedback and information sharing with the purpose of improving natural gas transmission and hazardous liquid pipeline integrity risk analysis.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—The working group described in subsection (a) shall include representatives from—

(1) the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration;

(2) industry stakeholders, including operators of pipeline facilities, inspection technology vendors, and pipeline inspection organizations;

(3) safety advocacy groups;

(4) research institutions;

(5) State public utility commissions or State officials responsible for pipeline safety oversight;

(6) State pipeline safety inspectors; and

(7) labor representatives.

(c) CONSIDERATIONS.—The working group described in subsection (a) shall consider and provide recommendations, if applicable, to the Secretary on—

(1) the need for and the identification of a system to ensure that dig verification data is shared with inline inspection operators to the extent consistent with the need to maintain proprietary and security sensitive data in a confidential manner to improve pipeline safety and inspection technology;

(2) ways to encourage the exchange of pipeline inspection information and the development of advanced pipeline inspection technologies and enhanced risk analysis;

(3) opportunities to share data, including dig verification data between operators of pipeline facilities and in-line inspector vendors to expand knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of in-line inspection technology and methodologies;

(4) options to create a secure system that protects proprietary data while encouraging the exchange of pipeline inspection information and the development of advanced pipeline inspection technologies and enhanced risk analysis; and

(5) regulatory, funding, and legal barriers to sharing the information described in paragraphs (1) through (4).

(d) FACA.—The working group shall not be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

(e) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall publish the recommendations provided under subsection (c) on a publicly available website.

SEC. 15. NATIONWIDE INTEGRATED PIPELINE SAFETY REGULATORY DATABASE.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall submit a report to Congress on the feasibility of a national integrated pipeline safety regulatory inspection database to improve communication and collaboration between the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and State pipeline regulators.

(b) CONTENTS.—The report under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) a description of any efforts currently underway to test a secure information-sharing system for the purpose described in subsection (a);

(2) a description of any progress in establishing common standards for maintaining, collecting, and presenting pipeline safety regulatory inspection data, and a methodology for the sharing of the data;

(3) a description of any existing inadequacies or gaps in State and Federal inspection, enforcement, geospatial, or other pipeline safety regulatory inspection data;

(4) a description of the potential safety benefits of a national integrated pipeline database; and

(5) recommendations for how to implement a secure information-sharing system that protects proprietary and security sensitive information and data for the purpose described in subsection (a).

(c) CONSULTATION.—In preparing the report under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consult with stakeholders, including each State authority operating under a certification to regulate intrastate pipelines under section 60105 of title 49, United States Code.

SEC. 16. UNDERGROUND NATURAL GAS STORAGE FACILITIES.

(a) DEFINED TERM.—Section 60101(a) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (21)(B), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (24), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(3) in paragraph (25), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(27) 'underground natural gas storage facility' means a gas pipeline facility that stores gas in an underground facility, including—

''(A) a depleted hydrocarbon reservoir;

''(B) an aquifer reservoir; or

''(C) a solution mined salt cavern reservoir.''.

(b) STANDARDS FOR UNDERGROUND NATURAL GAS STORAGE FACILITIES.—Chapter 601 is amended by inserting after section 60103 the following:

''§ 60103A. Standards for underground natural gas storage facilities

''(a) MINIMUM UNIFORM SAFETY STANDARDS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of the SAFE PIPES Act, the Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall issue minimum uniform safety standards, incorporating, to the extent practicable, consensus standards for the operation, environmental protection, and integrity management of underground natural gas storage facilities.

''(b) CONSIDERATIONS.—In developing uniform safety standards under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

''(1) consider the economic impacts of the regulations on individual gas customers to the extent practicable;

''(2) ensure that the regulations do not have a significant economic impact on end users to the extent practicable; and

''(3) consider existing consensus standards.

''(c) USER FEES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A fee shall be imposed on an entity operating an underground natural gas storage facility to which this section applies. Any such fee imposed shall be collected before the end of the fiscal year to which it applies.

''(2) MEANS OF COLLECTION.—The Secretary shall prescribe procedures to collect fees under this subsection. The Secretary may use a department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States Government or of a State or local government to collect the fee and may reimburse the department, agency, or instrumentality a reasonable amount for its services.

''(3) USE OF FEES.—

''(A) ACCOUNT.—There is established an underground natural gas storage facility safety account in the Pipeline Safety Fund established under section 60301, in the Treasury of the United States.

''(B) USE OF FEES.—A fee collected under this subsection—

''(i) shall be deposited in the underground natural gas storage facility safety account; and

''(ii) if the fee is related to an underground natural gas storage facility, may be used only for an activity related to underground natural gas storage safety under this section.

''(C) LIMITATION.—Amounts collected under this subsection shall be made available only to the extent provided in advance in an appropriation law for an activity related to underground natural gas storage safety.

''(d) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this section may be construed to affect any Federal regulation relating to gas pipeline facilities that is in effect on the day before the date of enactment of the SAFE PIPES Act.

''(2) LIMITATIONS.—Nothing in this section may be construed to authorize the Secretary—

''(A) to prescribe the location of an underground natural gas storage facility; or

''(B) to require the Secretary's permission to construct a facility referred to in subparagraph (A).''.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 601 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 60103 the following:

''60103A. Standards for underground natural gas storage facilities.''.

SEC. 17. JOINT INSPECTION AND OVERSIGHT.

To ensure the safety of pipeline transportation, the Secretary of Transportation shall coordinate with States to ensure safety through the following:

(1) At the request of a State authority, the Secretary shall allow for a certified state authority under section 60105 of title 49, United States Code, to participate in the inspection of an interstate pipeline facility.

(2) Where appropriate, may provide temporary authority for a certified State authority under that section to participate in oversight of interstate pipeline safety transportation to ensure proper safety oversight and prevent an adverse impact on public safety.

SEC. 18. RESPONSE PLANS.

In preparing or reviewing a response plan under part 194 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, the Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and an operator shall each consider, to the maximum extent practicable, the impact of a worse case discharge of oil, or the substantial threat of such a discharge, into or on any navigable waters or adjoining shorelines that may be covered in whole or in part by ice.

SEC. 19. HIGH CONSEQUENCE AREAS.

The Secretary of Transportation shall revise section 195.6(b) of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations to explicitly state that the Great Lakes are a USA ecological resource (as defined in section 195.6(b) of that title) for purposes of determining whether a pipeline is in a high consequence area (as defined in section 195.450 of that title).

SEC. 20. SURFACE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY REVIEW.

Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit a report to Congress on the staffing, resource allocation, oversight strategy, and management of the Transportation Security Administration's pipeline security program and other surface transportation programs. The report shall include information on the coordination between the Transportation Security Administration, other Federal stakeholders, and industry.

SEC. 21. SMALL SCALE LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS FACILITIES.

(a) DEFINED TERM.—Section 60101(a), as amended by section 16, is further amended by inserting after paragraph (25) the following:

''(26) 'small scale liquefied natural gas facility' means an intrastate liquefied natural gas facility (other than a peak shaving facility) that produces liquefied natural gas for—

''(A) use as a fuel in the United States; or

''(B) transportation in the United States by a means other than a pipeline facility; and''.

(b) SITING STANDARDS FOR SMALL SCALE LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS FACILITIES.—Section 60103(a) is amended to read as follows:

''(a) LOCATION STANDARDS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Transportation shall prescribe minimum safety standards for deciding on the location of a new liquefied natural gas pipeline facility or small scale liquefied natural gas facility.

''(2) LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS FACILITIES.—In prescribing a minimum safety standard for deciding on the location of a new liquefied natural gas facility, the Secretary of Transportation shall consider—

''(A) the kind and use of the facility;

''(B) the existing and projected population and demographic characteristics of the location;

''(C) the existing and proposed land uses near the location;

''(D) the natural physical aspects of the location;

''(E) medical, law enforcement, and fire prevention capabilities near the location that can cope with a risk caused by the facility; and

''(F) the need to encourage remote siting.

''(3) SMALL SCALE LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS FACILITIES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of the SAFE PIPES Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall prescribe minimum safety standards for small scale liquefied natural gas facilities.

''(B) CONSIDERATIONS.—In prescribing minimum safety standards under this paragraph, the Secretary shall consider—

''(i) the value of establishing risk-based approaches;

''(ii) the benefit of incorporating industry standards and best practices;

''(iii) the need to encourage the use of best available technology; and

''(iv) the factors prescribed in paragraph (2), as appropriate.''.

SEC. 22. REPORT ON NATURAL GAS LEAK REPORTING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration shall submit to Congress a report on the metrics provided to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and other Federal and State agencies related to lost and unaccounted for natural gas from distribution pipelines and systems.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required under subsection (a) shall include the following elements:

(1) An examination of different reporting requirements or standards for lost and unaccounted for natural gas to different agencies, the reasons for any such discrepancies, and recommendations for harmonizing and improving the accuracy of reporting.

(2) An analysis of whether separate or alternative reporting could better measure the amounts and identify the location of lost and unaccounted for natural gas from natural gas distribution systems.

(3) A description of potential safety issues associated with natural gas that is lost and unaccounted for from natural gas distribution systems.

(4) An assessment of whether alternate reporting and measures will resolve any safety issues identified under paragraph (3), including an analysis of the potential impact, including potential savings, on rate payers and end users of natural gas products of such reporting and measures.

(c) CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS.—If the Administrator determines that alternate reporting structures or recommendations included in the report required under subsection (a) would significantly improve the reporting and measurement of lost and unaccounted for gas or safety of systems, the Administrator shall, not later than 180 days after making such determination, issue regulations, as the Administrator determines appropriate, to implement the recommendations.

SEC. 23. COMPTROLLER GENERAL REVIEW OF STATE POLICIES RELATING TO NATURAL GAS LEAKS.

(a) REVIEW.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a State-by-State review of State-level policies that—

(1) encourage the repair and replacement of leaking natural gas distribution pipelines or systems that pose a safety threat, such as timelines to repair leaks and limits on cost recovery from ratepayers; and

(2) that may create barriers for entities to conduct work to repair and replace leaking natural gas pipelines or distribution systems.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration a report summarizing the findings of the review conducted under subsection (a) and making recommendations on Federal or State policies or best practices that may improve

safety by accelerating the repair and replacement of natural gas pipelines or systems that are leaking or releasing natural gas, including policies within the jurisdiction of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. The report shall consider the potential impact, including potential savings, of the implementation of its recommendations on ratepayers or end users of the natural gas pipeline system.

(c) CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS.—If the Comptroller General makes recommendations in the report submitted under subsection (a) on Federal or State policies or best practices within the jurisdiction of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, the Administrator shall, not later than 90 days after such submission, review such recommendations and report to Congress on the feasibility of implementing such recommendations. If the Administrator determines that the recommendations would significantly improve pipeline safety, the Administrator shall, not later than 180 days after making such determination and in coordination with the heads of other relevant agencies as appropriate, issue regulations, as the Administrator determines appropriate, to implement the recommendations.

SEC. 24. PROVISION OF PIPELINE OIL SPILL RESPONSE PLANS TO CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration shall, upon request of the Chairman or Ranking Member of an appropriate congressional committee, provide to such committee full and unredacted copies of oil spill response plans.

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

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

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

SEC. 25. CONSULTATION WITH FERC AS PART OF PRE-FILING PROCEDURES AND PERMITTING PROCESS FOR NEW NATURAL GAS PIPELINE INFRASTRUCTURE.

The Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration shall consult with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission during its pre-filing procedures and permitting process for new natural gas pipeline infrastructure to ensure the protection of people and the environment from the risks of hazardous materials transportation.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be withdrawn; the Fischer substitute amendment be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee-reported substitute amendment was withdrawn.

The amendment (No. 3427) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

The bill (S. 2276), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

WORLD LYMPHEDEMA DAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 389.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 389) designating March 6, 2016, as the first annual ''World Lymphedema Day.''

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I know of no further debate on the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Hearing no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 389) was agreed to.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that 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 preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

WORLD WILDLIFE DAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 390, submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 390) designating March 3, 2016 as ''World Wildlife Day.''

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I further 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. 390) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2016

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 3 p.m., Monday, March 7; 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 4 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; finally, that at 4 p.m., the Senate resume consideration of S. 524.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2016, AT 3 P.M.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:13 p.m., adjourned until Monday, March 7, 2016, at 3 p.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGISTERED AGENTS AND BROKERS

SUSAN LOUISE CASTANEDA, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGISTERED AGENTS AND BROKERS FOR A TERM OF ONE YEAR. (NEW POSITION)

OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION

ROBERTO R. HERENCIA, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 17, 2018. (REAPPOINTMENT)

COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION

CHRISTOPHER JAMES BRUMMER, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE A COMMISSIONER OF THE COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM EXPIRING JUNE 19, 2016, VICE MARK P. WETJEN, RESIGNED.

CHRISTOPHER JAMES BRUMMER, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE A COMMISSIONER OF THE COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JUNE 19, 2021. (REAPPOINTMENT)

BRIAN D. QUINTENZ, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE A COMMISSIONER OF THE COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING APRIL 13, 2020, VICE SCOTT O'MALIA, RESIGNED.

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

ANDREW R. MCIVER
GERARD C. PHILIP

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

MICHAEL L. HIPP

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be commander

JASON A. GRANT

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be lieutenant commander

RONALD H. NELLEN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

BRIAN D. HENNESSY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be lieutenant commander

ASHLEY A. HOCKYCKO

WITHDRAWALS

Executive Message transmitted by the President to the Senate on March

3, 2016 withdrawing from further Senate consideration the following nominations:

THERESE W. MCMILLAN, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATOR, VICE PETER M. ROGOFF, RESIGNED, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON JANUARY 8, 2015.

CASSANDRA Q. BUTTS, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SEVENTIETH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON SEPTEMBER 10, 2015.

BARBARA LEE, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SEVENTIETH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON SEPTEMBER 10, 2015.

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, OF NEW JERSEY, TO BE A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SEVENTIETH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON SEPTEMBER 10, 2015.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2016

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call upon the people of our nation to re-double the effort to pass the Equal Rights Amendment—an amendment to make real the promise of equal rights, equal justice and equal opportunity for women. Given the continuous assaults on women's health care and reproductive rights and the persistent wage gap, there is no better time for this Amendment to become enshrined in our constitution. This is long overdue and it is shameful that we continue to be three states short of ratification. The Constitution must guarantee and protect women's rights.

In recognition of Women's History Month, I encourage my colleagues to take up this issue and fight for the Equal Rights Amendment.

IN RECOGNITION OF MARCH AS BLEEDING DISORDERS MONTH

HON. DAVID SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize March as the first Bleeding Disorders Awareness month. As my colleagues may know, bleeding disorders are a group of diseases which affect more than three million Americans and which have no known cure. These diseases, which include hemophilia, Von Willebrand disease or VWD, and other rare disorders, can take a heavy toll on their sufferers' standard of living and finances. However, despite these troubling realities, by raising awareness, it is my hope that through earlier diagnosis, we might prevent more complications, unnecessary procedures, and disabilities so often caused by these diseases.

The most common bleeding disorders, hemophilia and VWD, are hereditary and caused by disorders in blood proteins meant to clot and stop bleeding. According to the Centers for Disease Control, as many as 400 babies are born with hemophilia each year. For hemophilia sufferers, their illness means that they require lifelong infusions of replacement clotting factor therapies. The financial burden for individuals with severe hemophilia are often $250,000 a year or more. While the affordable care act limits annual out-of-pocket expenses to $6,850 for individuals and $13,700 for families, the high cost of clotting factor therapies means that those afflicted with the disease often pay these full amounts each year.

In the past we have seen just how vulnerable sufferers of bleeding disorders are to complications. When the nation's blood supply became contaminated with HIV during the 1980's, almost 90% of severe hemophilia sufferers became infected. Of those cases of HIV transmission, over 50% have since died of the disease.

Despite these tragic outcomes, there is reason for optimism. Thanks to federally funded Hemophilia Treatment Centers (HTCs), originally authorized by Congress in 1974, as many as 70% of hemophilia sufferers take advantage of specialized treatment through the multidisciplinary, comprehensive care in a network of HTCs. According to the CDC, mortality rates and hospitalization rates for bleeding complications from hemophilia were 40% lower among Americans who received treatment at HTCs. I am proud to say that Georgia hosts a total of four HTCs.

In addition, organizations such as the National Hemophilia Foundation have made it their mission to continue to raise awareness about rare bleeding disorders in the United States and abroad. So Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize those who suffer from bleeding disorders and those who continue to work to create greater awareness of bleeding disorders.

HONORING A CHAMPION FROM THE STATE OF HOCKEY

HON. RICHARD M. NOLAN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my friend, and Elyite, Lt. Col. David Merhar for his many athletic achievements, service to his country, and passion for helping others pursue their goals.

On February 6th his West Point number 7 jersey was retired—one of the first three jerseys to ever be raised to the rafters of Tate Rink—in honor of his many accomplishments while playing for West Point's hockey team. During his senior season, he became the first NCAA hockey player to surpass 100 points in a season. The 57 goals and 50 assists that season made him the highest scoring NCAA hockey player at the time and today his 107 points in one season remains 6th all-time in NCAA history.

After graduating from West Point, Dave went on to a fulfilling 35 year career in government service, including 23 years in active military duty and serving as a special assistant to then General Alexander Haig stationed at NATO headquarters in Belgium. Dave's hard work and dedication helped to keep our country safe.

Today Dave continues in public service by helping me select candidates for service academy nominations. I truly appreciate the time he sets aside every year to help me nominate students to service academies, such as West Point, so they can pursue their goals just like Dave.

Once again thank you Dave for your service to our country, and congratulations on this historic achievement.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIVE DAUGHTERS OF THE GOLDEN WEST PARLOR 210 IN FORT BRAGG, CALIFORNIA

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 100th anniversary of the Native Daughters of the Golden West Parlor 210 in Fort Bragg, California.

On March 2, 1916, twenty-seven women were initiated as charter members of the newly formed parlor of the Native Daughters of the Golden West, a statewide fraternal and patriotic organization that has served the community and helped preserve the town's history for one hundred years.

Over the years, the Native Daughters of Fort Bragg Parlor has played an important role in raising awareness of Fort Bragg's unique history and in honoring important historical locations through plaques, volunteer work, and sharing the living history of the town with visitors and locals alike. They have helped Fort Bragg students further their education as well as countless other philanthropic efforts.

The longstanding dedication and commitment of the Fort Bragg members of the Native Daughters of the Golden West has created a legacy of service and historic preservation in Fort Bragg and Mendocino County. Please join me in acknowledging and expressing gratitude to the Native Daughters of the Golden West Parlor 210 in Fort Bragg, California, for a century of service.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF DORIS YOUNG HURLEY

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and accomplishments of Mrs. Doris Young Hurley. A beloved wife, sister, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, as well as an irreplaceable member of the community, Mrs. Hurley passed away on February 28th, 2016 at the age of 94.

Born in Buffalo, New York on May 27, 1921, Mrs. Hurley was raised on Humboldt Parkway on the East Side of Buffalo. One of nine children, she was a graduate of St. Mary Magdalene as well as St. Mary's Seminary. In her scholastic career she was extremely proud of an essay she wrote in 1933 titled "Why I am Proud to be an American" which won an Americanism Essay award.

Mrs. Hurley worked for American Airlines in the Buffalo airport after high school and during World War II, where she met her future husband Paul Bishop Hurley of Belmont, Massachusetts when he was transferred to Buffalo. They were married in January 1944, and were together sixty-two years until his passing in 2006.

In her spare time, Mrs. Hurley enjoyed many activities including sewing, crafts, dancing, and music. She was a dedicated fan of the Buffalo Bills.

A devoted mother, Mrs. Hurley's family brought her great joy. She is survived by her daughters, Mary Ann Tanski, Barbara Pacitti, Colleen Argus; sons Paul Jr., John, Daniel, Michael, William, and Timothy; 25 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren. Paul Jr. served as President of Trocaire College from 1998 to 2012, and John has held the position of President of Canisius College since 2010.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to honor the memory of Mrs. Doris Y. Hurley, an adored mother, sister, and grandmother. I offer my deepest condolences to her family, friends, and loved ones.

HONORING MORGAN PARK HIGH SCHOOL

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Morgan Park High School in Chicago, Illinois as it celebrates its 100th Anniversary.

The centennial celebration is a highly anticipated milestone for most organizations. However, only a select group gets the honor of actually celebrating one hundred years of existence and Morgan Park High School is now among them. Since its inception in 1916 when it opened its doors to less than 300 students, Morgan Park has been a champion for educational exceptionalism. Morgan Park is set apart during this momentous occasion as a bearer of academic excellence, a laboratory for stellar educators, and the training ground for talented and intellectually-stimulated students.

Mr. Speaker, the Mustang family is also a clan of notable alumni. Among them is physician, NASA Astronaut, and the first African-American woman in space Mae Jemison; Singer, songwriter, and record producer Jeremih; Actor Michael Colyar; Chicago Teachers Union and American Federation of Teachers leader Jacqueline B. Vaughn; Inventor James C. Bliss; and NFL Player Corbin Bryant—to name a few. Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if, amongst this list of notable alumni, I did not mention my dedicated and diligent Chief of Staff, Reverend Stanley Watkins.

The list of prestigious accomplishments that have emerged from the Mustang family is a testament of why Morgan Park High School is still standing 100 years strong. Mr. Speaker, 100 is a special number because it marks two significant transitions: the conclusion of one century and the beginning of a new one. While this is a time to celebrate the many victories and cherished moments of the passing century, it is also the moment in which we pause to reflect upon it critically to identify our shortcomings so that we can learn from them and better shape our future.

So, Mr. Speaker, this year we celebrate both our beginning and our becoming. We celebrate the struggles of the past 100 years and we embrace the challenge of the next 100 years. We commend the triumphant strides of the many leaders that have been birthed from this rich Mustang blood. We unleash the unbridled Mustang spirit upon those who are being groomed now and those who are still to come.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, we recognize this great achievement and commend Morgan Park High School for bestowing upon so many the opportunity of a lifetime; to pass through its halls, to sit in its classrooms, and to play on its courts.

Go Mustangs and congratulations on reaching your centennial.

RECOGNIZING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF M&Ms

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize Mars, Incorporated as they celebrate the 75th anniversary of M&Ms today, March 3, 2016.

Forrest Mars Sr., son of Mars founder, Franklin Mars, got the inspiration for M&Ms while running the family candy business in the United Kingdom. Mars encountered soldiers eating small chocolate candies encased in a hard shell as part of their rations. These hard shell chocolate candies resisted melting. Forrest Mars turned the concept into M&Ms and a world-renowned brand of candy. By the mid-1950s, M&Ms had become the number one candy in the United States.

Mars, Incorporated has five governing principles that deserve our recognition. First, they establish quality of their work as their first goal. Second, they require total responsibility from every member of their organization. Third, they seek out how to mutually serve everyone in a business relationship with them. Fourth, they strive to never waste resources. Fifth, as one of the world's largest family-owned companies, they embrace the freedom to do business with high standards.

After visiting M&Ms and Mars facilities in Central Florida and learning about their principle-based business model, I have come to respect this company. Mars is a quality, family-owned organization, and I wish M&Ms a happy 75th anniversary.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RENEE L. ELLMERS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on March 2, 2016, H.R. 3716, the Ensuring Access to Quality Medicaid Providers Act, passed the U.S. House of Representatives with an overwhelming 406 ''yea'' votes. Had I been I present, I would have voted in favor of this legislation.

IN HONOR OF LIN SCHMALE

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Lin Schmale, who recently retired from The Society of American Florists where she was senior director of government relations and an advocate for flower and plant growers across the nation. Lin is someone known for tenacity and fearlessness—as well as collaboration and kindness. A walking encyclopedia of the federal bureaucracy, she has a long and well-documented history for promoting teamwork and partnerships to accomplish the sometimes seemingly impossible.

For 22 years, Lin fought for the floral industry on Capitol Hill and throughout countless federal agencies, bringing together diverse people, groups and agencies, and standing her ground on issues that directly affect the livelihood of growers, wholesalers, retailers and suppliers.

Known for her sharp intellect and her ability to grasp and then distill complex issues, Lin has played a lead role in two critically important areas: first, through her efforts, federal funds are now available to conduct important research on floral and nursery crops; and second, she has dedicated countless hours to ensure safe and efficient transportation of flowers and plants within the United States and across international borders.

When Lin started working at SAF, the Floral and Nursery Research Initiative (FNRI) had been created and was poised to be a source of needed funding for research across the country. While the structure was in place, and there was support in Congress and the USDA, the Initiative needed more visibility. However, putting her knowledge of the federal and political bureaucracy to work, and calling on a vast network of colleagues and peers on the Hill, Lin soon helped take the Initiative to the next level. What was initially a glimmer in the eyes of the industry soon became a multi-million dollar annual USDA research program that today funds a wide variety of research benefitting not only the floral and nursery industries but literally all of agriculture. And the U.S. Department of Agriculture has called the Initiative a model program for private and public sector collaboration.

As the international movement of floral products has increased, Lin's role in addressing pest and disease issues took on more importance.

When the pathogen Ralstonia first threatened to disrupt the country's supply of geraniums, Lin made sure the industry maintained a respectful yet loud voice in often difficult negotiations between the USDA, the Department of Homeland Security and other agricultural groups. Leveraging her deep connections in Washington, she brought interested parties together to craft a realistic and workable solution that protected the geranium industry first and foremost, but also addressed the needs of other agricultural groups and the federal government. That was no small feat, and some people have said, without exaggeration, that Lin saved the geranium industry in the United States.

Over the years, Lin has been a strong industry advocate and negotiator in many other

similar situations. She has dealt with federal and state officials on a wide variety of other pest and disease issues that threatened to disrupt the flow of floral products. In working on these issues, Lin is often recognized because of her ability to get people to focus on the science of an issue and not only the politics. With that said, she knows politics in Washington, D.C., and at the state level and uses her knowledge to help diffuse challenging situations and work toward solutions.

Through all of her interactions with government officials, Lin emphasizes candor and transparency. For that, people in both the industry and government place great trust in her word.

At The Society of American Florists, Lin dedicated herself to staging SAF's annual Congressional Action Days event, and helped to inform and educate SAF members on the key issues of the day. And she has also had a major role in developing its annual Pest and Production Management Conference, a must-see for scientists, researchers and growers. Lin was honored this year with SAF's John H. Walker Award for excellence in the field of association management and she also received the Executive Director's Award from the North American Plant Protection Organization for her collaborative work with regulatory officials from the United States, Mexico and Canada.

Mr. Speaker, it is truly an honor to rise and celebrate Lin's excellence in fighting for the floral industry every day on Capitol Hill and for her deep commitment to collaboration and partnerships.

HONORING THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF OSWEGO COUNTY

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the people and history of Oswego County, New York and celebrate the county's 200th Anniversary. The County of Oswego was established in March of 1816 through an act of the New York State Legislature. The county occupies 986 square miles of land on the southeastern shore of Lake Ontario.

The County of Oswego has played a significant role in the history of the Central New York region as well as our nation's history. Fort Ontario, overlooking Lake Ontario, in Oswego County, is one of our nation's most unique and historical landmarks. Fort Ontario is the only fort that has been involved in every war since the French and Indian War. During World War II, the Fort served as the nation's only Emergency Refugee Camp, sheltering nearly 1,000 refugees. The Fort is now a state historic site and operates as a museum, attracting tourists from across the country.

Fort Ontario is just one example of the great history in Oswego County. As Oswego County celebrates its bicentennial, I want to honor all who have helped make Oswego County great and thank everyone who has played a part in preserving the irreplaceable history of Oswego County.

DEBATE COACH OF THE YEAR: DAVE PRITSCHET

HON. RICHARD M. NOLAN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dave Pritschet, of Brainerd High School in Brainerd, Minnesota, who has been named 2016 Coach of the Year by the Minnesota Debate Teachers Association.

Dave built a great and growing debate program at Brainerd High School that has brought so much honor and recognition to his students and to our entire community. In fact, under Dave's guidance, the program has sent students to state and national debate tournaments in every year but one since 2000. So it's no wonder his fellow coaches saw fit to recognize those achievements with this year's award.

Though his students debate many things, they can all agree Coach Pritschet's knowledge and passion for the art of debate motivates them to strive for excellence. Moreover, the success Brainerd's debate team has earned and enjoyed is inspiring other schools throughout rural Minnesota to form debate teams where students learn to respectfully exchange ideas and opinions based on facts. That ability to speak clearly and eloquently will take them far in life; perhaps even to this very Chamber one day.

Once again, it is an honor to recognize with my colleagues Minnesota's 2016 Coach of the Year, Dave Pritschet.

BAKKEN U

HON. KEVIN CRAMER

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, the people of North Dakota have many admirable qualities. Throughout the history of my state, they have shown resourcefulness and perseverance as they have produced food to feed a hungry world and unlocked today's shale oil revolution.

With low oil prices bringing a slowdown in the energy sector, North Dakotans are again showing their resilience. Many are looking to improve themselves by gaining new skills and more education. Bakken U, an innovative new program from the North Dakota University System that is funded by the North Dakota Petroleum Council, is helping make that happen.

I want to congratulate Warren Logan of Dickinson, who left college a few years ago to work in North Dakota's oilfields. As the first recipient of a $5,000 Bakken U scholarship, he will continue to work fulltime while also being a fulltime student, finishing the business administration degree he began to pursue years ago.

Warren is the first of many ambitious North Dakotans to take advantage of this unique Bakken U program. Bettering themselves with additional education is certain to benefit them and my entire state.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

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 $19,090,880,799,021.63. We've added $8,464,003,750,108.55 to our debt in 6 years. This is over $7.5 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

CELEBRATING THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Art of Living Foundation for its thirty-five years of promoting human values around the world and to wish them well as they kick off their World Culture Festival on March 11th in New Delhi, India. I'd also like to recognize all of the volunteers around the world and in New Delhi who have spent countless hours organizing this truly magnificent event.

As a United States Congresswoman, I am focused on improving the lives of girls and women across the globe. I applaud the Art of Living Foundation's programs that focus on empowering girls and women by giving them access to education, vocational skills training, and self-development programs. The vision and actions of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and the Foundation to empower marginalized girls and women is a positive force for strengthening our future.

The World Culture Festival will bring together individuals from 155 diverse countries to promote peace and unity. Thank you for your tireless work and for your commitment to making the world a more peaceful and harmonious place. Please accept my best wishes for a wonderful World Culture Festival and congratulations to the Art of Living Foundation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DAN BENISHEK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 105, I was unavoidably detained and was unfortunately unable to vote in favor of H.R. 3716, the Ensuring Removal of Terminated Providers from Medicaid and CHIP Act. As a doctor, I know how important it is to make sure that only qualified professionals are eligible for participating in health care programs like Medicaid and CHIP. Had I been present, I would have voted aye.

BRIGADIER GENERAL SANDY BEST

HON. RICHARD M. NOLAN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise with great pride to honor my friend, Brigadier General Sandy Best, the first woman in the Minnesota National Guard to be promoted to the rank of General. In recognition of her extraordinary leadership and exemplary service to the Guard and to our Nation, she began her new command of the 133rd Airlift Wing and 148th Fighter Wing on February 25th.

In her many visits to my office, General Best has always been an outstanding advocate for the Minnesota National Guard. She exemplifies the best of what makes our National Guard so effective. In her former role as the Minnesota National Guard's Director of Government Relations she advocated for Minnesota's bases at the federal and state level, contributing greatly to making our state's bases some of America's premier defense operations.

Members of the Minnesota National Guard have been deployed around the world, and they always stand ready to help our region when natural disasters strike and people are in need of aid and assistance. I'm confident that both the 133rd Airlift Wing and 148th Fighter Wing are in strong hands under General Best's command. And I know she will continue her strong advocacy for the brilliant, highly trained and hardworking men and women of Minnesota's National Guard.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing General Sandy Best for her historic accomplishment and service to our great nation.

EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATORS

HON. KEVIN CRAMER

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest challenges in public education is the integration of learning opportunities for exceptional children.

Dedicated parents, teachers, staff and administrators all contribute to the success of this effort. Today I congratulate Meredith Frisch, a paraprofessional at Westside Elementary School in West Fargo, who was recognized as Paraeducator of the Year by the North Dakota Council for Exceptional Children.

This award recognizes individuals who work to promote significant educational successes for students, a commitment to continued professional development and the highest standards of educational quality.

Meredith represents well all paraeducators in my state who dedicate their careers to working with exceptional students. She is known for her commitment to finding the best in all students, encouraging them to reach above and beyond their potential all with a unique brand of compassion and humor.

She is a credit to all educators throughout North Dakota, and our state is better because of her devotion to exceptional students.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to attend House Roll Call Vote Numbers 71 through 78 on February 11, 2016. If present, I would have voted Yes on vote numbers 71, 73, 74, and 75 and voted No on vote numbers 72, 76, 77 and 78.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF OFFICER DAVID HOFER

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life and memory of Officer David Hofer of the Euless, Texas Police Department. Officer Hofer was tragically killed while serving in the line of duty on March 1, 2016.

David's career as an officer began in 2009 after joining the New York Police Department. A native of Brooklyn, New York and a 2008 graduate of New York University, David fulfilled his lifelong dream of becoming a police officer soon after completing his degree. After dutifully serving the people of New York for five years, David relocated to North Texas where he accepted a position with the Euless Police Department.

David was an upstanding citizen of the community, and an outstanding police officer. He is remembered as a loving son, brother, fiancé, and hero. David's service and dedication to his neighbors, his community, and the City of Euless will never be forgotten. As we memorialize David's life within the halls of Congress, may we never forget his commitment and sacrifice for the safety and wellbeing of our community.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to stand here today to recognize a true hero. I ask all of my distinguished colleagues to join me in celebrating the life of Officer David Hofer.

IN HONOR OF JAMES KEHOE

HON. DONALD NORCROSS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate James Kehoe on his recent retirement as Business Manager for the Plumbers & Pipefitters Local Union 322 of Winslow Township, New Jersey, after thirty-six years of membership. Jim has had a lasting impact for generations to come and I would like to applaud him for his service.

Jim graduated from Rutgers University with a degree in Business Administration in 1979 and then joined the Local 322 Apprenticeship Program. He served his community tirelessly with the Camden County Improvement Authority and the Camden County United Way. As Vice President of the Southern New Jersey AFL–CIO, a board member of the Union Organization for Social Service and president of the Southern New Jersey Building Trades Council, Jim worked to improve the lives of working families in New Jersey.

As a trustee at Rowan University, a board member on the Senator Walter Rand Institute of Public Affairs at Rutgers University and as chair of the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority, Jim has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of families and all of southern New Jersey. Jim has worked with multiple community service organizations, including the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, Boy Scouts of America and the American Red Cross and I commend him for his social action and devotion to the betterment of our communities.

Mr. Speaker, James Kehoe is a great American whose dedication to community service is an inspiration to his family, friends, and our entire state. I join with his Plumbers & Pipefitters brothers and sisters and all of New Jersey in thanking him for his outstanding service and in wishing him continued success and prosperity in all his future endeavors.

IN RECOGNITION OF H. MARIE SMITH'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 90th birthday of H. Marie Smith, an institution in Monroe, Michigan.

Marie Smith, or Sweet Marie as she is known by many, was born on March 1st, 1926 in Monroe, Michigan, which remains her home to this day. She married William D. Smith on December 27th, 1947, and had four wonderful children; Mark, Paul W., Brian and Alison.

Marie Smith has been part of the fabric of the Monroe community for decades. As a young woman, she worked in the Betrus Market. This market was owned and operated by her parents for 47 years and was considered the ''meeting place for the neighborhood''. Marie lived in the building connected to the market until she married. In 1948, Marie and her husband cofounded the Monroe Community Players to produce theatrical productions for the people of Monroe and Southeast Michigan. To this day, the Monroe Community Players is still working as a nonprofit and volunteer organization to produce performances for the community. Even though ''Sweet Marie'' has retired, she still helps as a house manager for the Monroe Community Players.

To this day, she lives on her own, drives her own car, is active on social media and is critical in keeping people connected to ensure they are a part of the broader community. Her children have made her proud. Mark was a respected attorney in Monroe. Paul W. is known throughout America as the voice of the Great Lakes on the number one radio station, WJR. Alison is well-known in the healthcare community as a senior executive with ProMedica.

H. Marie Smith has worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life for the people of Monroe through her support of and passion for the arts in Monroe. She continues the tradition of one of the staple markets and community gathering locations, serving as the glue that binds people. We celebrate her birthday with

pride and gratitude for everything she has done for the good of her community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today to celebrate the 90th birthday of my friend H. Marie Smith and wish her many more years of success.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

HON. KEVIN CRAMER

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, North Dakota's exceptional quality of life has often been recognized by those who live in my state and those who wish they did.

The secret to this quality of life can be found in the quality of our people, the many individuals who dedicate their careers and volunteer time to making their communities better.

Today, I want to recognize Rebekah Christensen, director of the Richland-Wilkin Kinship Program. She was presented with this year's Outstanding Citizen Award by the Wahpeton Breckenridge Area Chamber of Commerce for her work as head of this program.

This Richland-Wilkin Kinship Program matches young people with volunteer adults. Its motto is "Mentors are ordinary people doing ordinary thing that produce extraordinary results." This motto holds true as well with dynamic leaders like Rebekah, her mentor volunteers and board members, and the many community members who support the program financially and with community engagement opportunities.

They are all contributing to supporting young people in the Wahpeton-Breckenridge area and helping them transition into successful adults.

55TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACE CORPS

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join in the celebration of the 55th Anniversary of the Peace Corps.

Since the program's establishment on March 1st, 1961 by President John F. Kennedy, the Peace Corps has been working to promote peace and friendship, and to help nations tackle some of the most pressing challenges they face. As we celebrate, let's remember that the Peace Corps is now active in over 130 nations and its volunteers remain committed to tackling issues such as climate change, pandemic disease, food security, and gender inequality and empowerment.

In the 55 years since its' founding, over 220,000 U.S. citizens, including current Members of Congress, have served their nation in the Peace Corps. And many more are eager to serve. In 2015, the Peace Corps received its highest number of applications (over 23,000) since 1975.

Peace Corps volunteers go abroad for deployments of 2 years aid in the social and economic developments in some of the world's poorest countries. They serve as teachers and health care providers in communities that lack access to various necessities like food, water, education, healthcare, equality and disease prevention. They also help our nation by becoming the face of America to those they interact with while themselves gaining a better understanding of the culture and people of other nations. Volunteers often immerse themselves in the communities that they are sent to and play a unique role in shaping the lives of the individuals permanently living there.

I want to take a moment to congratulate the 22 residents of my congressional district who currently serve as Peace Corps volunteers. They have been deployed to South Africa, Indonesia, Ethiopia, and Ecuador, just to name a few. I wish these young men and women the best of luck as they begin to make a difference in the communities they have been deployed to. And I have no doubt that these talented and skilled young people will make an incredible difference as Peace Corps volunteers.

I strongly support the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps represents the best of America and the undimmed potential of "soft power" initiatives that help make our world a better place. In the midst of poverty and through war and conflict, the Peace Corps has shown the world a hopeful, uplifting side of America that reflects our fundamental values of peace, prosperity, and progress. The Peace Corps will be a vital part of the U.S. diplomatic and development response and a sign of our nation's long term commitment to help alleviate suffering around the globe.

Let us work to keep this program strong and in business for another 55 years.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, on February 12, 2016, I was unable to attend House Roll Call Vote Numbers 79 through 82. If present, I would have voted Yes on vote numbers 79 and 82 and voted No on vote numbers 80 and 81.

RECOGNIZING THE ANNIVERSARY OF POGROMS AGAINST ARMENIANS

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the twenty-eighth anniversary of the pogroms against people of Armenian descent in Sumgait, Azerbaijan.

Peaceful demonstrations descended into chaos when Azerbaijani rioters attacked Armenian men and women advocating for democracy on February 27, 1988. After three days of unspeakable violence, hundreds of Armenians lost their lives and thousands more no longer had a place to call home.

Undeterred by Soviet oppression, the Armenian community and its dedication to democratic self-determination sparked a movement that finally helped bring an end to the dictatorship of the Soviet Union. The courage demonstrated by the Armenian people of Nagorno Karabakh in demanding their rights even after all of the adversity is admirable and should never be forgotten.

Today, authoritarian leaders in Azerbaijan continue to aggravate efforts by the OSCE Minsk Group to achieve lasting peace in Nagorno Karabakh and the surrounding region. This ancient Christian land has borne witness to several crimes against humanity over the years, and I have hope the United States will take on its moral responsibility to ensure the people of Armenia do not live in fear.

On behalf of the thousands of Armenian Americans living in my congressional district, I invite my colleagues to stand with me and the proud people of Nagorno Karabakh in remembering the lives lost and reinvigorating our commitment to freedom and democracy.

CELEBRATING THE CAREER AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF BILL BAILEY

HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great man, and an icon of our Houston community, retired Harris County Precinct 8 Constable Bill Bailey.

Bill Bailey has been the voice of RodeoHouston for the past three decades. He has brought unparalleled enthusiasm and depth of expertise to his craft, honed by years of experience. Bill has been involved with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo for over 50 years, where he serves as both a board member and a lifetime vice president.

Bill's iconic voice and announcing talent were honed by an equally prodigious career in broadcast radio, which saw Bill inducted into the Country Radio Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 2010. Through the medium of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Bill Bailey has also been instrumental in raising millions of dollars for educational scholarships to benefit Texas area youth and to enrich countless other worthy causes across Southeast Texas.

Let me extend my most hearty congratulations to Bill Bailey as he retires from RodeoHouston and turns the page on another chapter in his storied life.

RECOGNIZING YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

HON. KEVIN CRAMER

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, North Dakota's research universities are nurturing bright students in a variety of programs that encourage them to learn, grow, innovate and even change the world.

Today, I congratulate North Dakota State University student Andrew Dalman, a graduate

student in the mechanical engineering program. He has been recognized by the U.S. Society of Manufacturing Engineering as one of the ''30 under 30 Brightest Manufacturing Engineers.'' And again, Forbes magazine has put Andrew on its list of ''30 Under 30 in Manufacturing and Engineering in 2016.''

Andy has helped develop an affordable 3D-printed prosthetic arm for children. He was on an NDSU team designing a new shape and type of ceramic dental implant. Now he is focusing on an advanced bone technology project to make medical testing cheaper, safer and more ethical.

The talents of young entrepreneurs and innovators like Andy bring hope and promise to our world as they focus their bright minds on some of the greatest challenges and opportunities facing us today. This is the highest calling of our state's higher education system, especially our outstanding research universities, and I commend all who are part of it.

IN RECOGNITION OF ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. G. K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise in recognition of the 125th Anniversary of Elizabeth City State University—a public, historically black college in North Carolina's First Congressional District.

On March 3, 1891, Representative Hugh Cale, an African American member of the North Carolina General Assembly from Pasquotank County sponsored House Bill 383, which established a normal school to train African Americans to become primary school teachers. Dr. Peter W. Moore, a former slave, served as the school's first Principal, and then President until his retirement in 1928.

Dr. John Henry Bias became the school's second president in 1928 and was responsible for spearheading efforts to implement a baccalaureate program. In 1937, the school's name was officially changed to Elizabeth City State Teachers College after receiving approval from state officials to become a four year school. The first Bachelor of Science degrees in Elementary Education were awarded in 1939.

In 1963, the school's name was changed to Elizabeth City State College and was ultimately named Elizabeth City State University in 1969 when the school began awarding graduate degrees. When the University of North Carolina System was formed in 1972, Elizabeth City State University was one of the 16 public institutions to be granted membership.

Nearly 2,500 students attend ECSU. The university now offers 28 undergraduate degrees and 4 graduate programs of study in fields like aviation, natural sciences, arts, mathematics, business, and economics. The ECSU Vikings compete in the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Division II and have produced many star athletes over the years.

Elizabeth City State University, like many other Historically Black Colleges and Universities, has played an important part in African American culture, the history of North Carolina, and has contributed to the overall success of American higher education.

For well over a century, ECSU has lived up to its motto ''To Live is to Learn'' by producing lifelong learners and affording generations of North Carolinians with the tools necessary to be leaders in our global society.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and congratulating Elizabeth City State University for 125 years of serving and educating African Americans seeking higher education in my state.

RECOGNIZING DAN EARL JONES

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to congratulate Dan Earl Jones, Chairman of the South Carolina Cable Television Association from 2015–2016 and Vice President of Government Relations and Time Warner Cable of South Carolina, on his upcoming retirement.

In over 30 years as a community advocate in the state of South Carolina, Dan has achieved an exemplary and successful career. He has served with numerous organizations including the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, the Columbia and Charleston Optimist Clubs, the Brookland-Cayce High School Education Foundation, and the Lexington Medical Center Board of Directors. A graduate of Charleston Southern University, he also currently serves on its Board of Visitors. I am grateful for his admirable service and dedication to the community.

While having the opportunity to serve in the South Carolina Senate and now Congress receiving briefings from Dan, I always could count on his integrity and honesty.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and so I missed Roll Call vote number 105 regarding the ''Ensuring Removal of Terminated Providers from Medicaid and CHIP Act'' (H.R. 3716). Had I been present, I would have voted ''Yes''.

TRIBUTE TO BISHOP JAMES L. DAVIS

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a fifth generation African Methodist Episcopal minister, Presiding Prelate, Bishop James Levert Davis on the end of his outstanding tenure as the Presiding Prelate of the 9th African Methodist Episcopal District and for his dedicated and distinguished service to the State of Alabama.

Bishop Davis is the son of the late Mother Dorothy Lynch, the late Reverend Sam Davis and Mother Alma Davis. He is married to his partner in ministry, Arelis Beevers Davis. They are the proud parents of Dr. Nicole Davis Pass and Damarys Monique Burnett; and the proud grandparents of Patrick James Pass, Ashton James Pass, Baron Christopher Valentino Burnett and Noel Olivia Burnett.

Bishop Davis attended both public and private schools in Alabama and received the call to ministry at age 12. Bishop Davis is a graduate of Morris Brown College in Atlanta, Georgia where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree and later matriculated at Turner Theological Seminary where he earned his Master of Divinity degree. He also received a Doctorate of Ministry degree from the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Bishop Davis' leadership roles have included the 123rd Bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He was appointed to the 19th Episcopal District which encompassed the Republic of South Africa. Bishop Davis furthered the legacy of self-help and self-reliance through his ministry during his time living on the continent of Africa from 2004 to 2008.

Bishop Davis has preached and taught for over 45 years and has served the African Methodist church and community faithfully. His exemplary work and commitment to his call has earned the respect and admiration of fellow ministers, church members, government leaders and our community.

It was under the leadership of Bishop Davis that the 9th Episcopal District was able to purchase and renovate the District Headquarters located in downtown Birmingham, AL. It took only twenty-five months for the District to celebrate burning their mortgage while reporting $1.8 million in budget assessments and were able to donate over $60,000 to local churches in need.

Bishop Davis continues to demonstrate an exemplary commitment to community service through his work as the chair of the Board of Directors for the Daniel Payne College where he promoted his remarkable vision for its property which could help generate funds for the church. Under his leadership, The Daniel Payne College Foundation, Inc. of the 9th Episcopal District was able to purchase the Daniel Payne Middle School making this the largest property owned by an African American institution in the State of Alabama.

On a personal note, Bishop Davis has motivated and inspired me to utilize my gifts and talents in planting and reaping and sowing good seeds throughout Alabama's 7th Congressional District. I want to thank him for his continued support and encouragement as we both seek to serve God's people for the advancement of a better world.

On behalf of the 7th Congressional District, the State of Alabama and this nation, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the accomplishments of Bishop James Levert Davis. We pay tribute to his distinguished career and contributions for the betterment of the State of Alabama and extend deep appreciation for his exemplary service as the Presiding Prelate of the 9th Episcopal District.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, on March 2, 2016—I was not present for roll call vote 105. If I had been present for this vote, I would have voted: ''yea'' on roll call vote 105.

RECOGNIZING AND CONGRATULATING MATSON GUAM ON ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF SERVICE ON GUAM

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Matson Guam as the company celebrates its 20th anniversary of business and service to the people of Guam. Matson Guam began operations on February 1, 1996, during which it has provided continuous and uninterrupted service to Guam. Matson Guam has also made strong partnerships and provides services to neighboring islands in the Pacific, including the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau and Republic of the Marshall Islands. Matson Guam also served as the only U.S. carrier servicing Guam and Micronesia from 2011 to 2015.

Matson Guam is a part of a global company founded in 1882 which began carrying food and supplies from California to Hawaii. Today, Matson is a diversified company whose primary interest is in carrying freight between the Pacific Coast and Hawaii. Matson is the leading U.S. carrier in the Pacific and provides a vital lifeline to the economies of many Pacific islands.

In addition to Matson Guam's shipping and logistics services in the region, Matson Guam also makes many contributions to the local community and throughout Micronesia through the Matson Foundation. In 2016 alone, the Matson Foundation is estimated to have contributed over $200,000 to local causes. Additionally, Matson Guam is a key sponsor for the Festival of the Pacific Arts that will take place in Guam this summer. As part of the partnership, Matson Guam recently shipped a Sakman canoe, a traditional Chamorro fishing boat from San Diego, California to Guam. The Sakman symbolizes the tie between the company's shipping operations and Guam's seafaring heritage.

Matson Guam is also committed to environmentally friendly initiatives aimed at protecting and preserving the natural resources of the region. As part of this commitment, Matson Guam leads an environmental and community relations program called Adahi I Tano' which translates to ''taking care of our island.'' The company donates the use of container equipment on Guam for environmental cleanup projects arranged by non-profit organizations, and pays for trucking expenses for the delivery and pickup of the containers. Matson also awards these non-profit organizations a $500 contribution for each successful cleanup. Since 2013, over 5 dozen non-profit organizations participating in the program have conducted over 80 cleanups to help the environment and in turn help their individual organizations carry out their missions.

I thank Matson Guam for their service to the island and region over the last two decades. I congratulate Matson Guam on its 20th anniversary and commend the company's leadership and employees for their contributions to the people of Guam and communities throughout the region. I look forward to their future contributions and success.

COMMEMORATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF MASON COUNTY FARM BUREAU

HON. DARIN LaHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to honor a remarkable organization, the Mason County Farm Bureau. The Mason County Farm Bureau from Central Illinois is an integral organization that promotes agricultural prosperity. After many years of success and service, the Mason County Farm Bureau is celebrating their 100th anniversary.

Mason County Farm Bureau was chartered on February 16, 1916 by local farmers interested in promoting agriculture on a local, state, and national level. Today, the group has over 1,500 members supporting the agrarian community and economy throughout the county.

Not only does Mason County Farm Bureau focus on agricultural issues, but they have effectively established committees for young leaders involved in agriculture. These committees include initiatives like Farm Safety Day, Young Leaders Conference, and Farm Bureau scholarships. Programs like these greatly serve the community by ensuring that today's young aspiring farmers effectively, safely and efficiently grow a better quality and more abundant crop for future generations.

Ilinois has become a major economic force within the agricultural sector because of farm bureaus like Mason County that come together and enhance opportunities for local farmers, their families, and the community as a whole. I extend my sincere congratulations to Mason County Farm Bureau for their outstanding accomplishments and contributions to Illinois. I hope the organization continues to grow and prosper for the next one hundred years.

HONORING THE PASSING OF ATTY. LINDA SARNO

HON. EDWARD R. ROYCE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the passing of community activist and civic and religious leader, Atty. Linda Sarno, who passed away on February 1, 2016. Atty. Sarno was a beloved community organizer and leader who supported the development and professionalism of Filipino American businesses and raised awareness and appreciation for Filipino culture and cuisine in Southern California. She started initiatives in the community to promote the advantages of green technology, health, and conservation both in business and everyday life. She was co-founder and director emeritus of the Filipino American Chamber of Commerce of Orange County where she encouraged young entrepreneurship, and was also actively involved in the Asian Business Association of Orange County. Atty. Sarno will be deeply missed by her family, friends, and our community.

HONORING LIEUTENANT COLONEL CINDI FELDWISCH

HON. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Lieutenant Colonel Cindi Feldwisch, a champion of women's rights who served her country with distinction as one of the ''First Five'' women in the United States Air Force Honor Guard (USAFHG).

When Lt. Col. Feldwisch entered uniformed service in 1975, women did not serve in the USAFHG. This elite ceremonial unit in the United States Air Force (USAF) is charged with representing the USAF at all public and official ceremonies in the National Capital Region. These ceremonies include funerals for deceased USAF personnel, occasions for visiting dignitaries and military officials, wreath-laying at the Tomb of the Unknowns, and White House arrival ceremonies. In 1973, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs had issued a memorandum instructing the USAF to incorporate women into the USAFHG.

In 1976 a new training program began with the intention of integrating women into the USAFHG. Lt. Col. Feldwisch and four comrades defied expectations and, in the words of their commanding officer, Captain Marcel Mayer, ''they not only survived the training, they excelled.'' On July 15, 1976, Lt. Col. Feldwisch along with Teresa Brown, Margaret Jones, Madelyn Ritz, and Elizabeth Root graduated and became the first female members of the USAFHG. Collectively, they are known in the USAFHG as the ''First Five.''

Nevertheless, the First Five still endured discrimination and sexism. For example, the First Five were not initially allowed to carry M–1 rifles in ceremonies because of a ban prohibiting women from participating in combat. It would have been easy to accept this second rate status, but Lt. Col. Feldwisch and the other female members of USAFHG refused. In 1977 they penned a letter to First Lady, Rosalynn Carter, who issued a statement in their support. By January 1978, there was a change in policy allowing women to participate in all ceremonies with their M–1s.

Lt. Col. Feldwisch went on to serve four years of active duty in the USAFHG. After receiving her Bachelor of Science at the University of Northern Colorado, she returned to duty as an enlisted member of the Colorado Air National Guard, earning her commission as a Second Lieutenant, in 1991. She has risen through the ranks, and in 2006 she became a

Lieutenant Colonel. From November 2000–October 2003, Lt. Col. Feldwisch served three years of active duty at the Air Force Safety Center in Kirtland, New Mexico. From July–October 2004, she deployed overseas and served in Baghdad. Currently, Lt. Col. Feldwisch is the Executive Officer for the Assistant Adjutant General, Joint Force Headquarters, New Mexico National Guard, Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico.

Col. Feldwisch is a highly decorated officer and has received numerous awards and decorations for her service to her country. These include the Meritorious Service Medal, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Air Force Commendation Medal, the Air Force Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the United Nations Medal.

Our military has undertaken tremendous advancements since Lt. Col. Feldwisch entered the USAFHG. Indeed, women can now serve alongside men in combat, something that was hard to imagine when Lt. Col. Feldwisch entered the service. She was influential in expanding women's rights in the military and has paved the way for future generations of women to serve their country with distinction.

Lt. Col. Feldwisch and the other members of the First Five who bravely entered the USAFHG in 1976 are role models for all women and girls. Lt. Col. Feldwisch demonstrated that nothing is impossible so long as you are not willing to take no for an answer. For this and her years of service I honor her today.

IN RECOGNITION OF HOWARD P. DREW

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to recognize one of Springfield's most famous residents, Olympic athlete and scholar Howard P. Drew.

Howard was born on June 28, 1890 in Lexington, Virginia but was raised in Springfield, Massachusetts. As a high school student at Springfield High School, Howard tied the world record for the 100 meter dash to qualify for the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm, Sweden. Later, as a student at the University of Southern California, he broke the record for the 100 meter and 200 meter dash. Despite having many personal problems, he persevered and was able to travel to participate in an array of competitions. Howard won numerous medals throughout the Northeast, especially in Massachusetts. His triumphs in track and field were covered by every major newspaper including the Boston Globe and the New York Times.

During his time at University of Southern California, Howard was the first African-American man to write for USC's newspaper, titled the Daily Southern Californian, as well as being the first African-American man inducted into the Skull and Dagger Society, an exclusive academic club at USC. Before finishing his education, Howard enlisted and became a Sergeant in the Supply Company, 809th Pioneer Infantry Regiment, and the Eighty-Eighth Division of the United States Army during World War I, and during that time, he ran and coached the Army track teams in Neil, France. Once leaving the Army and finishing law school, he became a judge in Hartford, Connecticut and was elected to Justice of the Peace several times during the 1940s. Each of these positions was the first to be held by an African American in the State of Connecticut.

Mr. Speaker, as Springfield celebrates his legacy, let us remember all of Howard P. Drew's outstanding achievements, as we recall his legacy as a role model for today's high school athletes and students all over the country.

HONORING MRS. MARIAN KRUPICKA

HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Marian Krupicka as Darien, Illinois' Citizen of the Year 2016.

Mrs. Krupicka first began her support of public libraries in 1978 by volunteering with the Darien Library, which at that time was housed in a bus. What started as a small book mobile in a parking lot in Darien in 1978 has grown to the renowned award winning Indian Prairie Public Library thanks to Mrs. Krupicka and her perseverance to achieve the best.

Mrs. Krupicka's contribution to the Darien community doesn't stop at her library service; she also dedicated 30 years of her life to educating students. She was a Language Arts and Social Studies teacher at Eisenhower High School. During her teaching career, she touched many students' hearts through her ''not one size fits all'' teaching philosophy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mrs. Krupicka for being named Darien's Citizen of the Year and thank her for the time, service, and commitment she has given to our community.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1243–S1297

Measures Introduced: Twenty-one bills and six resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2622–2642, and S. Res. 385–390. **Pages S1277–78**

Measures Passed:

SAFE PIPES Act: Senate passed S. 2276, to amend title 49, United States Code, to provide enhanced safety in pipeline transportation, after withdrawing the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute, and agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Page S1292**

McConnell (for Fischer) Amendment No. 3427, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S1296**

World Lymphedema Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 389, designating March 6, 2016, as the first annual ''World Lymphedema Day''. **Page S1296**

World Wildlife Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 390, designating March 3, 2016 as ''World Wildlife Day''. **Page S1296**

Measures Considered:

Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act—Agreement: Senate continued consideration of S. 524, to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use, taking action on the following amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S1245–73**

Adopted:

By a unanimous vote of 90 yeas (Vote No. 31), Manchin Amendment No. 3420 (to Amendment No. 3378), to strengthen consumer education about the risks of opioid abuse and addiction. **Page S1263**

Pending:

Grassley Amendment No. 3378, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S1245**

Grassley (for Donnelly/Capito) Modified Amendment No. 3374 (to Amendment No. 3378), to provide follow-up services to individuals who have received opioid overdose reversal drugs. **Page S1245**

A motion was entered to close further debate on Grassley Amendment No. 3378 (listed above), and, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, and pursuant to the unanimous-consent agreement of Thursday, March 3, 2016, a vote on cloture will occur at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, March 7, 2016. **Page S1273**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the bill, and, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of Grassley Amendment No. 3378. **Page S1273**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the filing deadline for first-degree amendments to Grassley Amendment No. 3378, and to the bill, be at 3:30 p.m., on Monday, March 7, 2016. **Page S1273**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at 4 p.m., on Monday, March 7, 2016, Senate resume consideration of the bill. **Page S1273**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Susan Louise Castaneda, of California, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers for a term of one year.

Roberto R. Herencia, of Illinois, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation for a term expiring December 17, 2018.

Christopher James Brummer, of the District of Columbia, to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 19, 2016.

Christopher James Brummer, of the District of Columbia, to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission for a term expiring June 19, 2021.

Brian D. Quintenz, of the District of Columbia, to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission for a term expiring April 13, 2020.

Routine lists in the Army and Navy. **Page S1296**

Nominations Withdrawn: Senate received notification of withdrawal of the following nominations:

Therese W. McMillan, of California, to be Federal Transit Administrator, which was sent to the Senate on January 8, 2015.

Cassandra Q. Butts, of the District of Columbia, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the Seventieth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, which was sent to the Senate on September 10, 2015.

Barbara Lee, of California, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the Seventieth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, which was sent to the Senate on September 10, 2015.

Christopher H. Smith, of New Jersey, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the Seventieth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, which was sent to the Senate on September 10, 2015. **Pages S1296–97**

Messages from the House: **Page S1276**

Measures Referred: **Page S1276**

Executive Communications: **Pages S1276–77**

Petitions and Memorials: **Page S1277**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S1277**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1278–79**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S1279–84**

Additional Statements: **Pages S1274–75**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S1284–92**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S1292**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—31) **Page S1263**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 6:13 p.m., until 3 p.m. on Monday, March 7, 2016. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S1296.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2017 for the Department of Health and Human Services, after receiving testimony from Sylvia Burwell, Secretary of Health and Human Services.

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2017 for the Department of Commerce, after receiving testimony from Penny Pritzker, Secretary of Commerce.

APPROPRIATIONS: VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION AND VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2017 and fiscal year 2018 for the Veterans Health Administration and Veterans Benefits Administration, after receiving testimony from David J. Shulkin, Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, and Danny G. I. Pummill, Acting Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, both of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST AND FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the posture of the Department of the Air Force in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2017 and the Future Years Defense Program, after receiving testimony from Deborah Lee James, Secretary, and General Mark A. Welsh III, USAF, Chief of Staff, both of the Department of the Air Force, Department of Defense.

REGULATORY REFORMS

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Subcommittee on Securities, Insurance, and Investment concluded a hearing to examine regulatory reforms to improve equity market structure, after receiving testimony from Stephen Luparello, Director, Division of Trading and Markets, Securities and Exchange Commission; and Richard G. Ketchum, Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Washington, D.C.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 2555, to provide opportunities for broadband investment, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute; and

The nominations of Thomas F. Scott Darling, III, of Massachusetts, to be Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Department of

Transportation, Daniel B. Maffei, of New York, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner, and routine lists in the Coast Guard.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY BUDGET

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2017 for the Department of Energy, after receiving testimony from Ernest Moniz, Secretary of Energy.

FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

Committee on Finance: Committee concluded a hearing to examine free trade agreement implementation, focusing on lessons from the past, after receiving testimony from Sean P. Murphy, Qualcomm Incorporated, San Diego, California; Steven Tepp, Sentinel Worldwide, Vienna, Virginia; and Glenn Prickett, The Nature Conservancy, and Jim Mulhern, National Milk Producers Federation, both of Arlington, Virginia.

LIBYA

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the path forward in Libya, after receiving testimony from Frederic Wehrey, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Middle East Program, and Claudia Gazzini, International Crisis Group, both of Washington, D.C.

DHS CANINE PROGRAMS

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the dogs of the Department of Homeland Security, focusing on how canine programs contribute to homeland security, after receiving testimony from Kimberly Hutchinson, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Training and Development, and Doug Timberlake, Transportation Security Inspector, both of the Transportation Security Administration, and Damian Montes, Director, Canine Training Program, Office of Training and Development, Patrick Dowling, Officer/Instructor, and Jennifer Jones, Agriculture Specialist, each of Customs and Border Protection, all of the Department of Homeland Security; Jennifer Grover, Director, Homeland Security and Justice, Government Accountability Office; and Cynthia M. Otto, University of Pennsylvania Penn Vet Working Dog Center, Philadelphia.

FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the impacts of Federal fisheries management on small businesses, including H.R. 3094, to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to transfer to States the authority to manage red snapper fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico, after receiving testimony from Representative Garret Graves; Pamela W. Anderson, Capt. Anderson's Marina, Panama City Beach, Florida; Hughes Andry, Sportco Marketing, Richmond, Texas; Brad Gentner, Gentner Consulting Group, Tucson, Arizona; James Hayward, XI Northeast Fishery Sector, Portsmouth, New Hampshire; and Joshua B. Wiersma, Environmental Defense Fund, Boston, Massachusetts.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 38 public bills, H.R. 4677–4714; and 4 resolutions, H.J. Res. 85; H. Con. Res. 123; and H. Res. 636–637 were introduced. **Pages H1142–45**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H1145–46**

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Journal: The House agreed to the Speaker's approval of the Journal by recorded vote of 217 ayes to 154 noes with one answering ''present'', Roll No. 110. **Pages H1134–35**

Blocking Regulatory Interference from Closing Kilns Act of 2016: The House passed H.R. 4557, to allow for judicial review of any final rule addressing national emission standards for hazardous air pollutants for brick and structural clay products or for clay ceramics manufacturing before requiring compliance with such rule, by a yea-and-nay vote of 238 yeas to 163 nays, Roll No. 109. **Pages H1121–28, H1129–34**

H. Res. 635, the rule providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4557) was agreed to by a recorded vote of 235 ayes to 173 noes, Roll No. 107, after

the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 233 yeas to 174 nays, Roll No. 106.

Pages H1127–28

Suspension-Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measure which was debated on Tuesday, March 1st:

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 99 West 2nd Street in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, as the Lieutenant Colonel James "Maggie" Megellas Post Office: S. 1826, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 99 West 2nd Street in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, as the Lieutenant Colonel James "Maggie" Megellas Post Office, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 406 yeas to 1 nay, Roll No. 108.

Pages H1128–29

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 4 p.m. on Monday, March 7th. **Page H1135**

Congressional Advisors on Trade Policy and Negotiations—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members on the part of the House as Congressional Advisors on Trade Policy and Negotiations: Representatives Brady (TX), Reichert, and Nunes. **Page H1141**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yea-and-nay votes and two recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H1127–28, H1128, H1129, H1133–34 and H1134–35. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 9 a.m. and adjourned at 12:54 p.m.

Committee Meetings

APPROPRIATIONS—OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement. Testimony was heard from Joseph Pizarchik, Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement.

APPROPRIATIONS—INSTALLATIONS, ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND BRAC

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on Installations, Environment, Energy and BRAC. Testimony was heard from Pete Potochney, performing the duties of Assistant Secretary of Defense, Energy, Installations and Environment; Katherine G. Hammack, Assistant Secretary of the Army, Installations, Energy and Environment; Dennis V. McGinn, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Energy, Installations and Environment; and Miranda A. A. Ballentine, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, Installations, Environment and Energy.

APPROPRIATIONS—ARMY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Defense held a budget hearing on the Army. Testimony was heard from Patrick Murphy, Acting Secretary, U.S. Army; and General Mark A. Milley, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army.

APPROPRIATIONS—COAST GUARD

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Homeland Security held a budget hearing on the Coast Guard. Testimony was heard from Paul F. Zukunft, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard.

APPROPRIATIONS—BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on Bureau of Land Management. Testimony was heard from Neil Kornze, Director, Bureau of Land Management.

APPROPRIATIONS—DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, MARKETING AND REGULATORY PROGRAMS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on Department of Agriculture, Marketing and Regulatory Programs. Testimony was heard from Ed Avalos, Under Secretary, Marketing and Regulatory Programs; Kevin Shea, Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; Elanor Starmer, Acting Administrator, Agriculture Marketing Service; Larry Mitchell, Administrator, Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration; and Michael Young, Budget Officer, Department of Agriculture.

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION, OCEAN WORLDS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies held an oversight hearing on National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Ocean Worlds. Testimony was heard from Charles Elachi, Director, Jet Propulsion Lab; and a public witness.

THE MARINE CORPS 2017 OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE BUDGET REQUEST AND READINESS POSTURE

Committee On Armed Services: Subcommittee on Readiness held a hearing entitled "The Marine Corps

2017 Operation and Maintenance Budget Request and Readiness Posture''. Testimony was heard from General John M. Paxton, Jr., USMC, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps; Lieutenant General Glenn M. Walters, USMC, Deputy Commandant for Programs and Resources, U.S. Marine Corps; and Major General Vincent A. Coglianese, USMC, Assistant Deputy Commandant for Installations and Logistics (Plans), U.S. Marine Corps.

DISRUPTER SERIES: WEARABLE DEVICES

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade held a hearing entitled ''Disrupter Series: Wearable Devices''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY OVERSIGHT: THE DOE LOAN GUARANTEE PROGRAM

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Energy; and Subcommittee on Oversight held a joint hearing entitled ''Department of Energy Oversight: The DOE Loan Guarantee Program''. Testimony was heard from Mark McCall, Executive Director, Loan Programs Office, Department of Energy; Frank Rusco, Director, Natural Resources and Environment, Government Accountability Office; and public witnesses.

FISCAL YEAR 2017 ODNI BUDGET

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Full Committee held a hearing on Fiscal Year 2017 ODNI Budget. This hearing was closed.

Joint Meetings

VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS LEGISLATIVE PRESENTATIONS

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Senate Committee concluded a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of multiple Veterans Service Organizations, after receiving testimony from Robert D. Stamper, Blinded Veterans Association, Hayden, Idaho; Chris Kinnard, Gold Star Wives of America, Inc., Colorado Springs, Colorado; Marsha Four, Vietnam Veterans of America, Springfield, Pennsylvania; Robert J. Puskar, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Paradise Valley, Arizona; Ryan Kules, Wounded Warrior Project, Severna Park, Maryland; Mike Waite, National Guard Association of the United States, Alexandria, Virginia; James Pidgeon, AMVETS, Tulare, California; and Al Kovach, Jr., Paralyzed Veterans of America, Coronado, California.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2016

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

3 p.m., Monday, March 7

Senate Chamber

Program for Monday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond 4 p.m.), Senate will resume consideration of S. 524, Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. The filing deadline for first-degree amendments to Grassley Amendment No. 3378, and to the bill, is at 3:30 p.m. At 5:30 p.m., Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on Grassley Amendment No. 3378.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

4 p.m., Monday, March 7

House Chamber

Program for Monday: House will meet in pro forma session at 4 p.m.

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